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CHARTERS TOWERS

Thesis submitted by
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September 1984

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
the Department of History at
James Cook University of North Queensland

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ABSTRACT

The academic establishment has probably not been waiting anxiously for a Ph.D. thesis on Charters Towers. Nevertheless there are several good reasons why one should have been written. Firstly, the town played an important part in attracting settlers to North Queensland and in determining what sort of people these settlers would be. Secondly, the field made useful contributions to the technology and capitalisation of Australian mining at a time when the industry was growing rapidly. Thirdly political developments on Charters Towers influenced the style of Colonial politics, particularly labour politics, in a formative period. Lastly, there is an intrinsic historical interest in charting the growth of a community founded in the wilderness at the peak of the industrial-capitalist era. While it would be excessive to suggest it as a microcosm of the growth of a capitalist society there are, I believe, insights to be gained from the rise and decline of this goldfield.

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DECLARATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references given.

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Diane Menghetti
September 1984

INTRODUCTION



Possibly the most striking feature of North Queensland urban history is the rapidity with which pioneering communities developed into capitalist societies. Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in Charters Towers, a gold mining settlement some eighty miles inland from Townsville. In 1871 the site was part of a remote northern cattle run. Within two decades of the discovery of gold in late December of that year, a company-dominated mining industry, supported by a commercially and socially diverse society whose superstructure was hardly distinguishable from its English or southern colonial counterparts, had developed. Yet this was not a company-created town. Its early settlement was by diggers and itinerant merchants - small proprietors. Early in 1872 the preconditions of capitalism - the presence of a small group of entrepreneurs into whose hands the property of the community had accumulated, and a larger group of "free" labourers who had been stripped of the means of production sufficient for independent subsistence - did not exist. What did exist, however, were what have been described as the "capitalist passions" - the worship of private property and the pursuit of profit among all sectors of society.

A watershed in Australian history had occurred twenty years before the settlement of the field. The population of the colonies had trebled, institutions had changed to meet the needs of the newcomers and enduring social and economic traditions had been established. The dynamic was alluvial gold which, because of its small demands on capital and technology, offered unprecedented opportunities to men from all walks of life. Half a million gold immigrants entered Victoria during the decade after 1850, increasing the population of that colony sevenfold. Although many of the immigrants sought other occupations when the Victorian alluvial fields declined during the late 1850s,

the lure of gold remained strong. For those who had made the long and hazardous journey from Europe, distances were diminished and the diggers were prepared to travel widely to find their Eldorado. When gold was reported at Canoona in 1858, ten to twelve thousand Victorians set sail for Rockhampton only to be disappointed. Three years later 23,000 men embarked in Melbourne for New Zealand where gold was discovered in the South Island in 1861. When the North Queensland discoveries began, the coastal shipping companies were again the first to profit from the gold.

Thus the rush to Charters Towers which took place during 1872 attracted many Victorian miners as well as diggers who had already left that colony for Kiandra, Forbes and Gulgong in New South Wales and Gympie, Ravenswood and the Cape in Queensland. By this time they were no longer the "new chums" of the fifties. They carried north a web of social, economic and political relationships which ensured that, despite its tents and bark huts, Charters Towers was never a formless mining camp. Their aim was always to rise within the system rather than to transcend it: they brought with them the "capitalist passions". Also in the first rush came another group of small proprietors - the owners of small businesses who "grubstaked" prospectors in exchange for a share of their profits. They provided transport to remote fields; they set up stores and hotels, sold water and mining and milling equipment and built sawmills and assay offices in the infant towns. Though not without capital they too depended initially on their own labour for subsistence. Like the diggers, the merchants were itinerant, some moving their ventures from field to field, others establishing a network of interests throughout the region. They too gambled on the potential of a new find. Unlike the diggers, however, they immediately set about shortening

their odds by hastening the development of their chosen field and focussing settlement around their business premises. The means by which they did this and laid the grounds for their rapid "primary accumulation" are vividly demonstrated by the events of late 1872.

Notwithstanding such manoeuvres and the undoubtedly unequal distribution of both luck and proficiency among the dispossessed, the accumulation could not have been achieved so quickly if the conflict inherent in the process had surfaced at this stage. Several circumstances, however, combined to suppress such conflict. Many of these were peculiar to the nature of the ore bodies and the mining process employed on the field and are therefore discussed in the body of the thesis. In addition the high wages offered in Charters Towers were envied in the south and repeatedly stressed by local editors and politicians. This, combined with the presence of a pool of surplus labour created by the rush, may well have limited opposition. Most importantly, though, the attitudes of the people themselves - their "capitalist passions" - facilitated the process. The accumulators were objects of admiration, not hatred. The dispossessed believed that they had a community of interest with them - if business prospered so would they. They could well understand the satisfaction with which a man might describe himself in successive municipal ratebooks as "miner", "gentleman" and, finally, "capitalist".

At the end of its first decade, a rush of company registrations demonstrated the development of the economy. The social and political superstructure kept pace; the peak of primitive capitalism on Charters Towers gave rise to a classic Victorian society. It is not surprising,

then, that the arrival of international capital after the failure of British investment in the Indian mines, would trigger the long suppressed class-consciousness of the wage labourers. The first English capital and the first miners' union both appeared on the field in 1886. Working class political movements were in place within a few years, and the Labor Party remained the dominant mode of political expression until the exhaustion of the mines pushed the town into a decline.

All regional history topics present awesome problems of selection and organisation of material. Clearly the mode of production and its resulting superstructure are interdependent, yet to combine them in a single chronological history would breed confusion. On the other hand, the time scale is usually too long to allow for a rigidly thematic treatment: the interdependence would become completely obscured. Therefore the method chosen here is to break the life of the field into four periods which correspond roughly to the accumulation decade, the primitive capitalism of the eighties, the international capitalism of the nineties and the decline of the field in the years more or less preceding the First World War. Within these periods or sections it is possible to be thematic, the emphasis falling on those strands which seem to have the most significance for the time. In the seventies the thesis deals with the settlement of the field, the movement towards company mining, and nineteenth century milling technology, while social and political life are treated together. The eighties section develops the theme of company mining before devoting two chapters to politics - the first to the nineteenth-century political

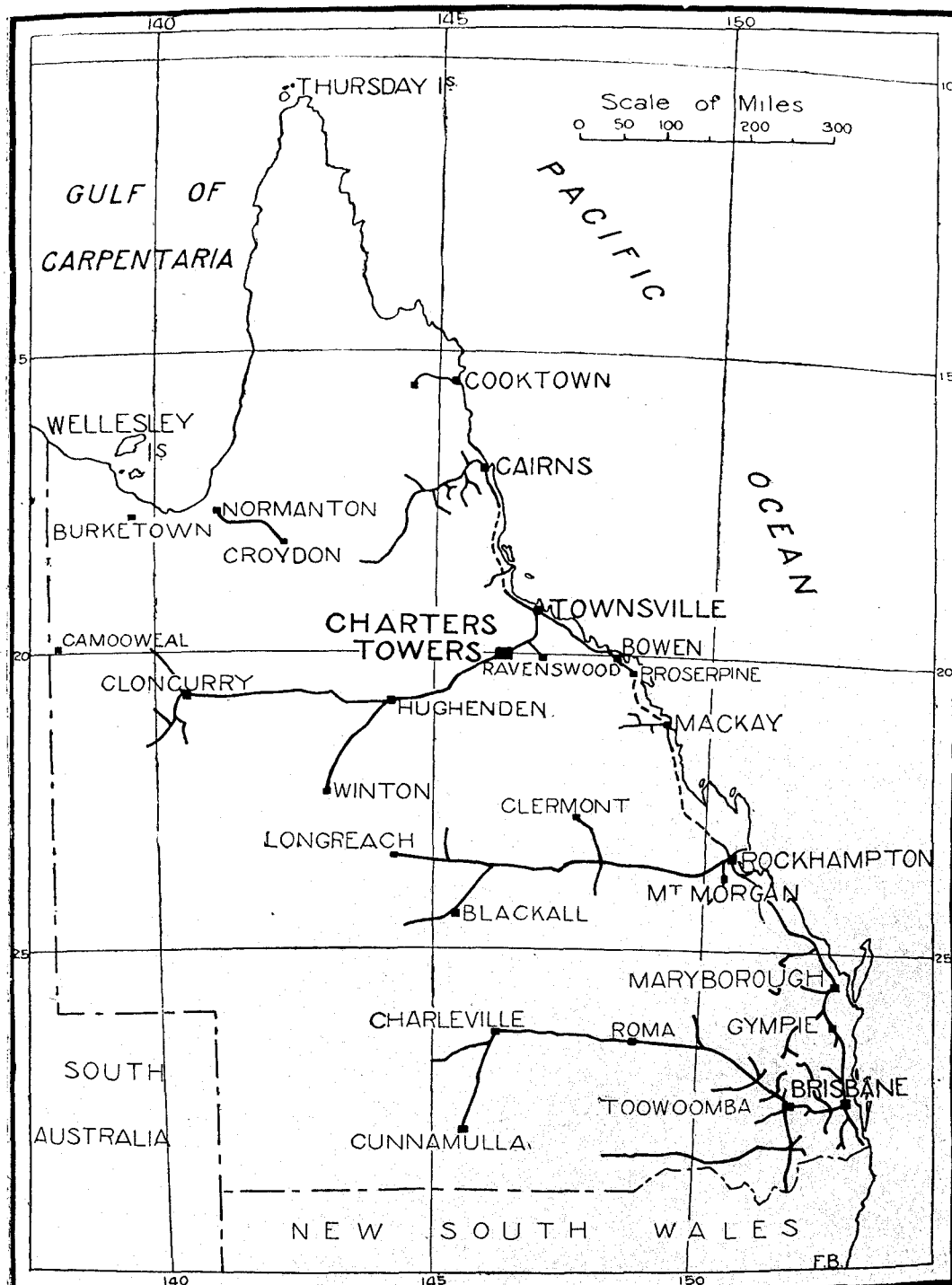
style of Isidor Lissner, and the second to the rise of the labour movement. Its last chapter looks at the social life of the period. The third section considers changes in mining and milling, the effects of the 1890s depression, the rise of Labor politics and society at the end of the century. The final section, the longest, briefly outlines the careers of the top mines of the field; it then looks at health and safety on the Towers, the decline of the labour movement and life styles in the early twentieth century. Such organisation has necessitated a decision to sacrifice some uniformity of style to the descriptive and evocative possibilities of adapting the writing to the subject matter. Although this has led to some imbalance between, say, the mining and the social history chapters, it has allowed the extensive use of oral history in the penultimate section of the thesis.

A great wealth of oral material has been collected and stored in the North Queensland Oral History Collection of the James Cook University History Department. Memories of people who were born in Charters Towers during the 1890s and who grew up in the town, have been transcribed from these tapes. These transcriptions have been ordered in an attempt to evoke the atmosphere of public life - the town, the park on Sunday and the churches; of home life - fathers' jobs and their associated health problems, mothers' jobs, almost invariably in the house, and domestic arrangements; commercial life from the viewpoint of a general storekeeper; private life - childbirth, the family and sexuality; the life of minority groups - the Chinese, Aborigines and the destitute. The most vivid youthful memories, however, are of recreation, schooling and leaving school to find work. For most interviewees this period coincides with the decline of the mines and the general exodus from the town.

This section is not intended to supplement archival research. Oral sources are notoriously inaccurate about events and dates; further, if the material were offered as an accurate description of the life of minority groups in Charters Towers it would be downright insolent. Rather, it is intended to evoke an atmosphere - to invite the reader to feel what it was like to live on this goldfield at the turn of the century. To this end some slowness and repetition have been retained in the text. This is the speech pattern of Charters Towers, and speech patterns also have something to convey. Although the material has been heavily edited and each section contains extracts from several tapes, it has been the author's intention to intrude as little as possible into these memories. In the end, all sources are polluted. Nineteenth century documents were almost invariably produced by middle class white males, often with experience of only a limited section of their community. This final section is an attempt at making some slight redress to the balance of the history.

SECTION 1. ACCUMULATION

CHAPTER 1. PROLOGUE



MAP OF QUEENSLAND.
SHOWING POSITION OF CHARTERS TOWERS AND RAILWAY SYSTEM.

For countless generations the land which was to comprise the goldfield of Charters Towers was inhabited by the Gudjal Aboriginal people. Despite its dryness postulates Helen Brayshaw, who has carried out an archeological survey of the area,¹ the region supported quite a large population, the people relying heavily (probably around twenty-five percent) on vegetable matter for their survival, but also using game, eggs, insects and honey. The Gudjal belonged to one of the three tribes which occupied the Herbert and Upper Burdekin Rivers, the others being the Warunga and the Gugu-Badhun. The three groups formed a linguistic unity which enabled considerable contact and much movement, both for trade and ceremony, within the region. Such contact fostered the development of a rich material culture embracing not only the highly decorated products of the inland group but also the shells and artifacts of the coastal and rain-forest people. Only one of the Gudjal rock art galleries, however, is actually in the vicinity of Charters Towers, although this site is remarkable for its high proportion of figurative motifs which include birds, fish, a turtle or tortoise and a goanna, as well as for its unusual use of colour. Further enrichment through contact with more westerly tribes is suggested by the discovery of a pointed bone, befeathered and encased in bark, in the district.

The Gudjal appear not to have made any attempt to approach European explorers when they first entered the district. Possibly the newcomers' reputation had preceded

1. Helen Catherine Brayshaw, *Aboriginal Material Culture in the Herbert/Burdekin District, North Queensland*, PhD. Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland 1977. This brief account of the Gudjal people is taken from this thesis.

them, for although Leichhardt saw no huts in the area, Gregory noted Aborigines climbing trees to avoid contact with his party.² The country which Leichhardt described in 1845, when he passed through the Charters Towers region seeking a route from New South Wales to Port Essington, was very different from that which greets the visitor today. His companion, Gilbert, noted in his diary that it was "fine land";³ Leichhardt recommended it for grazing and reported:

The ridges were covered with rusty Gum and narrowleaved ironbark. An Erythrina and the Acacia of Expedition Range were very plentiful. The grass was rich and of various species. The granite rock still prevailed. A felspathic rock cropped out near the second creek, where I met with a dark rock, composed of felspar and hornblend (Diorite). Our camp was pitched at the foot of a series of small conical hills, composed of porphyry. A larger range to the southward of it was also porphyritic, very hard, as if penetrated by quartz, and containing small crystals of flesh-coloured felspar. Syenite cropped out on the flats between these two ranges.... Numerous kangaroos were seen bounding over the rocky slopes to the grassy glens below. 4

Aboriginal reaction to the Gregorys could have been influenced by the conduct of private expeditions of in-

-
2. Augustus Charles and Francis Thomas Gregory, *Journals of Australian Explorations* (New York 1968), p. 185. Diary entries for 21 and 22 October 1856.
 3. John Gilbert, *Diary of Expedition with Ludwig Leichhardt 1844-5*, p. 163. Mitchell Library manuscripts A 2586 and A 2587.
 4. Dr Ludwig Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition in Australia from Moreton Bay to Port Essington, a Distance of Upwards of 3000 Miles, During the Years 1844-1845* (Adelaide 1964), pp. 208-9.

tending settlers who, in response to Leichhardt's enthusiastic reports, marked out runs in the district during the early 1850s,⁵ despite the fact that officially the country had not been opened for settlement. The hopes of prospective graziers were further encouraged by the reports of Augustus and Francis Gregory when they apparently passed about fifteen kilometres north-east of the site of the future city on 27 October 1856. Their journal for that day recorded:

The whole of the country traversed this day was well grassed except about a mile of bauhinia scrub, which did not appear of any considerable extent. Ironbark, box, bloodwood, and Moreton Bay ash formed the principal trees with which the country was openly timbered. The prevailing rock granite, traversed by numerous veins of dark trap, and in the latterpart of the day porphyry and schist appeared; concretions of limestone were frequent near the trap veins. 6

The Gregorys, like Leichhardt, recommended the country for grazing. Within three years a syndicate was formed in Sydney to finance an expedition led by George Elphinstone Dalrymple to explore the Kennedy district and select land on behalf of the members. Dalrymple's party set out in August 1859, encouraged by a New South Wales government proclamation opening the Kennedy and Mitchell districts for settlement. Three weeks later, however, Queensland was separated from New South Wales and the newly formed northern government, in an attempt to check land speculation, cancelled the proclamation.⁷

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5. Anne Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness: the First Decade of Pastoral Settlement in the Kennedy District* (Townsville 1977), p. 8.
 6. The Gregorys, *Journals of Australian Explorations*, p. 187.
 7. Noel Anthony Loos, *Aboriginal-European Relations in North Queensland 1861-1897*, PhD. Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland 1976, pp. 126-128. Also Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, pp. 10-11.

Dalrymple made contact with the Gudjal during his 1859 expedition and reported his impressions the next year after an officially sponsored voyage of exploration in the *Spitfire* during which he attempted to trace the outlet of the Burdekin River to the sea:

The aborigines of the Kennedy are more numerous than in any other part of the Eastern coast of Australia. They are generally large athletic men, and have as yet proved hostile to the few white wanderers who have traversed the country. I have now been able to hold intercourse with them in almost every part of the district, both on the sea board and in the interior, from latitude 18°48'0" south to the heads of the Isaacs, and to the westward of the Cape River, and can confidently assert that they have no admixture of the Malay, and in no particular differ from the Alfordian type peculiar to the Australia savage, farther than may be occasioned by differences of climate, locality and food. 8

He went on to demonstrate, by a circular logic common to nineteenth century discussions of Aboriginal characteristics that "the coast blacks are cannibals I have no doubt":

The now semi-civilized and noble New Zealander was but the other day a cannibal; and I have heard no sufficient argument against the existence of this fiendish practice among a race, ranking, unquestionably, with the lowest of the human species...I do not think that the blacks of the interior are cannibals; they obtain abundance of animal food from the kangaroo species....9

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8. G.E. Dalrymple and J.W. Smith, *Report of the Queensland Government Schooner "Spitfire", in search of the mouth of the River Burdekin, on the North eastern coast of Australia: and of the Exploration of a Portion of that coast extending from Gloucester Island to Halifax Bay* (Brisbane 1860), pp. 36-37.
 9. *Ibid.*

Unfortunately for the indigenous population Dalrymple was appointed Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Kennedy District when the Queensland Government began accepting applications for pastoral runs from 1 January 1861. The explorer who had reported -

The aborigines of the Kennedy have certainly appeared to me to have more intellect than their southern neighbours, although this varies with the locality; and I have no doubt that they may ultimately be made more useful when the advantages of submission to the white man become apparent to them 10

soon demonstrated these advantages. Leading the first settlers north from Port Denison, Dalrymple was accompanied by a detachment of eleven Native Police troopers under a Lieutenant Williams.¹¹ On arrival in the Kennedy the troopers immediately set about their task of "dispersal" of the Gudjal.¹² By 1863 almost the whole of the district had been taken up by white pastoralists, the future gold-field being marked out by Frederick L. Hodgson and T.B.S. Carwithen¹³ as the Oregon and Texas runs.¹⁴

While concentrating on the discovery of grazing land the explorers, particularly Dalrymple, also predicted that gold would be found in the Burdekin district. Early

10. *Ibid.*

11. Loos, *Aboriginal-European Relations*, p. 129.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

13. Anne Allingham, informal communication.

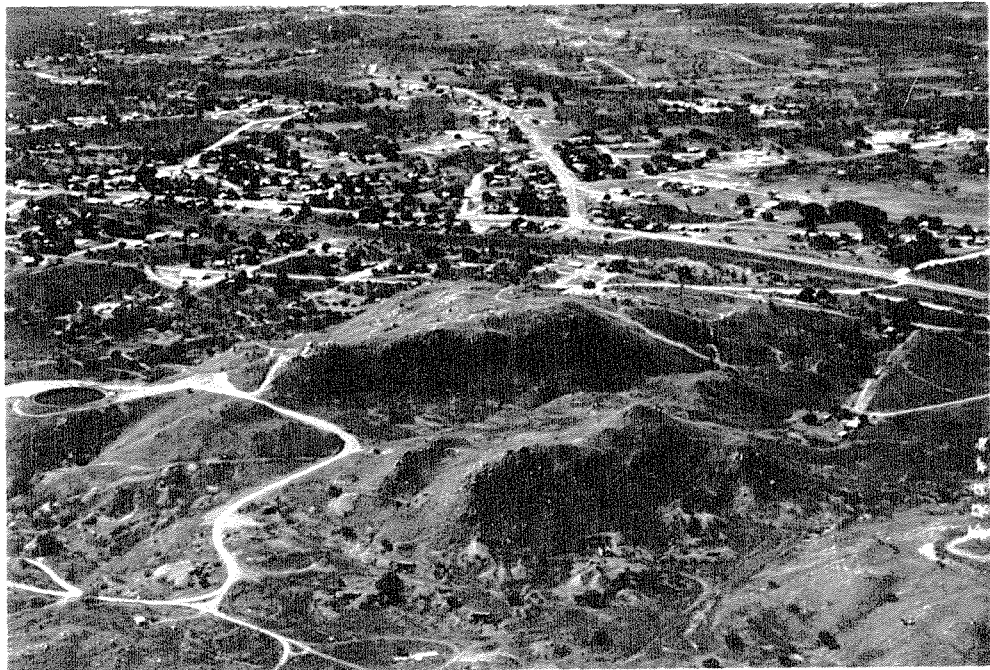
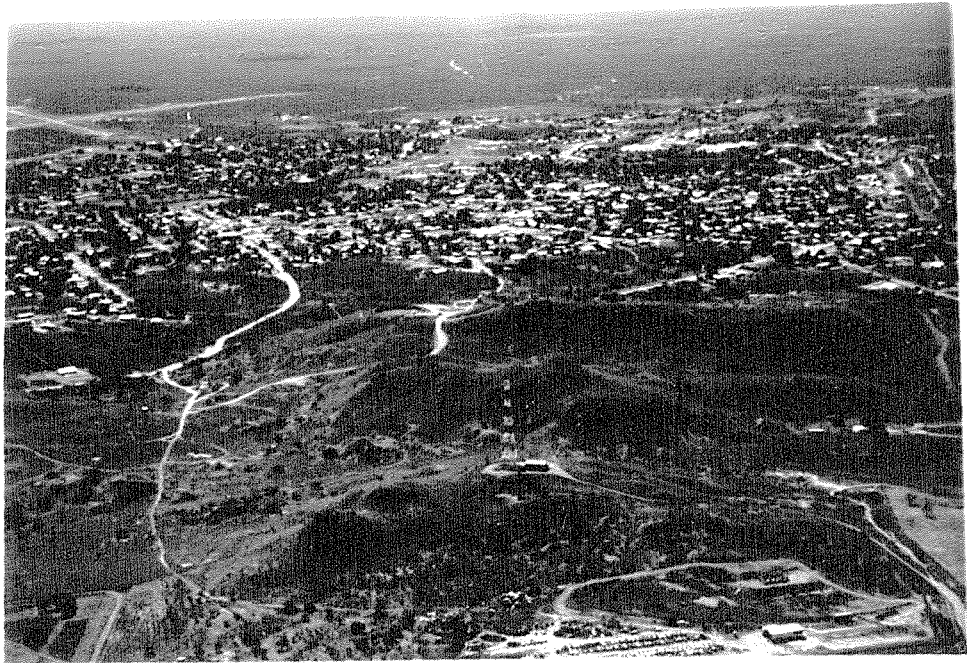
14. Works Department. General Correspondence, 1872. WOR/A, *Queensland State Archives (QSA)*. The field also impinged on Cardigan and Corriesdale stations.

Queensland governments had none of the reservations as to the social and political desirability of gold rushes which plagued southern legislators over a decade earlier. Indeed they were confident that such discoveries would lead to a rapid increase in population and therefore markets on which the colonial economy depended. After the settlement of Townsville in 1864 this new community pinned its hopes of future prosperity on gold and the following year offered a reward for a payable strike in the town's hinterland.¹⁵ This sparked the first North Queensland rush to a small prospect on the Star River, but the earliest important find was the Cape River lodes which were pegged in July 1867. The following year the major goldfield of Ravenswood was discovered; Gilbert River and Woolgar were proclaimed in 1869. In 1871 the Etheridge and the Broughton River were found, followed in December by what would prove to be the greatest of the North Queensland goldfields.

The discovery of this field is credited to George Clarke, Hugh Mosman, John Fraser and Jupiter, an Aboriginal horseboy "acquired" by Mosman at Kynuna station. The prospecting party, which had worked briefly in the Ravenswood district, investigated the Seventy Mile (later known as Mount Leyshon) before being attracted to what Clarke later described as a "cluster of conical and square-topped hills away to the North".¹⁶ They pitched camp at the

15. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, p. 187.

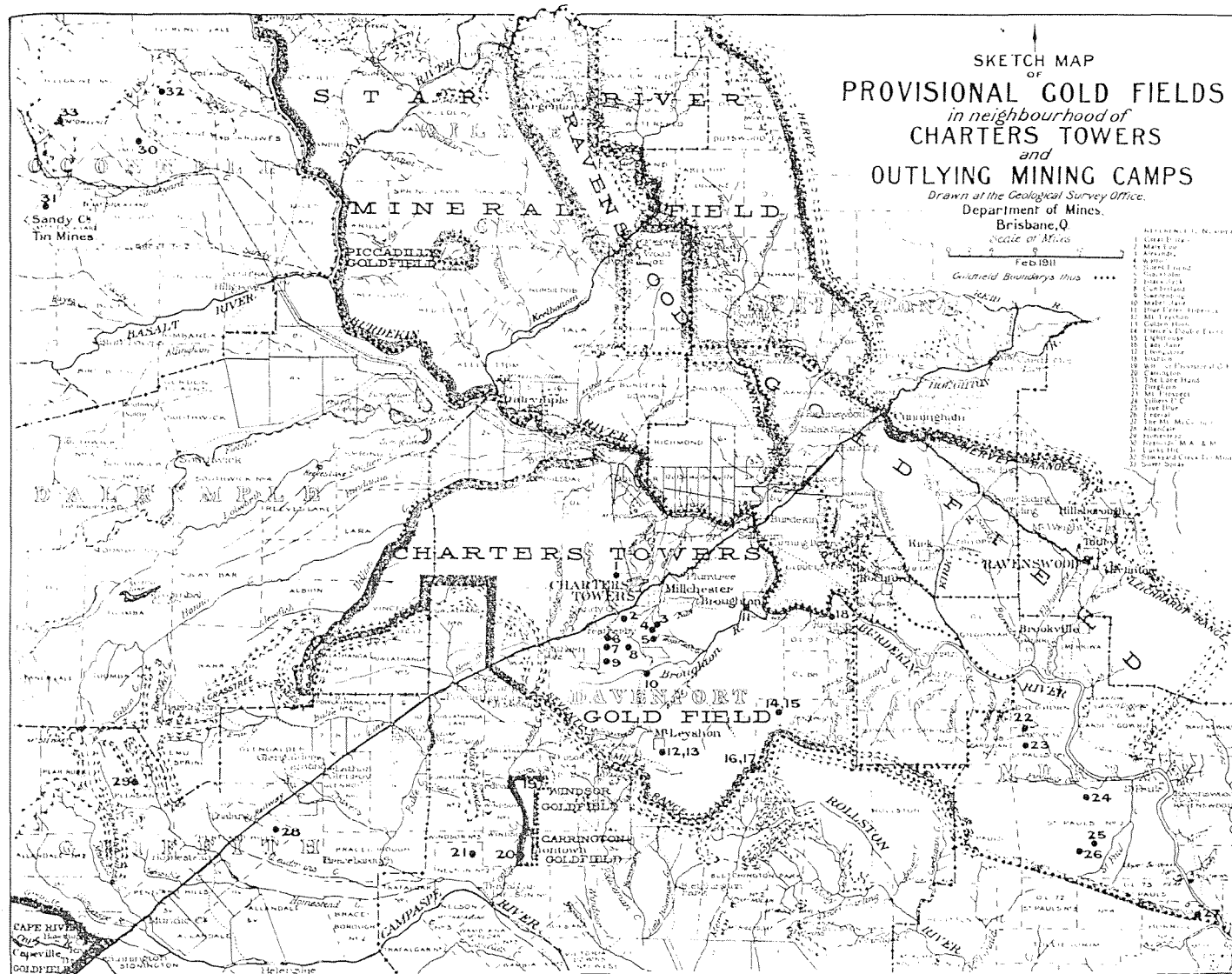
16. David Green, *Mining History of Charters Towers: 1872 to 1897* (Charters Towers 1897), unpaginated. "Discovery" is used here in the sense discussed by Geoffrey Blainey, "A Theory of Mineral Discovery: Australia in the Nineteenth Century", in *Economic History Review* XXIII (June 1970). In this sense the claim of Mosman's party to the discovery of the field is not affected by later claims that Jessop and Dumeresq directed Mosman to the field where they had prospected some eight months previously before moving on to the Broughton. *North Queensland Register*, 6 January 1892.



The top of Charters tower from the air.

outcrop of the North Australia reef late in December 1871, and on 2 January Mosman left the others to ride into Ravenswood to register the claim with the Cape River and Broughton Gold Commissioner, William Charters. Miners Rights for the prospecting claim were issued on 26 January 1872,¹⁷ and the North Australian PC was granted to Mosman, Clarke and Fraser in three equal shares on 25 March.¹⁸ Proclaimed on 31 August, the new field, according to a later mining warden, was called Charters for the Commissioner and Towers for the hills which had attracted the prospectors to the site.¹⁹ The first written suggestion that "Towers" is a corruption of the Old English "Tors" appeared in this report. There is, however, no evidence to suggest any name change. The field's original area was 1,700 square miles. Later it was reduced to six hundred,²⁰ the boundaries being the Burdekin River on the north and east, the Seventy Mile Range to the south and the township of Southern Cross on the west. They included Mount Leyshon, Rishton and the Broughton.²¹

-
- 17. Miners Rights 48661, 48662 and 48663, issued at Ravenswood. Hugh Mosman was a son of the original grantee of land bounded by Mosman's Bay in Sydney.
 - 18. Register of Claims, A/20697, QSA.
 - 19. P.F. Sellheim, "History of the Charters Towers Gold-Field: Its Rise and Progress", in *Annual Report, Department of Mines (Qld)*, (AR), 1887, p. 23.
 - 20. *Ibid.*
 - 21. W. Lees, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", in *The Goldfields of Queensland* (Brisbane 1899), p. 3.



CHAPTER 2. OPENING UP CHARTERS TOWERS

At the time of the discovery of Charters Towers North Queensland gold mining was depressed. At Cape River the alluvium was virtually exhausted: in 1872 Superintending Gold Commissioner John Jardine estimated the total population of the field at about eighty, including some fifty Chinese fossickers.¹ At Ravenswood, the most important and populous northern field, mining had reached the water level below which the sulphide or "mundic" ores were proving difficult to process. The outlook of Gilberton and the Etheridge was equally bleak. The miners were, therefore, more than usually ready to rush to a new field. By 7 February Charters had issued Miners Rights for twenty-five prospecting areas;² by mid-February the news had been telegraphed to Brisbane and Sydney. The *Sydney Morning Herald* announced:

a new reefing country, many miles in extent has been discovered about a hundred miles from Townsville. It is reported to be very rich; a rush has taken place from Ravenswood. Lumps of quartz richly impregnated with gold have been lodged in the bank at Ravenswood. More than one hundred claims are taken up at a place named Charters Towers....³

A few weeks later Gold Commissioner T.R. Hackett reported that the "surplus population" of Ravenswood had left for the latest discovery.⁴

The new field yielded little alluvial gold and most of the claims were pegged on the basis of a "careful

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1. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, *Votes and Proceedings (V&P)*, 1873, p. 1075.
 2. W.S.E.M. Charters to the Secretary for Public Works, *V&P*, 1872, p. 1290.
 3. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 February 1872.
 4. *Queenslander*, 30 March 1872.



On the North Australia line.

examination of surface blows".⁵ Fortuitously it was characterised by many outcrops of easily accessible and simply treated quartz. The early claims were centred on the North Australia, Rainbow, Wyndham, Moonstone and St. Patrick reefs,⁶ but the Washington, Alexandra, Caledonia, Just-in-Time and Queen reefs were also worked during 1872. As the lodes were opened up crushing machinery arrived; a mill was in place by the beginning of May and its first crush of twenty-nine tons of stone for 176 ounces of gold⁷ gave the diggers further cause for optimism. This early progress was, however, soured by chicanery.

In late August a rush was triggered in the Millchester area by a small alluvial find which was much exaggerated in a telegram sent from Townsville announcing the discovery of "a second Bendigo" at Charters Towers.⁸ Another telegram sent the following week claimed that the alluvial lead was a mile long with three feet of wash dirt yielding six ounces to the load.⁹ Later in the year it was rumoured that this news originated with a Charters Towers businessman who hoped to profit from a sudden influx of population. A Ravenswood correspondent claimed that the rush had been accompanied by a land boom, and wrote: "it has been very much a rush of business people, followed by one of the diggers instead of, as it should be, preceded by them."¹⁰

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5. Green, *Mining History of Charters Towers*, u.p.
 6. J.H. Reid, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", Geological Survey of Queensland (GSQ) publication 256 (1917) p. 25.
 7. *Queenslander*, 6 May 1872.
 8. *Ibid.*, 24 August 1872.
 9. *Ibid.*
 10. Cited in *Queenslander*, 28 September 1872.

Further the *Northern Miner* reported that "a very great quantity" of flour had been brought into the town by speculators before the rush.¹¹ Whatever their origin, the telegrams were distributed by Associated Press,¹² and by the end of September some two thousand diggers had disembarked from steamers at Townsville to be faced, often to their surprise, by an eighty-two mile journey over a track so dry and sandy that each two ton load needed fourteen horses to pull it to the diggings.¹³ Most were seeking alluvial gold.¹⁴

The rush, as might be expected, placed great demands on Gold Commissioner Charters,¹⁵ whose idiosyncratic interpretations of the *Gold Fields Act* were already causing confusion on the field. Despite a ruling by the Secretary for Public Works A.O. Herbert, which followed a dispute with Commissioner Hackett,¹⁶ Charters' usage of the Regulation governing labour requirements on prospecting claims cost Clarke and Fraser their North Australia claim during April. It was jumped while Fraser, who was fulfilling the labour conditions, sought treatment for an eye injury.¹⁷ As the population grew the administrative problems became unmanageable; the *Northern Miner* complained

11. *Ibid.*, 5 October 1872.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ballarat Courier*, 16 October 1872; cited in *Queenslander*, 26 October 1872.

14. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, *V&P*, 1873, p. 1072.

15. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, 9 October 1872. COL/A 2340, QSA.

16. *V&P*, 1873, p. 1291.

17. *Queenslander*, 10 August 1872. Fraser lost the sight of the eye; he later died of dysentery on the Palmer River during 1874. Clarke prospected the Russell River Goldfield before going on to Papua where he was killed on the Mambare River late in 1895. Only Mosman prospered in Charters Towers.

that claims were being jumped on the most trivial of excuses and that their owners were "at the mercy of the strong."¹⁸ During August and September two men were killed in fights over disputed ground,¹⁹ and many claims were unprotected as Charters tried to cope with a backlog of applications for registration.²⁰ Competition was intensified by the extremely limited amount of alluvial ground available for pegging. Indeed Jardine reported that the "so-called alluvial which has been worked, is rather a deposit of quartz drift in a cleft or hollow of the granite rock"²¹ and later wrote that on "Charters Towers I saw no alluvial (properly so called) diggings."²²

Perhaps the most pressing problem of the rush however, was the shortage of water on the field. The miners had arrived late in a particularly harsh dry season, and those who had managed to peg "alluvial" claims were unable to wash their dirt. Stone and wash-dirt were stock-piled, and at one stage it seemed that the mills would be forced to close. Water sold for 3d a bucket,²³ fodder became scarce and cartage expensive, and the price of crushing soared to 30/- a ton.²⁴ Many undercapitalised miners were

18. Cited in *Queenslander*, 14 September 1872.

19. *Queenslander*, 9 November 1872.

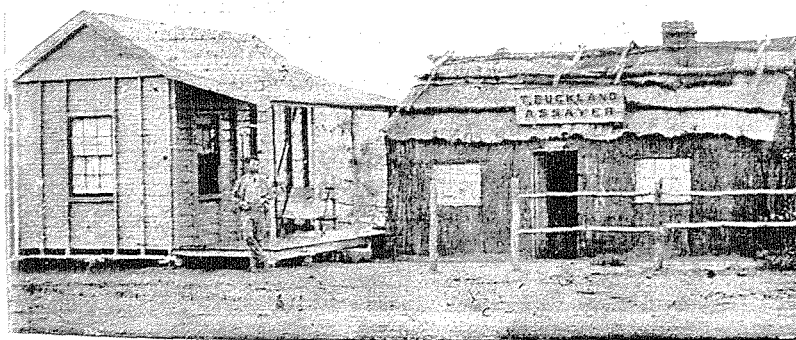
20. *Northern Miner*, cited in *Queenslander*, 5 October 1872.

21. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, 9 October 1872. COL/A 2340, QSA.

22. *V&P*, 1873, p. 1072.

23. *Cleveland Bay Express*, 5 October 1872, cited in *Queenslander*, 19 October 1872.

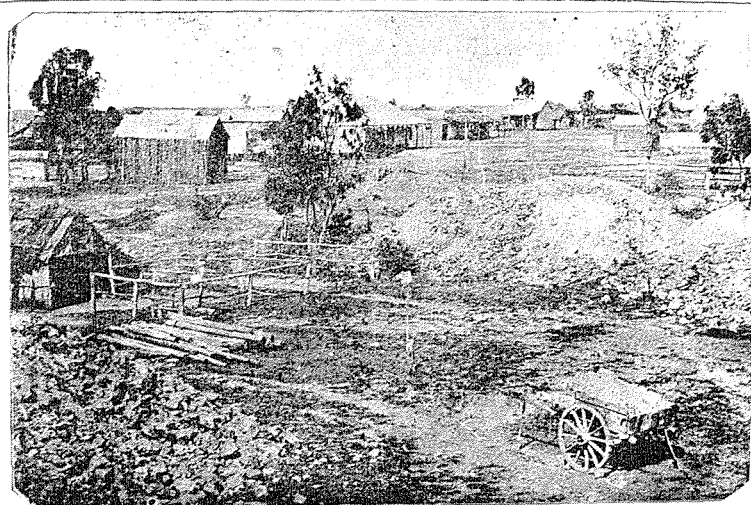
24. *Queenslander*, 12 October 1872.



MR. BUCKLAND'S ASSAY OFFICE, MILLCHESTER, 1874.

Notice
 October 25th
 1874
 (Denis Whelan and Party
 has this day taken up
 the south
 side of Ledger Claim
 as abundant as
 stand abundant
 light ground
 Denis Whelan 348-5/2
 Edward Rogers 62810
 Michael Smyth 63548
 John McManis 62171
 8W 70/10/14

— QUEENTON IN 1876. —



destitute, unable even to leave the field despite reduced fares offered by the Australian Steam Navigation Company. Although ASN reduced the Townsville-Sydney fare to two pounds it was reported that another pound was needed to travel from Sydney to Melbourne, and that on one steamer seventy-three passengers had been accommodated in a space twenty-six by twenty feet. Assuming the miners were prepared to walk from Charters Towers to Townsville it still cost ten shillings to send a swag by the carrier.²⁵ Notwithstanding later, and probably predictable, claims that violence in the town originated with a "gang of roughs" rather than with the "real" mining population,²⁶ by mid-September Charters Towers was a community under stress.

One early manifestation of unrest was a "roll-up" of some two hundred men who had to be dissuaded from levelling the office of the *Northern Miner* which, they alleged, had been responsible for the reports that had attracted them to the field.²⁷ A week later another "roll-up" was called, this time in an attempt to exclude the Chinese from Charters Towers. About one hundred miners attended, but no committee was formed,²⁸ indeed the cause was largely irrelevant. Although by September 1872 Chinese gardeners were supplying the field with some fresh fruit and vegetables and at least four hotels were owned by Chinese by the end of the year, very few Chinese attempted to mine on Charters

25. *Ballarat Courier*, 16 October 1872, cited in *Queenslander*, 19 October 1872. ASN normally charged £2/10/- from Townsville to Brisbane. *Towers Herald and Mining Register*, 1 January 1879.

26. *V&P*, 1873, p. 1074.

27. *Queenslander*, 5 October 1872.

28. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1872.

Towers. As tension mounted the Colonial Government appointed a "Superintending Commissioner", John Jardine, to inquire into the administration of the district. His commission noted that it might be necessary for him to take temporary charge of the field, "the Government having full confidence that you will discharge a disagreeable duty with zeal and prudence."²⁹ He arrived at the beginning of October and immediately attempted to ease the potentially explosive situation. Interpretations of the Gold Fields Regulations were brought into line with those on other fields,³⁰ and rations were issued to the "totally destitute".³¹ Employment on public works in Rockhampton and Brisbane and passages to these towns were arranged for some of the disappointed diggers.³² After further inspection of the field he recommended that Charters' area of responsibility be limited to the Cape and Broughton district, and that Charters Towers be administered as a separate field by the hitherto unattached Commissioner MacDonald.³³ He was unable, however, to

29. *V&P*, 1873, p. 1072.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 1073.

31. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, cited in *Queenslander*, 12 October 1872. Government relief was not extensive. The Department of Public Works Correspondence File contains the item: "Re. expenses of bringing men from Townsville (Return diggers from Charters Towers). Charged to Immigration Vote. Bright Bros. £172/-/-; ASN Co £4. A26/81-4302, QSA.

32. Rockhampton correspondent of *Queenslander*, 16 November 1872.

33. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, 12 October 1872. *V&P*, 1873, p. 1073.

prevent open violence on the evening of 29 October.³⁴

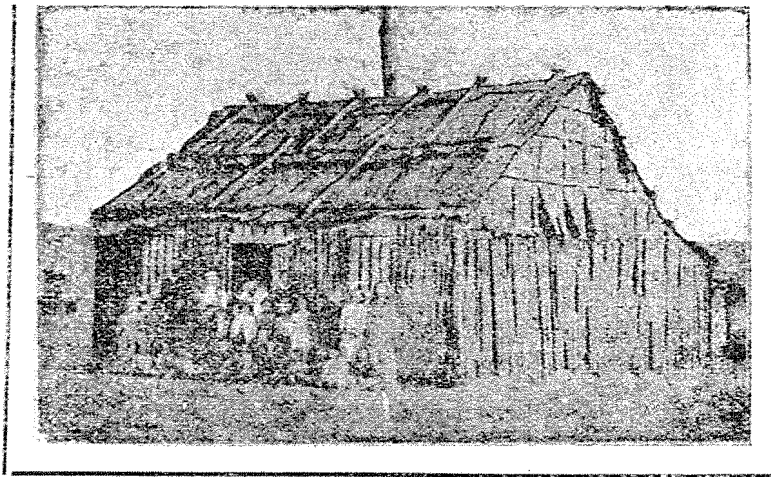
On this date a butcher's shop owned by Adolphus Trevethan was demolished by a "roll-up" of six or seven hundred citizens³⁵ who were outraged by a rise in the price of beef. During the riot the authorities watched helplessly, but the following morning George Steel, James Foreman and Daniel Scullen were arrested for "unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assembling to the disturbance of the peace, and destroying a shop."³⁶ When they appeared in court on 1 November a brawl broke out among the two thousand strong crowd outside the improvised courtroom at Borghero's hotel, during which Trevethan shot two miners, seriously injuring one of them. Only the presence of all available police, including the gold escort, prevented a lynching. The police allowed bail and the aggrieved butcher was smuggled out of the town.³⁷ Further "roll-ups" were staged during the

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34. This date was taken from the reports of Jardine (*V&P*, 1873, p. 1073) and Trevethan (Copy of Trevethan to the Colonial Secretary, 2 March 1873. MWO 11A/A1, QSA). The *Queenslander* reported the riot as occurring on 30 October, which is probably a difference in emphasis since the events covered several days. W.O. Hill's frequently quoted date, 2 November, is likely to have been a memory lapse since he wrote some thirty-five years after the event. W.O. Hill, *Forty-Five Years Experience in North Queensland, 1861-1905* (Brisbane 1907), p. 57.
35. The reports give the number as anything between 500 and 2,000. The numbers given for both riots are taken from Jardine's report.
36. J. Jardine to the Minister for Public Works, 5 November 1872. COL/A 4508, QSA.
37. For details of the meat riots see Colonial Secretary's Office Correspondence File COL/A 2350, QSA, (Reports of Sub-Inspector Clohesy, Detective Smyth and Commissioner Jardine); Mining Warden's Office Correspondence

following week, particularly on 4 November when committal proceedings were successfully concluded.³⁸ The incident added weight to Jardine's request for the removal of Charters, who had retired to his house on the Broughton on 29 October,³⁹ leaving Jardine and MacDonald to cope with the disorder.

Although Charters was ordered to Brisbane⁴⁰ giving MacDonald temporary charge of the field, the Cape and Broughton diggings were not separated from Charters Towers to which Charters returned as Commissioner in April 1873, MacDonald remained unattached. It is likely that the Superintending Commissioner underestimated the complexity of the political and commercial forces already at work in the infant community. Acting under the Gold Fields Regulations Charters had announced, in May 1872, that Charters Towers (or Upper Camp) was to be the centre of government for the new field. Some resumptions of land for reserves were made, and a business area laid out on a ridge immediately to the east of Mosman Creek.⁴¹ As a

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37. cont. File, MWO 11A/A1, QSA, (Trevethan's report accompanying a claim for compensation); *Queenslander*, 9 November 1872, (Report obtained from the Colonial Secretary and the Brisbane police); 23 November 1872, (Report reprinted from the *Northern Miner*, 2 November 1872); and 30 November 1872, (Report by Trevethan as given to the *Toowoomba Chronicle*). Although committed to the Circuit Court, Rockhampton, Trevethan was not tried on charges of assault as these were withdrawn by the Attorney-General. (John Keane to the Charters Towers Police Magistrate, 25 February 1873. MWO/A1, QSA.).
38. Sub-Inspector Clohesy to the Commissioner of Police, 5 November 1872. COL/A 2350, QSA.
39. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, *V&P*, 1873, p. 1073.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 1074.
41. *Queenslander*, 11 February 1873.



The First School (Mr. and Mrs. Gibson's, Millchester) A.D. 1873.



Gill Street 1872



GRAHAM'S FAMILY HOTEL, MILLCHESTER, 1874.

result, some £20,000 were invested in land and business premises in Mosman Street. Clearly Jardine offended some powerful vested interests when he recommended that the Court House and public offices be constructed two and a half miles away at Millchester which, due to the superiority of its water supply, had attracted three of the mills, both banks and a larger population than Charters Towers.⁴² The issue became intertwined with that of Charters' replacement, as Charters Towers investors, led by H.W. Palmer, brother of the Queensland Premier Arthur Hunter Palmer, sought to demonstrate the superiority of Charters' judgement over that of Jardine. A petition was drawn up and street meetings were organised, the first victim of which was the committee of the Miners' Protection Association, which had spearheaded the attack on Charters' interpretations of the Gold Fields Regulations over the size of protection areas. After a stormy public meeting in support of Charters, the committee resigned, much to the satisfaction of the editor of the *Cleveland Bay Express* who believed that the formation of "such bodies" must lead to disorder.⁴³

The campaign was complicated, however, by the fact that leading Millchester businessman, E.H.T. Plant, had quarrelled violently with Charters over water rights earlier in the year, and his men, armed with picks and axes, had driven the Gold Commissioner and his companion,

42. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, 9 October 1872. COL/A 2340, QSA.

43. Cited in *Queenslander*, 14 December 1872.

Adolphus Trevethan, from Plant's machine area.⁴⁴ Charters fared better than Commissioner Hackett of Ravenswood who was horsewhipped by the secretary of the Miners' Protection Association after a similar argument with E.H.T. Plant at Ravenswood in 1871. Plant contrived a rival petition which enlisted support for Jardine and Millchester. The outcome of the dispute probably satisfied no-one: Charters was reinstated but not so the business area of Charters Towers, and late in November Alex Fraser was awarded a contract for the construction of a Gold Commissioner's and a Clerk of Petty Sessions' office at Millchester.⁴⁵ In the event the location of the public offices had less than the anticipated effect on development. Charters Towers became the dominant centre and when larger premises became necessary they were located there.

In the meantime the advent of the wet season had brought comparative peace to the field. The first rain fell in mid-November, and with it came fresh hopes of alluvial finds. By the end of the month reefing claims were lying abandoned as the diggers fanned out to areas where alluvial gold was rumoured.⁴⁶ However, the year's

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44. E.H.T. Plant to the Secretary for Public Works, 11 July 1872. MWO/A1 2803; W.S.E.M. Charters to the Secretary for Public Works, 7 October 1872. MWO/A1 4102, QSA. E.H.T. Plant was born in Nottingham and arrived in Australia in 1867 at the age of 17. Intending to enter the pastoral industry he worked briefly on two Queensland stations before arriving in Ravenswood in 1869. He bought a ten-head battery in Melbourne and, in partnership with Thomas Jackson, erected a mill. He moved to Charters Towers soon after its discovery but continued to speculate outside the field.
45. Specifications and Contract Documents. MWO 11A/A1, QSA.
46. *Queenslander*, 16 November, 1872.

gold return of about 31,000 ounces⁴⁷ derived mainly from the crushing of the rich surface stone:⁴⁸ the availability of water allowed the mills to crush to capacity, and as the yards emptied costs dropped to a more reasonable 20/- a ton. At the end of the first year some 4,500 people were scattered over about three square miles of diggings⁴⁹ on which no real trial had been made of the ground below the surface, and whose permanency had yet to be demonstrated. Already, however, an unusually large amount of money had been invested in machinery, land and business premises, and influential businessmen in both Charters Towers and Townsville had a strong interest in the long term growth of the field.

47. Reid, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 61.

48. Lees, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 8.

49. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, *V&P*, 1873, p. 1073.

CHAPTER 3. A POOR MAN'S FIELD

Despite the activity in the business sector Charters Towers before 1875 can only be described as a "poor man's field". The outcrops and the "brownstone" above the water level were easily worked with a primitive technology imported from the southern goldfields. Ore was raised from shallow shafts, roofed with bark for shade, by means of windlasses, whips or whims. A windlass could be constructed from three pieces of bush timber set astride the shaft. It was operated by iron handles driven into both sides of the crosspiece from which the bucket was suspended by a rope. The whip was only a little more complicated. It consisted of a log about sixteen feet long, the thicker end of which was embedded in the ground at an angle of approximately forty-five degrees, so that the other end stood eight feet above the centre of the shaft. The hauling bucket was attached to a rope, running over a large diameter wheel set into a groove at the top of the whip. From there it went under another wheel at ground level to the man or horse providing the motive power. The bucket was lowered or raised by walking back and forth with the rope.¹ The whim was a larger timber structure built away from the shaft. It supported a vertically positioned timber drum through the centre of which ran a vertical wooden axle. A horizontal beam was attached to the lower end of the axle. The bucket rope ran over a wheel set above the shaft and then around the drum. It was raised and lowered by a horse harnessed to the cross-beam and walking round in circles to make the drum rotate.²

Much of the field was owned by working miners, either as "hatters" or in syndicates which often included one or

1. See figure 1.

2. See figure 2.

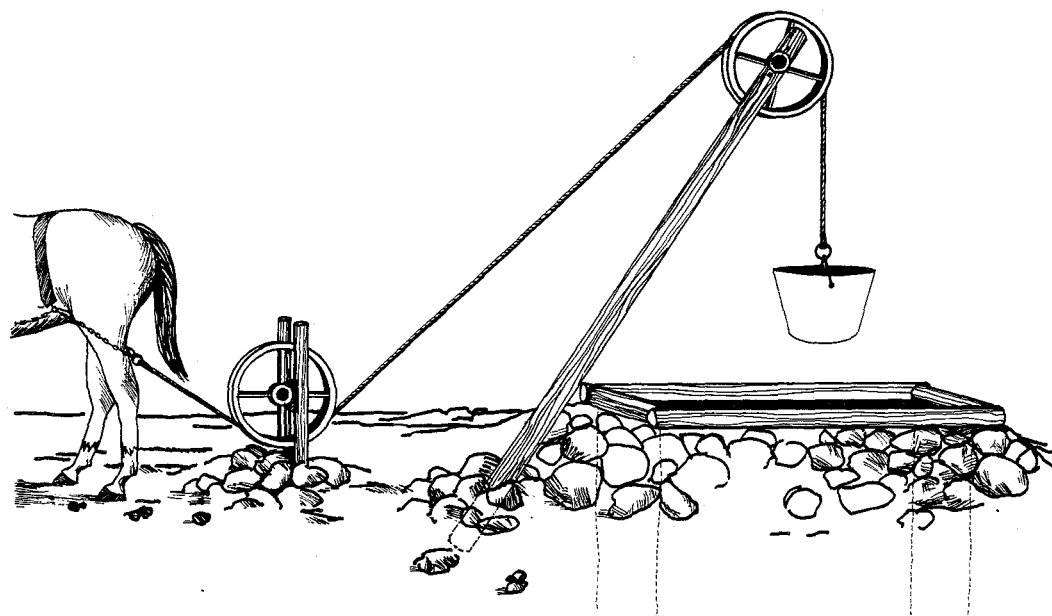
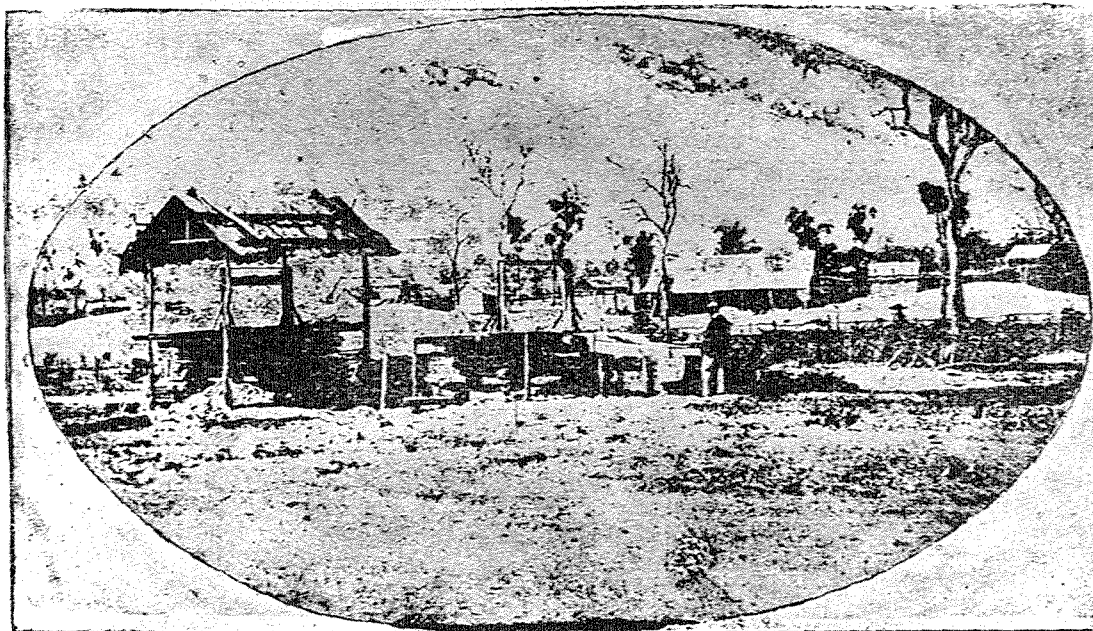


Figure 1: Whip

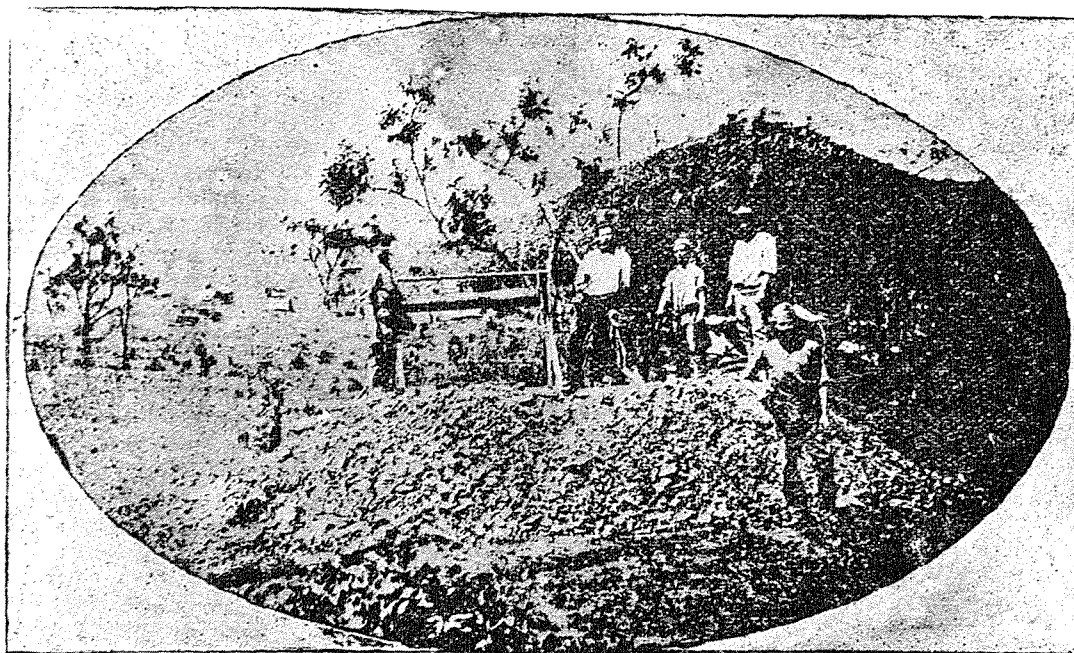


Figure 2: Whim

THE DEFIANCE MILL IN 1873.



The No. 4 North Australian in 1873.





Charters Towers 1873-4

more local businessmen contributing cash or goods rather than labour. Of the mines employing wage miners, few worked more than a single shift.³ Nevertheless, even by the second half of 1873 there were signs that this method of exploitation could not continue. Mining costs were increasing in proportion to the depth of the shafts, and at a vertical depth of between seventy and a hundred feet, where air and water from the surface had not penetrated, more complex ores were encountered: ores containing undecomposed sulphides such as iron pyrites, galena and zinc blende.⁴ For the large number of ex-Ravenswood miners on the field this development was alarming. Due probably to the presence of arsenic, Ravenswood "mundic" had proved refractory; at best the Charters Towers stone would require a more complex and therefore more expensive retrieval process; at worst it could refuse to yield its gold at all. Threatened by rising costs and the unpredictable nature of the "mundic", many small miners abandoned their claims and joined the rush to the new alluvial field of the Palmer River after its discovery in September 1873. Only months later the colonial government passed legislation which, combined with increased depth and cost of mining and the departure of the diggers, began the gradual transformation of Charters Towers into a company field.

Prior to 1874 Queensland goldfields had been administered under the 1856 *Gold Fields Management Act*⁵ of New South

3. In May 1873 only six mines were working two shifts a day, none worked three shifts. *The Queenslander*, 17 May 1873.

4. Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p.36.

5. 20 VIC No. 29.

Wales, modified after the discovery of gold at Gympie during 1867 by various regulations. The new legislation⁶ allowed for the combination of leases and claims; syndicates could form partnerships and finance shafts to work their combined ground at depth, a development essential for the establishment of sufficient permanence to attract capital investment to the field.⁷ The term "deep sinking" at this time referred to shafts of about two hundred feet, a depth reached in a number of mines on the Rainbow and St. Patrick lines during the year following the introduction of the new Act. Their reports were good; indeed the *Queenslander* published claims that the stone showed "marked improvement" at depth.⁸ Company formation was for a time encouraged by the introduction in 1875 of Queensland's first "no liability" legislation.⁹ Previously the 1863 *Companies Act* had stipulated that all companies be registered in Brisbane, and the employment of "town agents" had added considerably to the costs of North Queensland firms. The new Act provided for local registration through the District Court. Its most important effect however, was to free shareholders from the possibility of court action to enforce the payment of calls, substituting an automatic forfeiture of shares fourteen days after the latest possible day for payment.¹⁰

6. *The Queensland Gold Fields Act* of 1874; 38 VIC No. 11.

7. M. Drew, "Queensland Mining Statutes 1859-1930", in K.H. Kennedy (ed.) *Readings in North Queensland Mining History* (Townsville 1982), Vol. 2, Chapter 3. See also J. Stoodley, "An Early Aspect of Queensland Mining Law", in *University of Queensland Law Journal* 5 (1966).

8. *Queenslander*, 29 May 1875. The terms "deep sinking" and "at depth" were used at different stages in the life of the field to mean depths of between 200 feet and 3,000 feet. Always they signify the deepest shafts being sunk during that period.

9. *Gold Mining Companies Act* 1875. 39 VIC No. 9.

10. Drew, "Queensland Mining Statutes", p. 151.

About the middle of 1875 the owners of the Rainbow Claim, in which the Queensland National Bank held a strong interest, decided to float a company to finance the sinking of a new 200' vertical shaft on their property. The company was registered on 6 September 1875¹¹ with a nominal capital of four thousand pounds in one pound shares, half of which were issued fully paid to the promoters, the others being sold as contributing shares to provide capital for the new work. During 1876 another five no liability companies, Columbia Lease GMNL, Sir Henry Havelock GMNL, St. Patrick and Queen Grand Junction GMNL, Same-As-Usual Extended GMNL and Alexandra Freeholds GMNL, were floated in Charters Towers.¹² Most of their shares were taken up by local business and professional men, for example shareholders in Sir Henry Havelock comprised six publicans, a doctor, seven miners, two commercial travellers, two graziers, two drapers, a solicitor, an auditor and a bartender.¹³ Nevertheless, the majority of mines continued to be worked by syndicates, often through a salaried manager.

Some of the mines were rich enough to finance considerable development; indeed the field was, at this time, dominated by two incredibly wealthy mines, the St. Patrick Block and the Bryan O'Lynn, both owned by syndicates in which Frank Stubley had very large holdings. In addition to these Stubley also had interests in the Mexican, the No. 1 East Sunburst and the Identity. As well he was

11. Register of Mining Companies, Queensland. COM 1, QSA.

12. Register of Mining Companies, Charters Towers. MWO 11A/T1, QSA.

13. Memoranda and Articles of Association for Companies Registered. MWO 11A/S1, QSA.

Average Gold Contents Per Ton of Ore Shoots at Different Levels

Depth	Mine	Lode	Average Content of Gold Won per Ton of Ore
			cr. oz.
100-800 feet	Victoria	Brilliant	2.4
200-1,000 feet	Day Dawn Block and Wyndham	Day Dawn	1.6
550-750 feet	Victory	Brilliant	3.4
700-1,000 feet	Queen Cross	"New" Queen Cross	2.3
760-1,000 feet	Brilliant PC	Brilliant	1.7
1,000-1,900 feet	Brilliant & St. George	Brilliant	1.25
1,050-1,800	Mills United	Day Dawn	1.03
1,500-1,900	Brilliant Central	Brilliant	0.92
2,000-2,300	Mills United	Day Dawn	0.87
1,900-2,900	Brilliant Extended	Brilliant	0.55

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 169.

partner to the Secretary for Mines and Public Works, H.E. King and King's brother-in-law Thomas Buckland, in the No. 4 Queen.¹⁴ The St. Patrick Block produced eighteen and a half percent of the wealth of Charters Towers during 1876 and fifteen percent and thirteen percent during 1877 and 1878. The following year it was replaced as top producer by the Bryan O'Lynn which yielded thirteen percent of the gold mined on the field during 1879. The rich surface stone of these mines financed their development at depth, despite Stubley's sometimes disastrous experiments in mining, the most notable of which was the introduction of an English "borer" which he imported during 1876. Operated by a local engine driver, it promptly buckled on the hard Charters Towers granite and, as the *Queenslander* later noted, drilled a total of two feet at an average cost of £2,500 per foot.¹⁵ By contrast, the General Wyndham mine was a model of local ownership. The principal shareholder in the syndicate, Thomas Mills,¹⁶ imported the machinery of the London Battery from Ravenswood during 1877 and connected the mine to both battery and mullock heap by tramway the following year. Three hundred feet of pipes through which water was pumped from the mine to a dam and thence to the mill provided ample water for crushing, at the same time solving the General Wyndham's troublesome bailing problem.¹⁷

14. Stubley later invested heavily in wheat and ships, lost all his money, died and was buried by the roadside while on his way to Croydon to mend his fortunes.

15. *Queenslander*, 30 November 1878.

16. See Chapter 5.

17. *Northern Miner*, 28 July 1877; also *Queenslander*, 16 November 1878.

Many mines, however, were neither fabulously wealthy nor prudently managed, and the period 1875 to 1880 was marked by a polarisation of the capital of the field. For several reasons the possession of adequate working capital was of particular importance on Charters Towers. Firstly, the reefs were irregular both in direction and angle of dip, and so it was not uncommon to find several shoots of gold lying parallel to each other at different depths in the same mine. Indeed, the history of the field is one of mines "worked out" and abandoned then taken up at a later date to yield even greater wealth than before. The continued success of a mine was, therefore, dependent on the ability of its owners to survive long and expensive periods of "dead work". Secondly, the cost of sinking was high - during this period from £10 to £12 per foot by contract - and as the mines sank deeper¹⁸ dangerous and expensive water problems were often encountered, making the replacement of whips and whims by steam engines and poppet heads a matter of urgency. By 1880 more than eighty shafts had reached a vertical depth of over a hundred feet, the deepest being nearly six hundred.¹⁹

Those syndicates forced to abandon their mines for want of adequate capital found few new surface deposits to exploit. Although many new mines were yet to be opened these normally occupied "block" claims on which it was necessary to sink at least one shaft to cut the reef at depth before any

18. The calculation of shaft depths is complicated by the use of underlie shafts at varying angles and often in conjunction with vertical shafts.

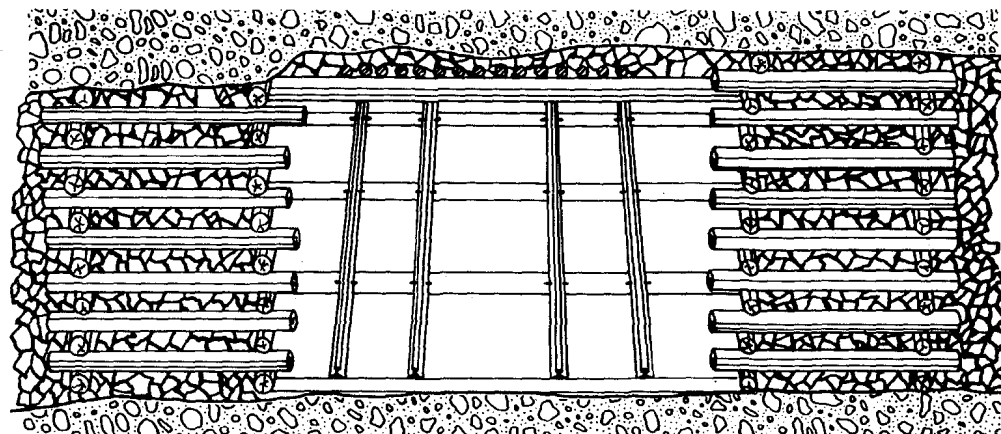
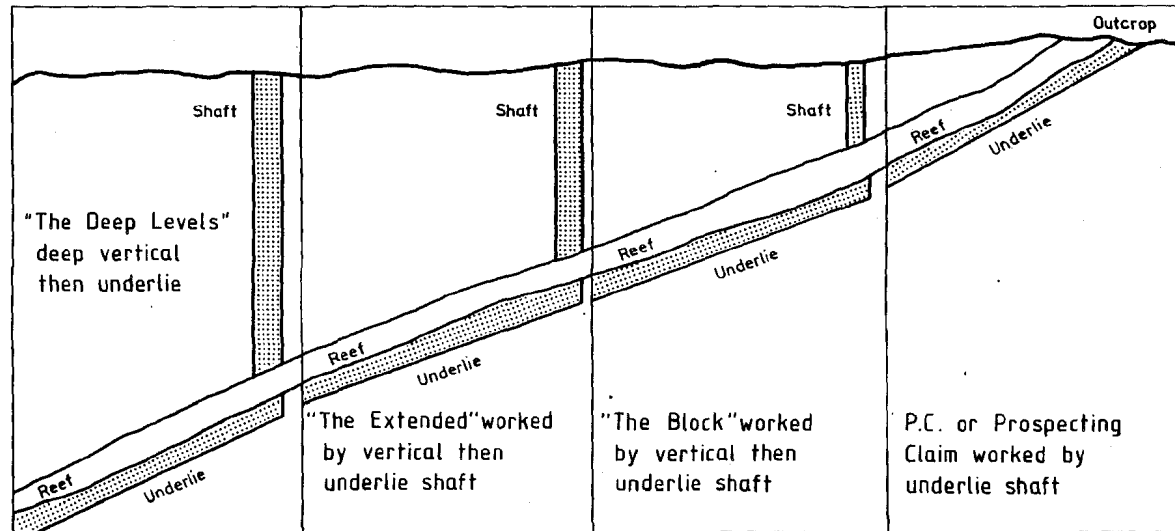
19. AR, 1880, p. 12. Although there were 69 (aggregate 736 horsepower) engines on the field by 1882, whims and whips were used in some mines at depths of 400-500 feet, especially where water was not a problem.

return might be expected.²⁰ Due to the small angle of dip on the reefs nearly all early workings consisted of underlie shafts, though there were occasional shallow vertical diggings. To open a "block" claim, however, a vertical shaft had to be sunk on the edge of the claim nearest the reef and an underlie shaft was run in from the bottom of the vertical to which it was occasionally connected by a crosscut.²¹ In Charters Towers nearly all vertical shafts were sunk by contract in a single operation from "grass" to lode. Because of this it was not customary to provide penthouses above the sinkers as was normal in the Victorian mines where shafts were sunk by stages, while the stoping was being carried out from the previous stage. Therefore sinking was a dangerous occupation, more so because it was also contract work: shafts at this time had only one compartment and the broken rock was hoisted from the sinkers at the bottom in one lift. Occasionally a rope would break at the shoe due to the bucket spinning above the brace; the sinkers' only recourse was to crouch against the side of the shaft and hope to avoid being struck by falling debris. Once stoping began the Cornish arrangement of two trap doors was used to protect the shaft. The doors opened upwards to allow the bucket to rise and were then closed by a hand lever from the brace. The single shaft also created ventilation problems. The early miners had used canvas piping for ventilation; the top part of the piping was opened up so that each side formed a sail. When the device was fixed so that the sails opened towards the wind, air was forced down the shaft.

20. *Towers Herald and Mining Record*, 2 June 1877.

21. See figure 3.

Figures 3 and 3a.



Pigsty timbering

This became less practical as the mines went deeper and, until the drives were connected to each other by crosscuts, ventilation remained inadequate.

Ore was extracted by overhead cut-and-fill stoping, with occasional small underhand stopes. "Deads" were packed into the worked-out areas where they compacted under the weight of the ground. The ore was raised in wrought iron buckets or kibbles in loads weighing 500 to 600lbs. Motive power was provided by a variable expansion steam engine, such as the Robey's Patent, operating a horizontally-set cylindrical iron winding drum from an engine house in front of the head frame. The miners communicated with the engine driver by a system of knocks transmitted by a hammer with an arm lever attached to lines which ran down the shaft. The ropes were still mainly of hemp, although wire ropes were being introduced towards the end of the decade. In Charters Towers the rope shoes were normally conical, probably because of the field's tendency towards small diameter pulley wheels. The ropes ran from the winding drum over sheave wheels set on a pyramidal group of four wooden poppet legs centred over vertical shafts.²² From the sheave wheels the ropes ran down through the centre of the head frame into the mine. Ore buckets were hauled up by ropes to the brace, a wooden platform built somewhat less than half way up the poppet head. There the braceman manhandled them to the ore heap

22. For underlie shafts the poppet legs were omitted and winding was carried out from the brace.

or mullock dump.²³ Clearly this type of mining required considerable initial capital resources.

The problems of undercapitalised syndicates were further aggravated by transport and ore treatment difficulties. Transport of stone to the mills was expensive due to the poor condition of the roads. Even the road connecting Charters Towers to Millchester became impassable during the wet: a fatal accident occurred on this route in December 1874 when a public coach, the "Big Bus" overturned. The difficulties were exacerbated by the shortage of draught animals in the poorly grassed, frequently drought stricken countryside. At the end of the decade the local warden explained the district's inability to support draught horses:

At present there are sixty-seven persons on this goldfield that own more than fifty head of cattle each, and in the aggregate they depasture 14,121 head. To this number must be added about 3,000 head, the property of the owners of smaller herds. When it is taken into account that besides this, at a modest computation, about ten thousand goats

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23. For mining methods see George G. André, *A Descriptive Treatise on Mining Machinery, Tools and Other Appliances Used in Mining*, Two Volumes (London 1878); William Blane, "Report on the Conditions and Modes of Working on the Goldfields of Queensland", in *AR*, 1901, pp. 37-42; K.H. Kennedy, Peter Bell and Carolyn Edmondson, *Totley: A Study of the Silver Miles at One Mile, Ravenswood District* (Townsville 1981); K.R. Levingston, *Ore Deposits and Mines of the Charters Towers 1:250,000 Sheet Area, North Queensland* (Brisbane 1974); Reid, "The Charters Towers Goldfield"; Joseph Shakespeare, "Report by Inspector of Mines for the Northern Districts", in *AR*, 1883, pp. 68-9; Joseph Shakespeare, "Special Report of Mining in Deep Ground in Victoria", in *AR*, 1895, pp. 37-48; Derrick I. Stone and Sue Mackinnon, *Life on the Australian Goldfields* (Sydney 1976).



BONNIE DOON P.C., HOGFLESH CREEK, CHARTERS TOWERS.

are permitted to devastate the country, it must be conceded that this goldfield is about the closest stocked piece of land in the country. 24

In fact transport problems frequently led to the closure of "outside" mines which, under more favourable conditions, might have worked profitably.²⁵

On reaching the mills the smaller syndicates were likely to be further disadvantaged. Although the law required battery owners to supply the Gold Commissioner with returns of the amount of stone crushed and its yield, Charters evidently had little faith in the accuracy of figures supplied to him.²⁶ The miners too believed that they did not always receive the full gold content of their ore, the great Venus Mill being particularly suspect.²⁷ Such scandals, as well as more normal reasons of mine economy, persuaded many of the wealthier mines to install their own crushing plant which, when connected to their mine by a tramway, had the further advantage of reducing transport costs. Others, however, purchased public mills in which they gave priority to their own ore. Early in 1876 Stubbley and Buckland bought the Defiance Mill; Richard Craven took over the Enterprise to crush for his Caledonia, No. 4 Queen and Mexican interests.²⁸ The following month the Never Despair was purchased by David Nagle and Ellen Kelly, partners in the No. 1 St. Patrick²⁹ leaving only three mills on the field which gave priority to custom crushing.

24. Philip Sellheim, *AR*, 1880, p. 11.

25. *AR*, 1879, p. 9.

26. *Queenslander*, 1 April 1876.

27. *Ibid.*, 7 June 1876.

28. *Ibid.*, 26 February 1876.

29. *Ibid.*, 11 March 1876.

Increasingly those mines which were most dependent on quick returns were forced to wait weeks or even months to put their stone through the mills.³⁰

During 1876 technological innovations improved the production of the field,³¹ but contributed only marginally to the viability of the smaller mines. For some years owners of tailings treatment machinery refused to treat sands for the miners, preferring to buy them outright. Since current law did not stipulate that such operators furnish the warden with returns miners were unable to gauge the value of their sands, and some large fortunes were made by men such as Deane and Sadd, the Plant Brothers, Hutton and Whitehead and Thomas Buckland. During 1877 the Gold Escort carried 12,754 ounces over and above the mill returns. In 1878 the figure was 17,462 and the following year 12,133. While it is possible that up to 5,000 ounces a year came from outlying areas to travel by the escort, this must be offset by the strong likelihood that some gold left in private hands, and by the fact that mill returns are given in retorted gold while escort figures are in refined gold, and should therefore be smaller. Although by 1882 the warden reported that "the after-treatment of sands at separate works...has nearly fallen into disuse",³² and it was normal practice for millers to carry out the entire extraction practice for their customers, the owners

30. Problems in tracing the history of the mills arise because changes of name and occupation or cancellation were not always registered. Even when registration was effected it was often many months after the event had been reported in the newspapers. See also Chapter 4.

31. See Chapter 4.

32. *AR*, 1882, p. 10.

of tailings plants probably absorbed up to one seventh of of the wealth of the field in the intervening years.

When small mines ran into difficulties many diggers turned to wages mining. The big mines began to work three shifts a day and some became quite large employers: the Queen, for example, had eighty-one miners on its payroll during 1879.³³ Wages in Charters Towers were quite good. Miners were paid £3 to £3/10/- a week throughout the nineteenth century. This compared favourably with Gympie and Ravenswood, but was less than was paid on other North Queensland fields. Mine labourers received about £2. Even so employment tended to be seasonal since "dead work" - which employed a smaller workforce than stoping - was best carried out during the winter, when the shafts were drier and water shortages increased crushing and transport costs. Surplus miners were invariably discharged: some became tributors, working mines which could not be operated profitably by their owners, on a percentage basis. A typical agreement at this time might involve a period of three years during the first of which the tributors paid five percent of the gross yield to the owners, and ten percent for the following two years. Frequently these were mines which had been taken over by the banks after their owners defaulted. Some unemployed miners "fossicked about in old workings"³⁴ hoping for news of another alluvial rush. In addition to the Palmer rushes of 1873 and 1874, there was an exodus to the Hodgkinson in March 1876 which attracted a quarter of the population of Charters Towers; to Coen River, Lukinville and New Guinea during

33. AR, 1879, p. 11.

34. *Queenslander*, 9 March 1878.

1878, Fanning River, Mount Pleasant, Old Broughton and Rishton during 1879, and Woolgar in 1880.

It is perhaps indicative of the condition of the wages miner on the field at this time that despite massive investment in machinery, which in 1880 was conservatively valued at £81,500,³⁵ all stoping was still done by hand. No rock drills arrived on the field until 1881. Further, as the shafts went deeper accidents increased both in number and severity. Falls of ground, mishaps in the shafts and rushes of water became more common: during 1877 several tons of water broke, without warning, into the North Australia mine;³⁶ the following year three men were drowned in a similar accident at the Identity.³⁷ While the mining wardens invariably ascribed accidents to the carelessness of the victims, the safety standards of the management are suggested by such practices as weighting the safety valves of the steam boilers to obtain extra steam.³⁸ Similarly in March 1879 the *Towers Herald* drew attention to the frequency of accidents arising from the use of perpendicular ladders in shafts which, it claimed, were particularly dangerous at the end of a shift when the miners were tired.³⁹ It was not until 1881 that the first safety regulations were passed⁴⁰ controlling ventilation, the use of explosives and the fencing and staging of shafts, and providing for inspection of the mines by both

35. *AR*, 1880, p. 12.

36. *Queenslander*, 18 September 1877.

37. J. Stoodley, *The Queensland Gold Miner in the Late Nineteenth Century: His Influence and Interests*, MA Thesis, University of Queensland 1964, p. 55.

38. *Queenslander*, 5 July 1879.

39. *Towers Herald and Mining Register*, 22 March 1879.

40. *The Mines Regulation Act of 1881*. 45 VIC No. 6.

government inspectors and miners' representatives. Although only mines employing six or more men were covered by the Act, it nevertheless afforded a degree of protection to the growing number of company miners on the field in the following years.

As for "no liability" companies, those registered during 1876 proved disappointing: none of them survived beyond 1878 and no more were registered until late 1881.⁴¹ Among the reasons for the lack of investment, two stand out - isolation and the flaws which appeared in the "no liability" legislation. Although both Millchester and Charters Towers had been connected to the electric telegraph during 1875 communication with other centres was still poor. During 1878 the road to Townsville was described as "unpleasant as can possibly be conceived...the whole distance being covered with several inches to a foot of fine powdered dust".⁴² Clearly a rail link was needed, but though the Enabling Act passed the Legislative Assembly during 1877, tenders were not called for over a year and the railway was only completed in 1882. It was undeniable, however, that local investors as well as southerners shied away from "no liability" companies. A common criticism was that the clause in the Act stipulating that sales of forfeited shares must be advertised in the *Government Gazette* at least twenty-one days in advance caused long delays in the receipt of calls.⁴³ Allowing fourteen days after the call was made, a further fourteen

41. Register of Mining Companies, Charters Towers. MWO 11A/T1, QSA.

42. *Queenslander*, 8 November 1878.

43. 39 VIC No. 8, Clause 8 (4).

days for postage and advance notice of twenty-one days, a minimum of seven weeks elapsed before shares could be sold. Should a large shareholder default this delay might be sufficient to cause the collapse of a company. It was also suggested that the cost of incorporation was too high (although this had not risen from the price stipulated in the Act of 1863) and that fees paid to directors and company secretaries were exorbitant. The *Northern Miner* complained that banks refused to lend to what its editor termed "no reliability companies".⁴⁴

It would appear, however, that another factor in their failure was the inability of their promoters to raise even the five percent of the nominal capital demanded by the Act.⁴⁵ The formation during this period of seven new companies under the old Act - the Towers and Millchester Pyrites Saving Company during 1876, Rainbow Amalgamated GMCL in July 1877, Hope GMCL in December 1877, Comstock GMCL in February 1878, Day Dawn Extended in September 1880, Day Dawn Block in March 1881 and No.1 North Alliance in May 1881 - adds substance to this theory.⁴⁶ This was further illustrated by the flotation, early in 1882, of three "no liability" companies with a very small nominal capital which was increased dramatically soon after registration. The Lady Maria GMNL raised its capital from £1,200 to £12,000 and the Union GMNL and Caledonia

44. *Northern Miner*, 29 August 1877.

45. Clause 8 (1).

46. Register of Companies, Queensland. COM 1, QSA. The Towers and Millchester Pyrites Saving Company was floated in Melbourne.

GMNL both went from £3,000 to £24,000.⁴⁷ Nevertheless it was during 1882 that internal and external circumstances combined to make company mining the rule rather than the exception.

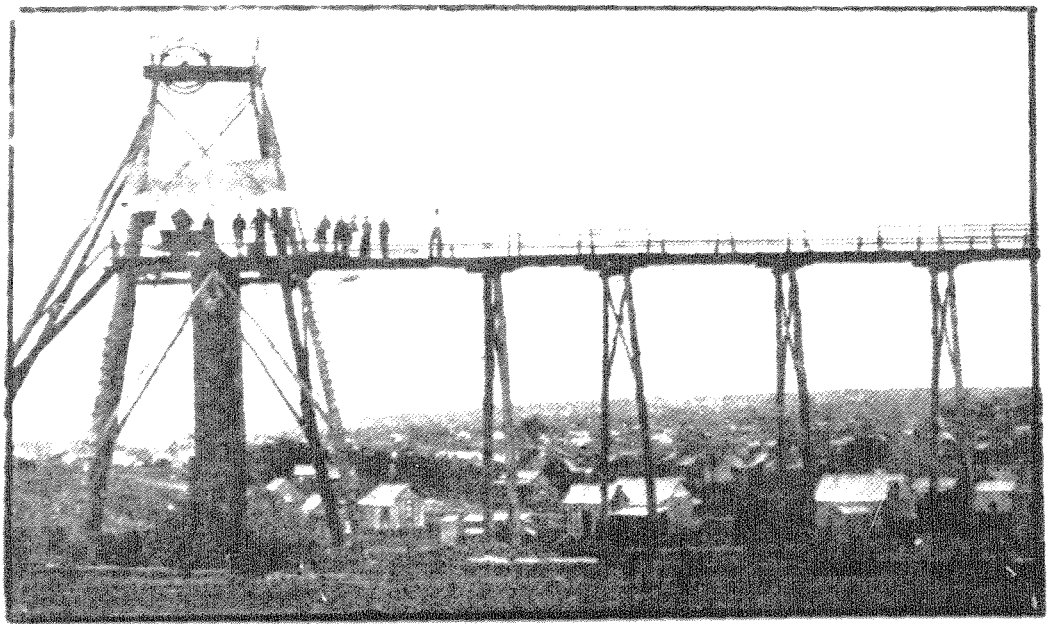
One such circumstance was the discovery of rich deposits of the Day Dawn PC. This ground was originally laid off in 1873. During the five years to 1879 it was worked by a small syndicate whose membership changed frequently, but which was led by Frederick Pfeiffer. Pfeiffer had been born in Attenhasslau during 1834. He arrived in Australia in 1856 and worked on the Victorian and New Zealand goldfields before moving north. His partners when Thomas Christian bought in during 1879 were Ievers, Harman, Romberg, Reidrich, Paradies and Bandholz, but Pfeiffer retained ownership of twenty-five percent of the mine.⁴⁸ Christian assumed management and soon abandoned the rickety vertical shaft. Borrowing one thousand pounds he replaced the whip with steam winding gear with which he developed the underlie shaft.⁴⁹ Within months it became evident that the mine contained the largest reef yet found on the field.⁵⁰ During 1881 the syndicate floated the first

47. Register of Companies, Charters Towers. MWO 11A/T1, QSA.

48. Pfeiffer later became a mining speculator and company director. He died in Charters Towers during 1903.

49. L.W. Marsland, *The Charters Towers Gold Mines: A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and Goldfield of Charters Towers, Queensland, with Full and Detailed Particulars of the More Important Mines, Illustrated by Plans and Photographic Views, And of all Mining Companies Carrying on Operations on the Field, Being a Handbook of Charters Towers and a Guide to mining Investors* (London 1892), p. 72.

50. Yields from the Day Dawn PC were: 1881-13,933 oz; 1882-22,778 oz; 1883-18,077 oz; 1884-30,130 oz; 1885-34,775 oz; 1886-29,365 oz. The mine continued to be one of the biggest producers on the field during the 1890s and was worked until 1913.



DAY DAWN P.C. VERTICAL SHAFT.

of the new "no liability" companies, with the unprecedented capital of £24,000.⁵¹ Within two weeks the company paid its first dividend. Late that year Thomas Edwards took over as mine manager. Under him pressure to maintain production appears to have led to rivalry between shift bosses resulting in dangerous mining practice. An enquiry into an accident which had occurred in March 1882, when a body of stone 120 feet long fell killing two men, heard evidence that, despite three rock falls during the preceding five weeks in two of which miners had been injured, the reef had been undercut leaving the hanging wall with no timber to support it.⁵² Nevertheless the mine continued to give handsome returns to its shareholders; the company paid £131,800 in dividends by the end of 1882.⁵³ The importance of the Day Dawn, however, was by no means limited to its success as a joint stock company. Prior to 1880 it had been accepted that, in Charters Towers, a yield of one ounce for each ton of stone raised was the minimum level of profitability. In addition to some very rich pockets the Day Dawn possessed vast bodies of low grade ore which, combined with the comparative freedom of its gold, made its working profitable at a yield of 15dwts per ton.⁵⁴ Therefore it guaranteed the permanence of the field and, indeed, through the Day Dawn PC, the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham and Mills Day Dawn United the new reef dominated the field during the 1880s and continued to be worked for three decades.

51. 11 October 1881. Register of Companies, Charters Towers. MWF 11A/T1, QSA.

52. *Northern Miner*, 27 June 1882. Edwards was found not guilty of negligence.

53. *AR*, 1882, p. 13.

54. Marsland, *The Charters Towers Gold Mines*, pp.14-15. In Victorian mines 10dwts per ton was considered payable.

As the Day Dawn was beginning to realise its potential in Charters Towers, innovations on the distant Victorian goldfields prepared the way for a nationwide boom in mining speculation. On the rich but uneven Ballarat field where early prospecting has been described as a "game of blind man's bluff"⁵⁵ diamond drills were introduced late in 1878. Their revelations enabled a massive increase in production which started during 1879 but reached its peak the following year when almost three times as much gold was produced as in 1878. This was further increased by an inflow of capital when interest rates started to fall in February 1880. During the next two years they dropped from six percent to three percent, encouraging the opening of new avenues for investment, particularly the formation of joint stock companies.⁵⁶ The prices of Victorian mining shares soared, stimulating the formation of gold mining companies on other fields. In Queensland the effects of the share boom were first encountered at Gympie during 1881, when large numbers of new companies were floated in what has been called a "period of speculation beyond description".⁵⁷ Aided by the completion of the railway and the consequent improvement in communications, the boom reached Charters Towers during 1882, at the end of which year Warden Sellheim reported the existence of twenty-four registered companies on the field.⁵⁸ Seventeen new companies were registered

55. Weston Bate, *Lucky City. The First Generation at Ballarat: 1851-1901* (Melbourne 1978), p. 193.

56. A.R. Hall, *The Stock Exchange of Melbourne and the Victorian Economy 1852-1900* (Canberra 1968), p. 95.

57. R.G. Lockwood, *History of Gympie in the 1840s-1900s*, BA Hons Thesis, University of Queensland 1964, p. 48.

58. *AR*, 1882, p. 13.

Gold Production, Charters Towers, in fine ounces

Year	Ore tons	Gold fine oz	Year	Ore tons	Gold fine oz	Year	Ore tons	Gold fine oz
1872	12,054	25,030	1905	224,519	226,696	1938	25,858	12,693
1873	37,937	59,797	1906	240,416	205,632	1939	37,021	14,431
1874	33,097	49,876	1907	211,090	175,552	1940	39,825	13,895
1875	36,876	55,422	1908	193,858	162,270	1941	30,969	10,506
1876	37,500	54,092	1909	187,454	171,654	1942	6,091	6,657
1877	36,030	69,760	1910	168,619	147,484	1943	1,713	1,774
1878	35,509	59,482	1911	175,803	133,833	1944	1,510	1,684
1879	41,584	63,715	1912	136,431	96,046	1945	1,290	1,614
1880	39,285	67,773	1913	76,139	69,895	1946	2,396	2,778
1881	45,378	65,410	1914	70,121	62,610	1947	4,768	5,129
1882	45,663	63,242	1915	55,066	56,888	1948	3,417	4,480
1883	44,602	55,264	1916	33,107	42,777	1949	3,607	2,993
1884	52,561	86,228	1917	19,319	30,784	1950	4,208	2,856
1885	70,164	106,981	1918	10,218	17,386	1951	1,942	1,782
1886	77,665	112,166	1919	4,685	8,095	1952	281	377
1887	82,853	117,603	1920	3,300	8,662	1953	323	474
1888	81,698	106,839	1921	3,115	6,660	1954	424	512
1889	108,828	126,666	1922	2,895	5,016	1955	249	859
1890	121,406	127,426	1923	1,742	2,787	1956	870	1,336
1891	173,789	183,830	1924	693	1,350	1957	749	1,088
1892	186,392	216,679	1925	131	539	1958	1,027	853
1893	180,208	216,660	1926	88	238	1959	482	581
1894	224,292	221,544	1927	159	297	1960	141	365
1895	230,672	200,916	1928	51	147	1961	64	401
1896	176,112	181,923	1929	105	219	1962	139	549
1897	198,873	242,641	1930	393	367	1963	30	301
1898	209,978	272,368	1931	1,911	1,335	1964	159	150
1899	209,802	319,572	1932	2,907	2,907	1965	78	108
1900	206,205	283,237	1933	5,824	3,880	1966	52	104
1901	235,302	235,302	1934	6,581	4,670	1967	113	89
1902	221,098	265,244	1935	7,598	5,441	1968	228	86
1903	247,481	285,771	1936	10,666	7,994	1969	128	62
1904	241,200	262,018	1937	20,565	12,933			

Totals: 6,007,108 tons of ore raised for 6,624,683 fine ounces of gold.

Source: *Levingston, Ore Deposits and Mines of the Charters Towers 1:250,000 Sheet Area*, p. 12.

in Charters Towers during 1882.⁵⁹ Although many of these were short-lived, from 1882 to the end of its productive life Charters Towers remained a company mining field.⁶⁰

59. Register of Companies, Charters Towers. MWO 11A/T1, QSA.

60. 1882 was also the year during which the field produced its millionth ounce of gold. It had become the most productive field in the colony when it overtook the Palmer in 1880.

CHAPTER 4. GETTING THE GOLD

In the course of the decade the Charters Towers field made advances in milling as well as mining and business practices. Indeed during its productive life it made a considerable contribution to the technology of the mining industry. The experiments and advances in gold extraction practices made there are of particular interest, not only because their sophistication set the pattern for all North Queensland goldfields, but also because their scope set them apart from other major producers. This scope stemmed from the competition engendered by the multiplicity of mills in the area, contrasting sharply with single company mining districts such as Mount Morgan, and from the fact that Charters Towers' productive life spanned an era of experimentation in milling which had largely ended by the hey-day of the Western Australian mines during the early twentieth century. Despite the cannibalisation of much of the machinery by scrap-metal dealers in the inter-war period, it is still possible to reconstruct this technology from the relics of abandoned mill sites and from the Venus Mill which, as a state-owned enterprise, continued to crush small parcels of ore as late as 1972.

The Charters Towers country rock is a grey grano-diorite which occupies about four-fifths of the field. The ore deposits occur in connection with fault fissures in this rock, the lode material consisting of crushed grano-diorite or "formation" which contains the auriferous quartz reefs.¹ Early mining concentrated on the rich

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1. For a description of the geology of the field see Levingston, *Ore Deposits and Mines of the Charters Towers 1:250,000 Sheet Area*; for contemporary accounts see Robert Logan Jack, *Report on the Geology and Resources of the District between Charters Towers Goldfields and the Coast*, Geological Survey of Queensland (GSQ) publication 1 (Brisbane 1879); Robert Logan Jack, *Report on the Gold Deposits of Mount Leyshon*, GSQ publication 18 (Brisbane 1885); Walter E. Cameron, *The Charters Towers Goldfield. Notes on the Main Reefs*,

"brownstone" deposits near the surface, consisting of quartz subjected to the oxidising effect of surface waters. There iron oxides (gossans), cerussite² and copper carbonates mingled with the free metallic gold which made the brownstone the simplest of ores to treat.

Only one extraction method was used on this oxidised stone. After crushing, the gold was recovered from the quartz by a hydro-metallurgical process known as amalgamation, during which clean metallic surfaces of gold alloyed with liquid mercury to form a mercury-covered particle with surface properties similar to those of pure mercury. These amalgamated particles coalesced, much as drops of pure quicksilver will collect into a single puddle. When the mercury had collected as much gold as possible the result was a grey plastic mass of amalgam which, when heated, released its mercury as a gas, leaving metallic gold in the retort.³ The technique was used in Europe during the seventeenth century⁴ and later refined in the mills of Eastern Europe and America where, by the mid-nineteenth century, Californian gold milling provided a model for the industry.

By the 1870s three types of machinery had been developed to crush the ore for amalgamation: rollers, breakers and

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1. cont. GSQ publication 224 (Brisbane 1909); E.O. Marks, *Outside Mines of the Charters Towers Goldfield*, GSQ publication 238 (Brisbane 1913); and Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*.
 2. PbCO_3 , an ore of lead formed by the oxidation of lead sulphide.
 3. Joseph Newton, *Extractive Metallurgy* (New York 1967), pp. 447-448; E.J. Pryor, *Mineral Processing* (London Third Edition 1974), pp. 734-737.
 4. R.F. Tylecote, *A History of Metallurgy* (London 1976), p. 101.

stamps. At this time, however, roll mills were used only as coarse crushers to prepare ore for concentration or for further comminution.⁵ Usually rock breakers served the same purpose although it was possible for them to do the work of the stamp mill. For service in remote mining fields they had the advantage of being relatively light and cheap; however when used for fine crushing their power consumption was high. Further, and probably most importantly, the rock breaker was a more complex machine than the stamp battery, and replacement of broken or worn parts represented formidable problems in mining communities distant from foundries. Therefore the early crushing machinery introduced into North Queensland was of the stamper type.⁶

Stamps consisted of heavy pestles of iron which were lifted by means of revolving cams or arms of iron, keyed to a cam shaft, then allowed to fall upon the ore. They worked in a rectangular iron mortar which contained from three to six, commonly five, stamps set in wooden guides within a frame to form what was usually called a battery. The ore was fed with water and often mercury into the mortar where it was crushed between the stamps and dies set into its base. If mercury was added at this stage the mortar box might be partially lined with copper plates to catch the amalgam formed there. In Charters Towers mercury was added to the mortars but no inside plates were used. The crushed material was splashed out through a metal screen on to an amalgamation table - an inclined table covered with copper plates sprinkled with mercury. Late in the

5. In the last years of the nineteenth century Huntingdon mills were used in tandem with stamps in two Charters Towers mills.

6. For a full description of mining and milling machinery in use during the 1870s see André, *A Descriptive Treatise on Mining Machinery*.

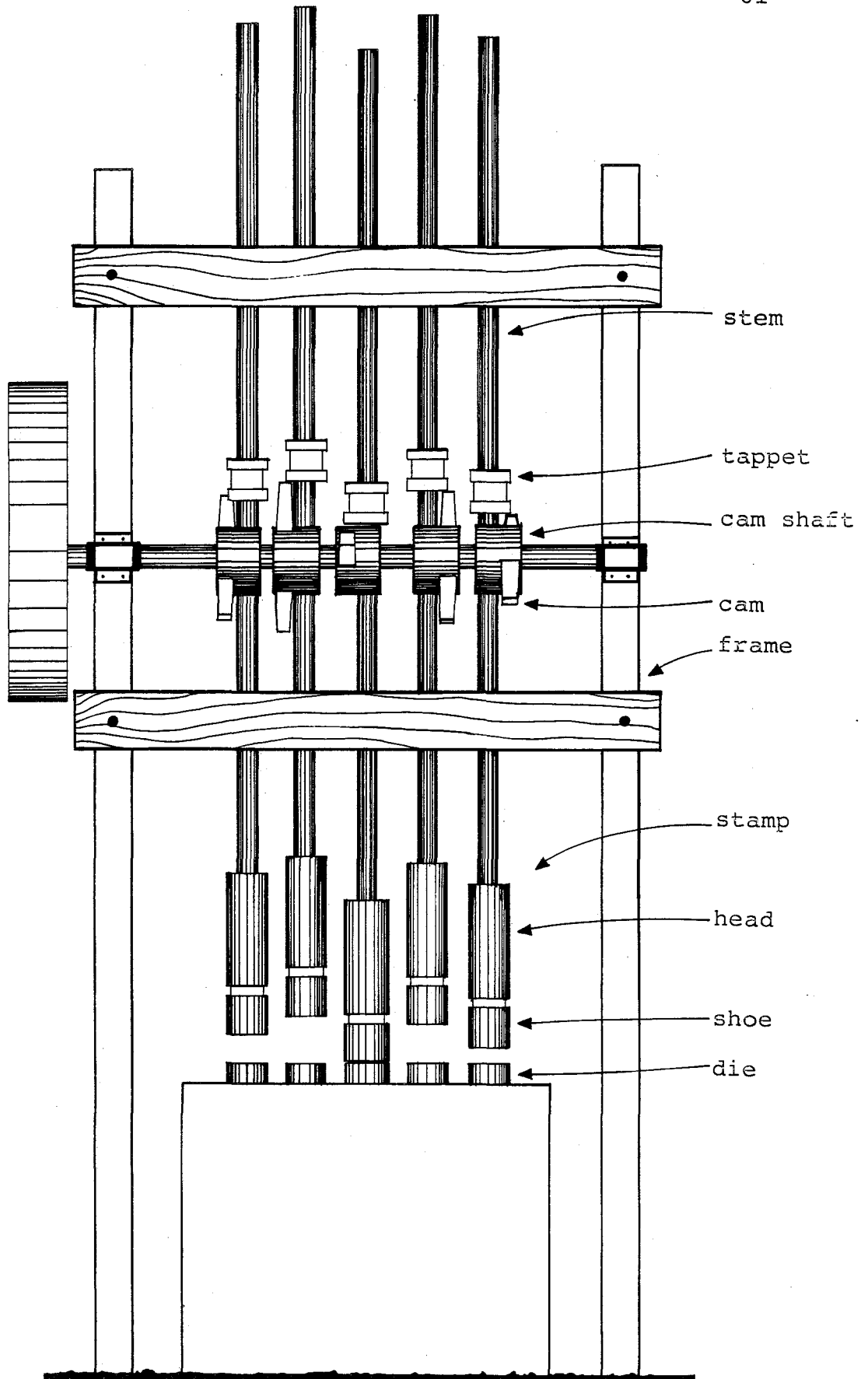
century silver was sometimes substituted for copper, although there is no record of it being used in Charters Towers. As the stream of crushed rock ran down the table the amalgam adhered to the plates from which it was scraped and retorted at regular intervals.⁷

The early arrival of crushing machinery was imperative for the successful establishment of a quartz mining field in North Queensland. Cartage was slow and expensive and only the richest specimens could profitably be transported to other fields for processing. Fortunately for Charters Towers there was already a considerable amount of machinery in the colony by 1872. Since separation in 1859 gold rushes had been inspired by finds at Crocodile Creek, Moronish, Ridgeland, Mount Wheeler and New Zealand Gully. In 1867 the discovery of the first of the permanent fields, Gympie, instigated the opening, the following year, of a foundry and engineering works at Maryborough by the Ballarat firm of Walker and Company.⁸ Shortly after, the North Queensland rushes began to attract machinery into the district. However by 1872 only Gympie was flourishing: all the northern fields were in a depression, even Ravenswood being at a temporary standstill due to the problems its millmen were experiencing with the field's refractory ores. Therefore crushing machinery arrived in Charters Towers with unusual rapidity, Superintending Commissioner John Jardine reporting the existence of five mills with an aggregate of seventy-eight stamps by the end of the first year.⁹

7. See figures 4 and 5.

8. C.E. Horsburgh, Chief Draftsman, Walkers Limited, to Ian Black and Company, 6 March 1979. Copy provided by Walkers, Maryborough.

9. J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, V&P, 1873, p. 1073.



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Figure 4 : Stamp Battery

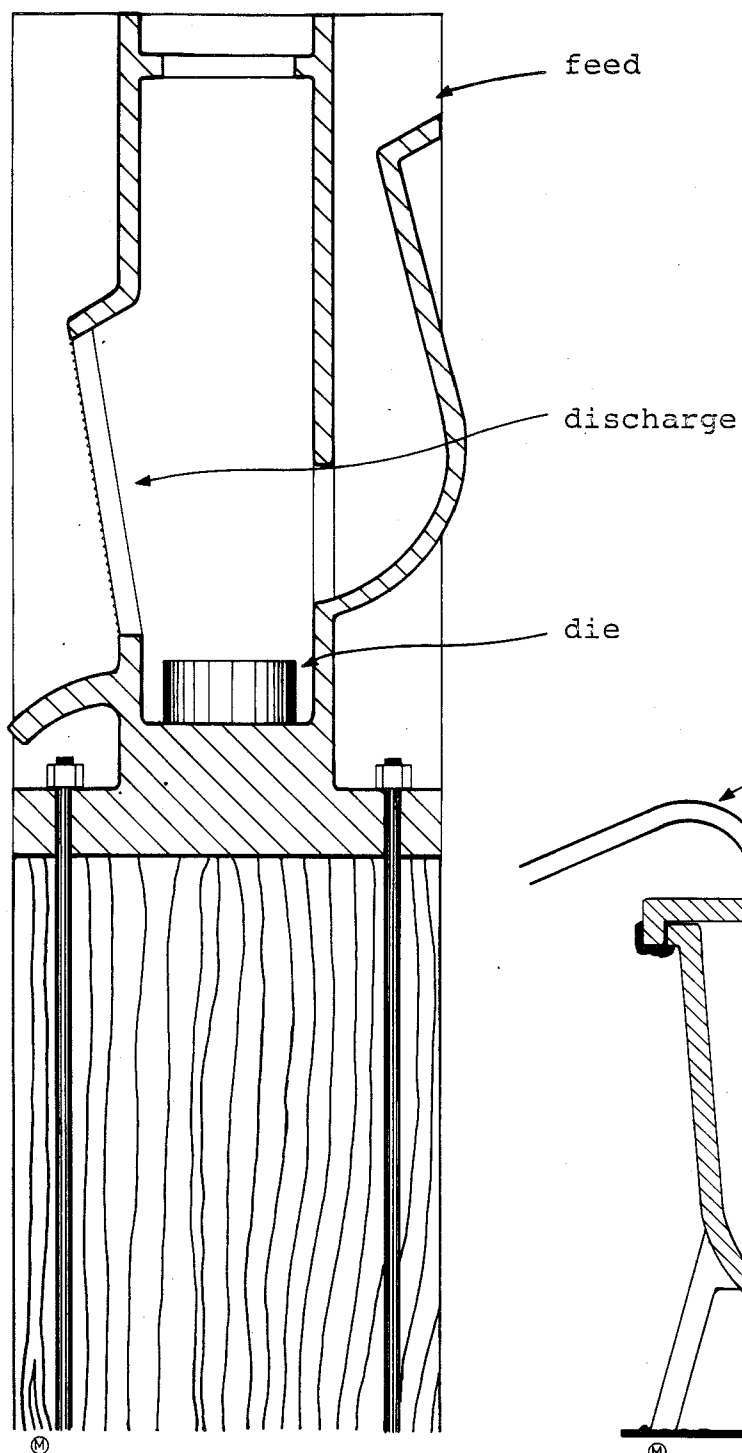


Figure 5 : Mortar box

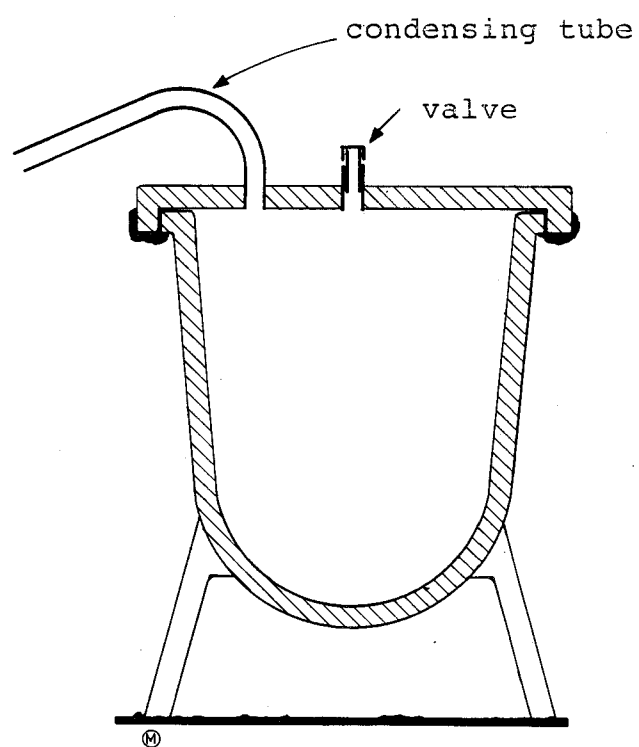
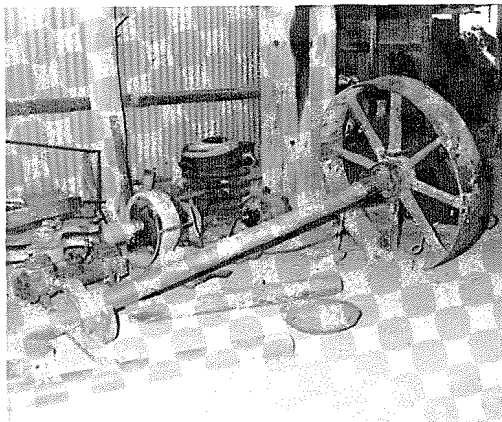


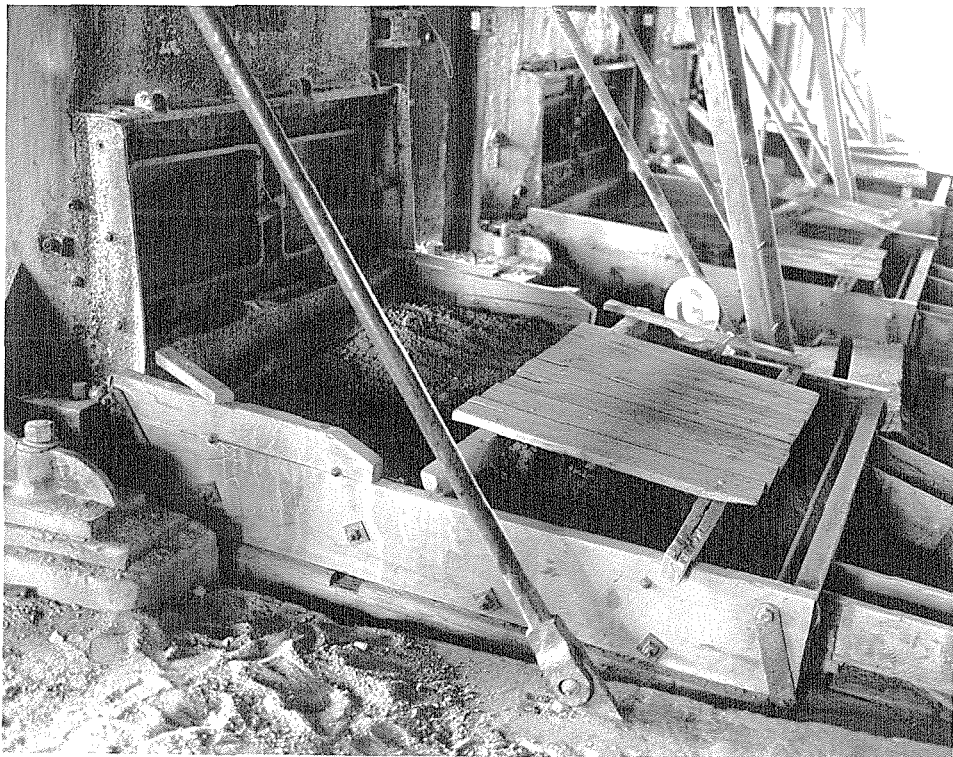
Figure 6 : Retort



The Venus Mill: note that the battery has its camshaft removed. Camshafts with and without their cams are shown separately.



Shoes and dies from the battery - Venus mill



Analgamation plates - Venus battery

Buchanan's mill was operating by the beginning of May 1872 followed by the Venus and the Defiance in June; the Working Miner was crushing by September and the One and All the following month. Other machines soon followed. Each new installation was greeted as a symbol of progress without regard to the provenance or the suitability of the machinery involved. For the millmen the unproven field was a speculation. Should its permanency be established the first-comers stood to profit from their registration of the few sites which had access to water for crushing; should Charters Towers fail the machinery would have to be removed to another field. William Buchanan obtained his machine area by bringing second-hand crushing gear from Ravenswood. He added new batteries towards the end of 1872 and sold what was by that time a substantial plant to Thomas Mowbray soon afterwards. Mowbray, however, made the mistake of removing the mill during the slump of 1873.¹⁰ Similarly Ravenswood businessmen Plant and Jackson erected the twenty head Venus Battery as an exercise in capital appreciation, selling the mill to Hutton and Whitehead at a profit of one thousand pounds before the end of the year.¹¹

Although John Deane worked his Defiance Mill for several years, the battery had been intended to crush Ravenswood ore. It was freighted to Townsville in the schooner *Black Dog*, which was wrecked off the coast during 1871. By the time the salvage operations were complete

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10. *Queenslander*, 27 April 1872; *Ravenswood Miner*, 6 September 1872, cited in *Queenslander*, 12 October 1872; Register of Applications for Areas, A/20767, QSA.
 11. *Queenslander*, 28 September 1872 and 16 November 1872; Register of Applications for Areas, A/20767, QSA.

Ravenswood had slumped and the mill was erected at the newly opened Broughton field for a short time before being transferred to Charters Towers.¹² The Working Miner was a very small concern, consisting of a single battery of three stamps, possibly one of the hand operated prospecting units manufactured by Walker and Company. Its owners, W. H. Norris, J.R. Robson and L.M. Harrison, removed their plant during 1873 and the site was claimed by a Charters Towers storekeeper and investor, P.O'C. Hishon, who installed an unusually grouped set of three batteries of four stamps each, plus a "Mickey" or single stamp used for small or experimental parcels of ore. Norris remained in Charters Towers as manager of the new mill which was named the Never Despair.¹³ Of the pioneer millmen only the Tough brothers, William, John and George, worked their One and All mill throughout the seventies. Their machinery comprised three five-stamp batteries and a "Mickey", and was situated close to the Venus.¹⁴ In 1873 Thomas and Byrne brought their ten head Mary Louisa mill from Rishton, and the following year Deane, in partnership with William Sadd, erected five head on the North Australia line. This was moved in 1875 when it was re-named the Enterprise.¹⁵

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12. *Port Denison Times*, 3 June 1871; *Queenslander*, 25 November 1871, 20 January 1872. John Deane and William Pockock's bid to install this machine at Ravenswood was accompanied by a pledge to reduce crushing charges on that field from 20/- to 15/- a ton, and led to a confrontation with Plant and Jackson of the Vulcan Battery. Deane later became active in local government as a member of the Divisional Board. For Jackson's political career see chapter 12.
 13. Register of Applications for Areas, A/20767, QSA; *Queenslander*, 7 December 1878.
 14. *Queenslander*, 28 September 1872; *Ravenswood Miner*, 6 September 1872, cited in the *Queenslander*, 12 October 1872; *Northern Miner*, 5 October 1880.
 15. *Northern Miner*, 5 October 1880; Applications for Areas, A/20767, QSA.

Despite the quantity of machinery on the field the cost of Charters Towers milling was high. Charges started at 25/- a ton rising to 30/- in October 1872; at the end of the year Jardine estimated that carting and milling absorbed the value of one ounce of gold for each ton of ore crushed.¹⁶ To some extent high costs were unavoidable; both the climate and the topography of the district were inimical to efficient milling. The need for water for the stamps ensured that most of the mills - the Defiance on Mosman's Creek was the exception - were established on Gladstone and Millchester Creeks, some two or three miles away from the main reef systems. During the dry season, when fodder for draught animals was scarce, cartage from mine to mill was understandably expensive and difficult to obtain. During the wet season, when the road from Charters Towers to Millchester was often impassable, the situation was equally difficult. Further the batteries had to be sited on the flat creek banks, which obviated the use of gravity for transport within the mills. Costs were therefore increased by the need to manhandle ore between each stage of the milling process.

One facet of operations in which there was hidden but inevitable cost was the amalgamation and retorting of the gold. After the amalgam had been formed and caught on the amalgamation plates the battery had to be hung up for the "clean up". The amalgam was scraped from the plates and the inside of the mortar box, washed to remove sand and other loose waste, then stirred up with extra mercury to bring impurities to the surface. This dross was skimmed off and collected for further cleaning.

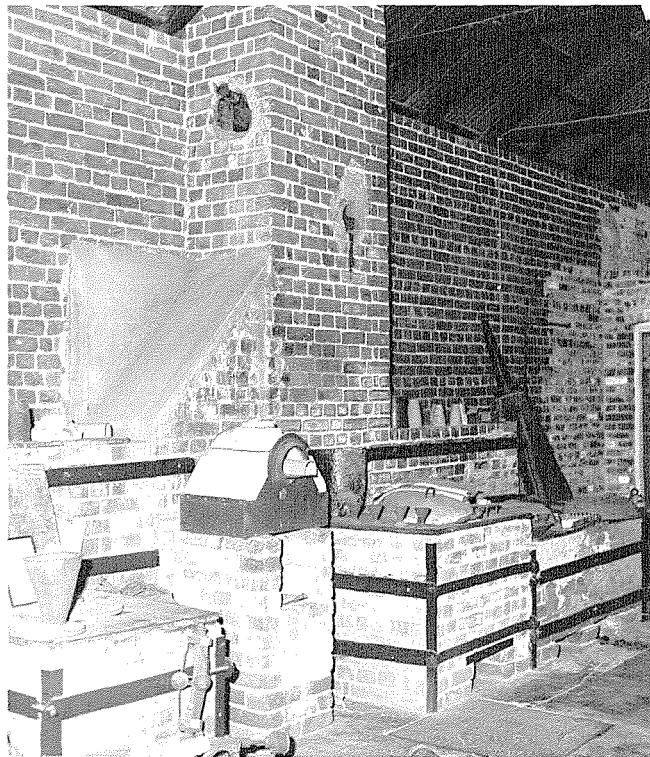
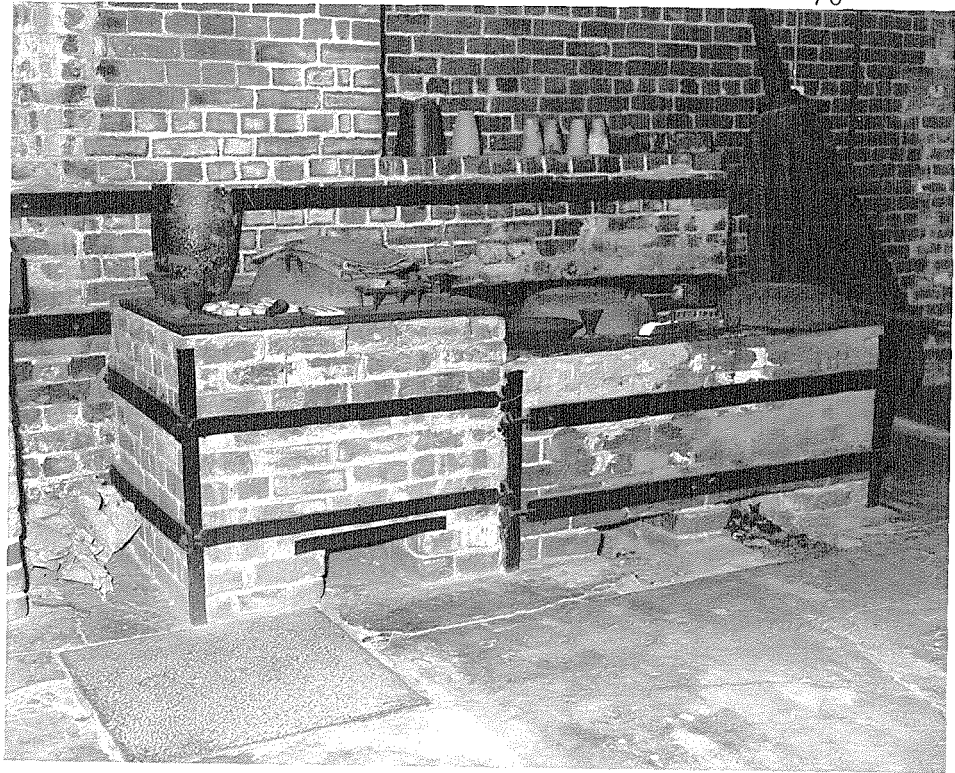
16. *Queenslander*, 28 September 1872 and 12 October 1872. Also J. Jardine to the Secretary for Public Works, 9 October 1872. COL/A 2340, QSA.

The superfluous mercury was then squeezed by hand through a straining cloth and the resulting balls of amalgam retorted. In the mills of the 1870s this process would have been carried out in a cup shaped retort suspended over a fire. Into its lid, which was sealed on with a paste of flour or wood ash and water, was screwed a curved condensing pipe. As the retort was heated the mercury vaporised, passed into the pipe which was immersed in cool water, and condensed. Heat was maintained for about two hours until all the mercury was distilled off.¹⁷ Ideally all of the mercury, an expensive as well as a very poisonous metal, was saved for re-use. In practice, however, there was always some loss to add to the cost of milling; in Charters Towers mercury loss was very high.

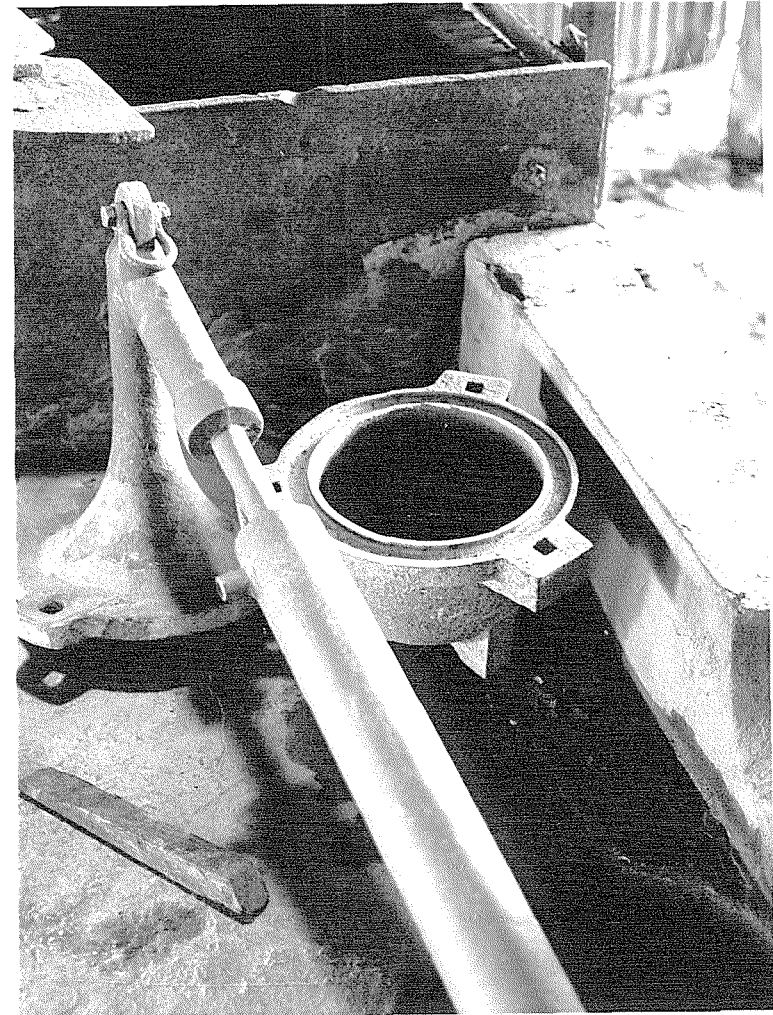
Two factors would have increased the amount needed for each ton of ore. Firstly the climate: mercury is highly volatile, beginning to vaporise at about 60°F and evaporating quite rapidly at 100°; in summer the loss from this source must have been considerable. Secondly, to maintain the discharge of crushed ore onto the plates a great deal of water¹⁸ had to flow into the batteries. Insufficient water resulted in the stone, together with the mercury which was invariably added to the mortar boxes

17. Ed.B. Preston, *California Gold Mill Practices* (San Francisco 1895), pp. 45-46. See figure 6.

18. In 1878 André gave the following figures of gallons of water used by each stamp per day in Australian mining districts: Clunes 11,512 gallons; Ballarat 950 to 8,640 gallons; Beechworth 720 to 11,512 gallons; Sandhurst 4,000 to 8,640 gallons; Maryborough 900 to 8,640 gallons; Castlemaine 4,800 to 12,960 gallons; Ararat 4,320 to 12,960 gallons; Gippsland 1,600 to 25,000 gallons. André, *A Descriptive Treatise on Mining Machinery*, pp. 209-211.



The assay room at the Charters Towers Stock Exchange



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Retort and mercury bottle - Venus Battery

in Charters Towers,¹⁹ remaining too long under the stamps. Thus, during the very frequent periods of water shortage, large amounts of mercury would have been lost through "flouring", that is being separated into minute globules which were unable to reunite and so were lost in the sands. Further, this problem would also have resulted in gold loss in slimes: material too fine to present an adequate metallic surface to the mercury for amalgamation.

While contemporary attention was drawn to the cost of milling in Charters Towers,²⁰ its efficiency or otherwise was little discussed during the first few years of the field. Probably standards were comparable to those of other Queensland fields, and the Charters Towers brownstone was rich enough to distract attention from gold losses in the mills. Problems arose when the complex ores were reached. The most common mineral of these "mundic" reefs was pyrite or iron disulphide, occurring in bunches, veins or as small particles disseminated through the quartz. In association with the pyrite were two other sulphides: galena or lead sulphide and zinc blende or zinc sulphide. Although other minerals were found they were restricted to a few mines, and even in these were not plentiful. Indeed the ore was remarkably constant across the field, the only notable variation being the increasing quantity of zinc blende occurring at depths in excess of one thousand feet where

19. J. Malcolm MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice* (Brisbane 1901), p. 22.

20. Late in 1872 a group of miners made an unsuccessful attempt to float a co-operative milling company to erect forty stamps. *Northern Miner*, 18 October 1872, in *Queenslander*, 9 November 1872.

it became more plentiful than galena.²¹

Although some of the gold in the sulphide ore was "free milling" a portion of the values existed as metal which, during the formation of the mineral deposit, had precipitated from its solution in molten metal sulphides and was therefore disseminated through the pyrites in minute specks.²² Therefore the treatment of mundic stone presented millmen with several inter-related problems. Firstly, to release the gold mechanically from the pyrites required extremely fine comminution, which would inevitably result in gold loss through sliming. Secondly, after their release the tiny gold particles were likely to be coated with sulphide. Since only clean metallic surfaces will unite with mercury, this coating rendered the gold un-amalgamable. Thirdly, sulphides of base metals cause the mercury itself to "sicken": the drops of mercury become chemically coated and so are prevented from reuniting.²³ At the end of 1875 tests carried out on a small quantity of stone from the St. Patrick Block mine suggested that crushing and amalgamation released less than half the gold from this mundic ore.²⁴ It became apparent to even the most conservative millmen that new treatments would have to be devised.

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21. Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, pp. 169-171; also Levingston, *Ore Deposits and Mines*, pp. 18-19. It should be noted, however, that the sulphides rarely exceeded 6% of the ore. While classed as "refractory" (not free milling) the Charters Towers ores did not present any unusual milling problems, although the absence of copper and the presence of zinc would have made local smelting a problem. Grateful acknowledgement is made of the advice of members of the Geology Department of James Cook University, its former Professor, Bill Lacey and Richard Keene of the Chemistry Department.
 22. Pryor, *Mineral Processing*, p. 737.
 23. Robert H. Richards, *A Text book of Ore Dressing* (New York 1909), p. 112.
 24. *Queenslander*, 4 December 1875.

Within the framework of contemporary technology three basic methods were available. Firstly, the stone could be crushed coarsely and the metallic particles separated from the gangue for smelting. Secondly, after similar ore dressing, the concentrates could be crushed finely and amalgamated. Thirdly, the crushing and amalgamation might be carried out as for the brownstone and the "tailings" or waste material, instead of being discarded, could be collected and retreated. As the sulphide ores became more predominant the millers of Charters Towers chose the third alternative. Indeed until they acquired their own equipment the mills continued to operate as before, while their tailings were sold outright to firms set up specifically to treat this material. These firms also bought from individuals who collected old tailings from the beds of creeks where they had been discarded in earlier years and separated out the heavier portions for retreatment. The collection of old tailings from Gladstone Creek fully employed twelve men during 1878.²⁵ Interestingly, of the four plants operating solely as tailings works in 1878 three were owned by men who had speculated successfully in milling during 1872. E.H.T. Plant was the major shareholder in two: the Charters Towers Pyrites Company and its sister plant at Millchester, while a third was owned by John Deane and William Sadd. The other plant came under the proprietorship of butcher, assayer and mining speculator, Thomas Buckland.²⁶

After leaving the batteries the tailings were first concentrated, either by buddle (Venus, Wyndham and the Millchester Pyrites Works) or in a Brown and Stanfield

25. AR, 1878, p. 14.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

concentrator (Charters Towers Pyrites Works and Buckland's plant). The buddle used in Charters Towers was the round concave Mundy's Patent.²⁷ It consisted of a circular pit some twenty-five feet in diameter with a slope of five to eight degrees towards the centre. The pit was lined with bricks covered with a smooth layer of cement. The moving parts, attached to a revolving hollow pipe standing upright in the centre, were the feed tubes and sweeps which extended to the outside edge of the buddle. The pulp was fed into the central pipe and ran out through the revolving feed tubes to be distributed evenly on the perimeter of the machine. As it was washed towards the centre it was kept in motion by the revolving sweeps and gradually a layer of sand was built up on the cement, the heavier concentrates remaining on the surface and the light worthless tailings being swept down the slope and discharged through a central launder.²⁸ The buddle was an effective concentrator and sizer; however, it was labour-intensive. The height of the sweeps needed constant monitoring and at the end of the process it was necessary to stop the machine and remove the concentrates with a shovel.

The Brown and Stanfield concentrator was a shallow pan about five feet eight inches in diameter and four inches deep, with a slightly convex base. Over this was a fixed convex iron plate reaching nearly to the sides of the pan. This plate acted as a distributor, spreading pulp fed in through a central iron basin with perforated sides. As the pulp was spreading, the pan oscillated, making the heavier concentrates move downward and outwards to the edge

27. *Queenslander*, 7 December 1878. Later the Borleas buddle was introduced.

28. See figure 7.

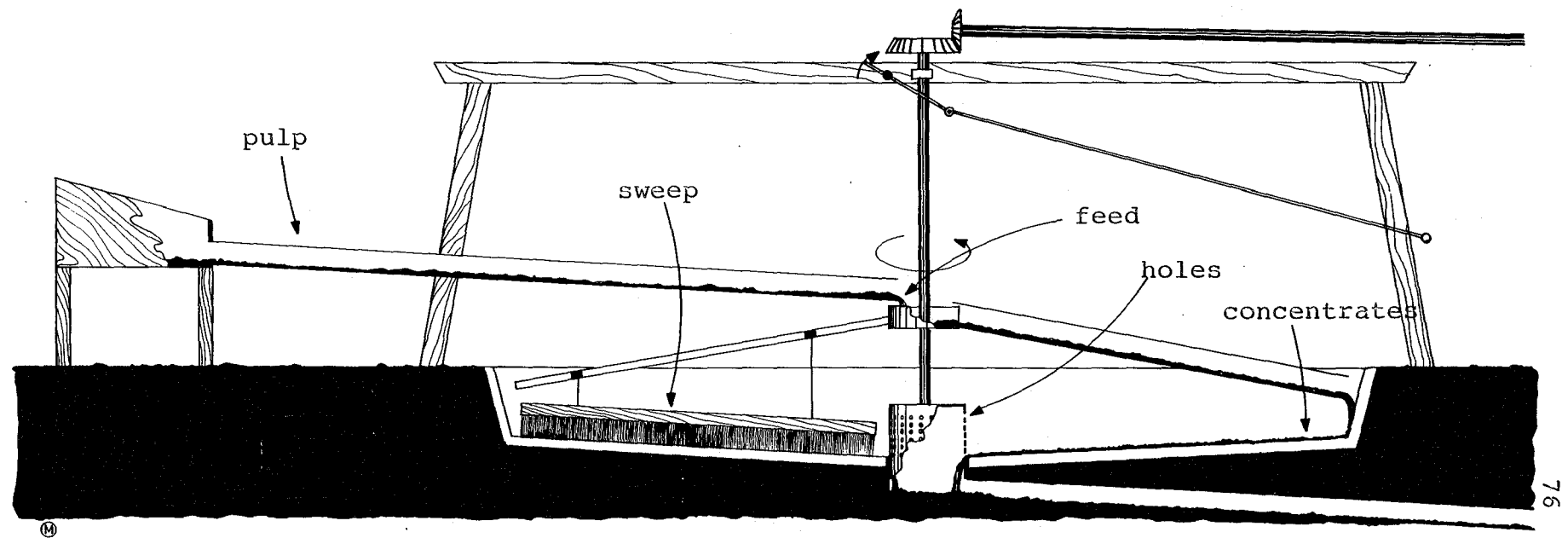


Figure 7: Concave buddle

of the pan to be discharged through an outlet in the centre.²⁹ Writing in 1901, MacLaren noted that the millmen of Charters Towers habitually overloaded the Brown and Stanfield, a procedure which resulted in the loss of fine concentrates and the pollution of the saved values with gangue.³⁰

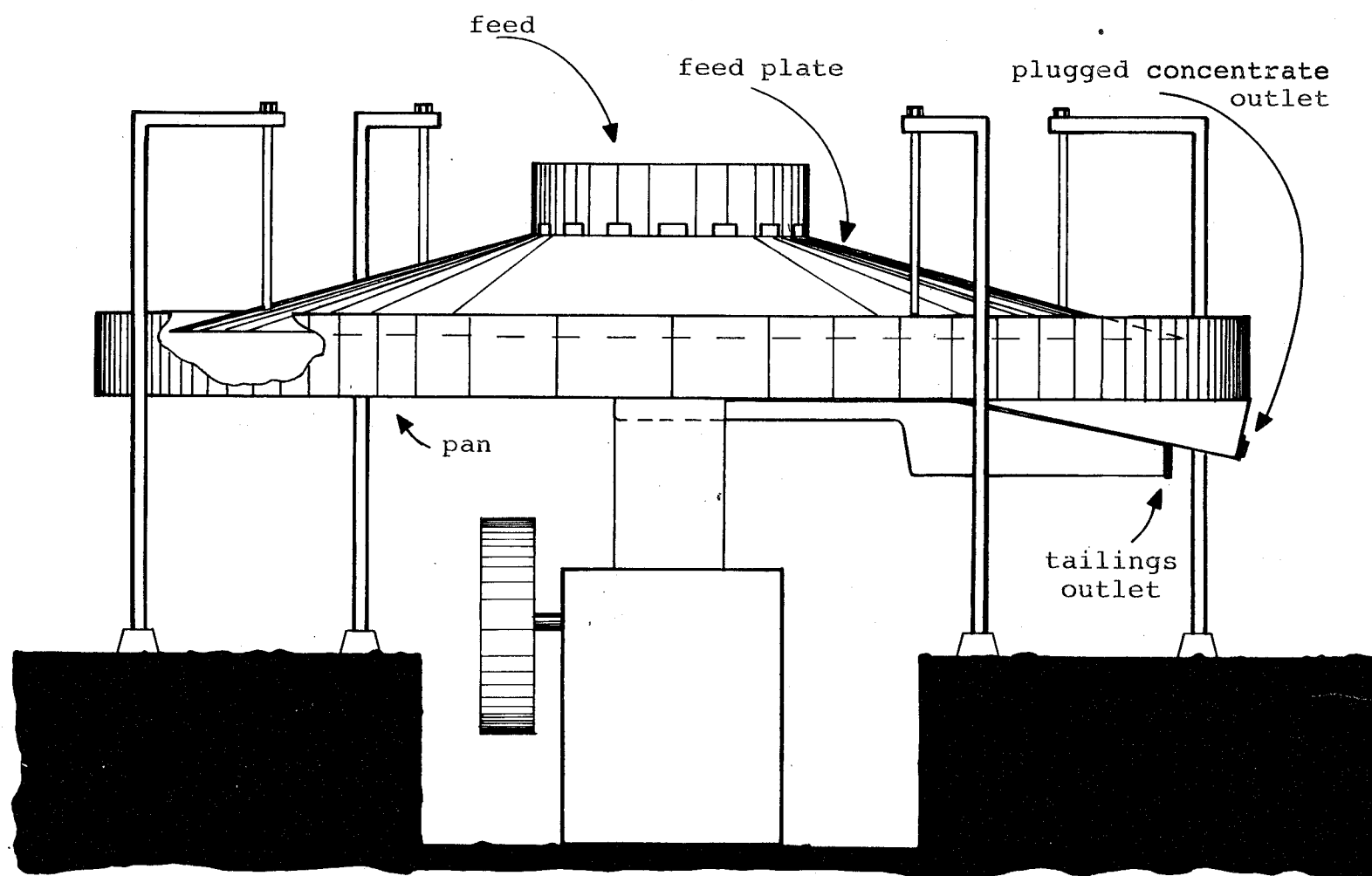
After separation the heavier metallic portion of the tailings was reground with mercury in an attempt to release the specks of gold from the pyrites and to scour them clean for amalgamation. The first regrinding was carried out in Wheeler pans which were set up in every plant on the field except at the Defiance Mill.³¹ The Wheeler pan was from four and a half to five feet in diameter and one and a half feet deep. Crushing was effected between dies set in the base of the pan and shoes attached to a flat plate or "muller" which revolved on top of the dies. The speed of the muller tended to drive the particles to the sides of the pan where wings or guides were fitted to direct them back towards the centre.³² Grinding in a Wheeler pan reduced the particles to about one fifth of their original size. Finer grinding was possible in the machine but because this brought the grinding surfaces into contact with each other it caused excessive wear of the shoes and dies. Consequently the pan was used mainly as an intermediate grinder whose product was then subjected to further treatment.

29. See figure 8.

30. MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, p. 23.

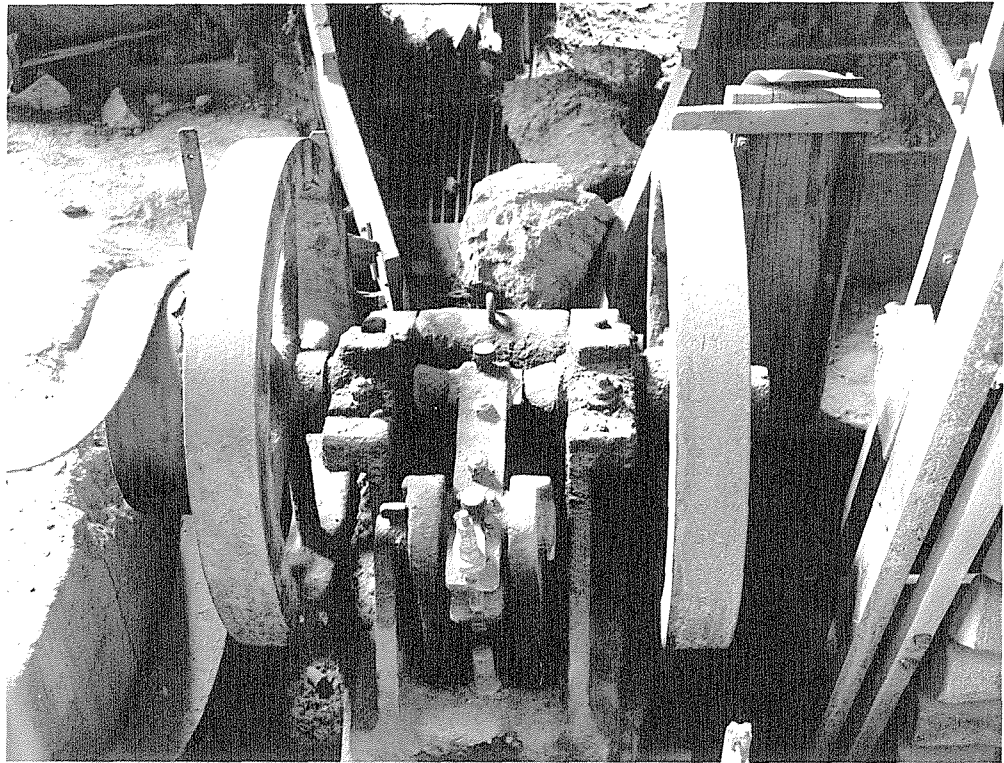
31. AR, 1878, p. 15. Tailings from the Millchester Pyrites Works were ground at the company's Charters Towers plant.

32. See figure 9.

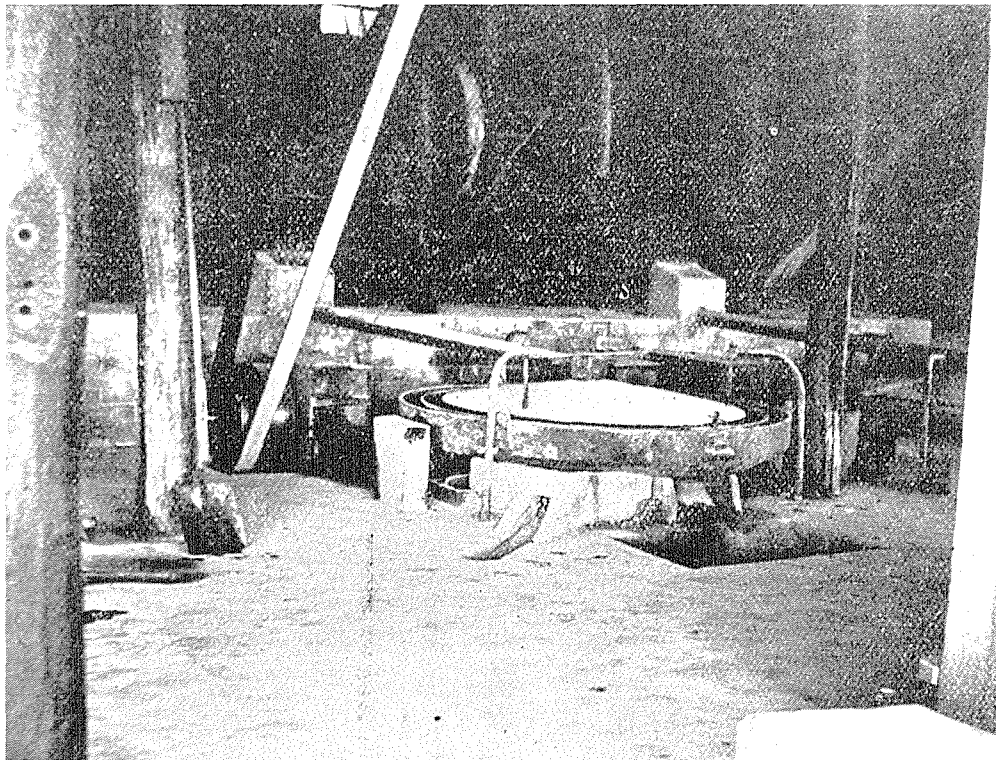


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Figure 8: Brown and Stanfield concentrator



Rock breaker - Venus battery



Brown and Stanfield concentrator

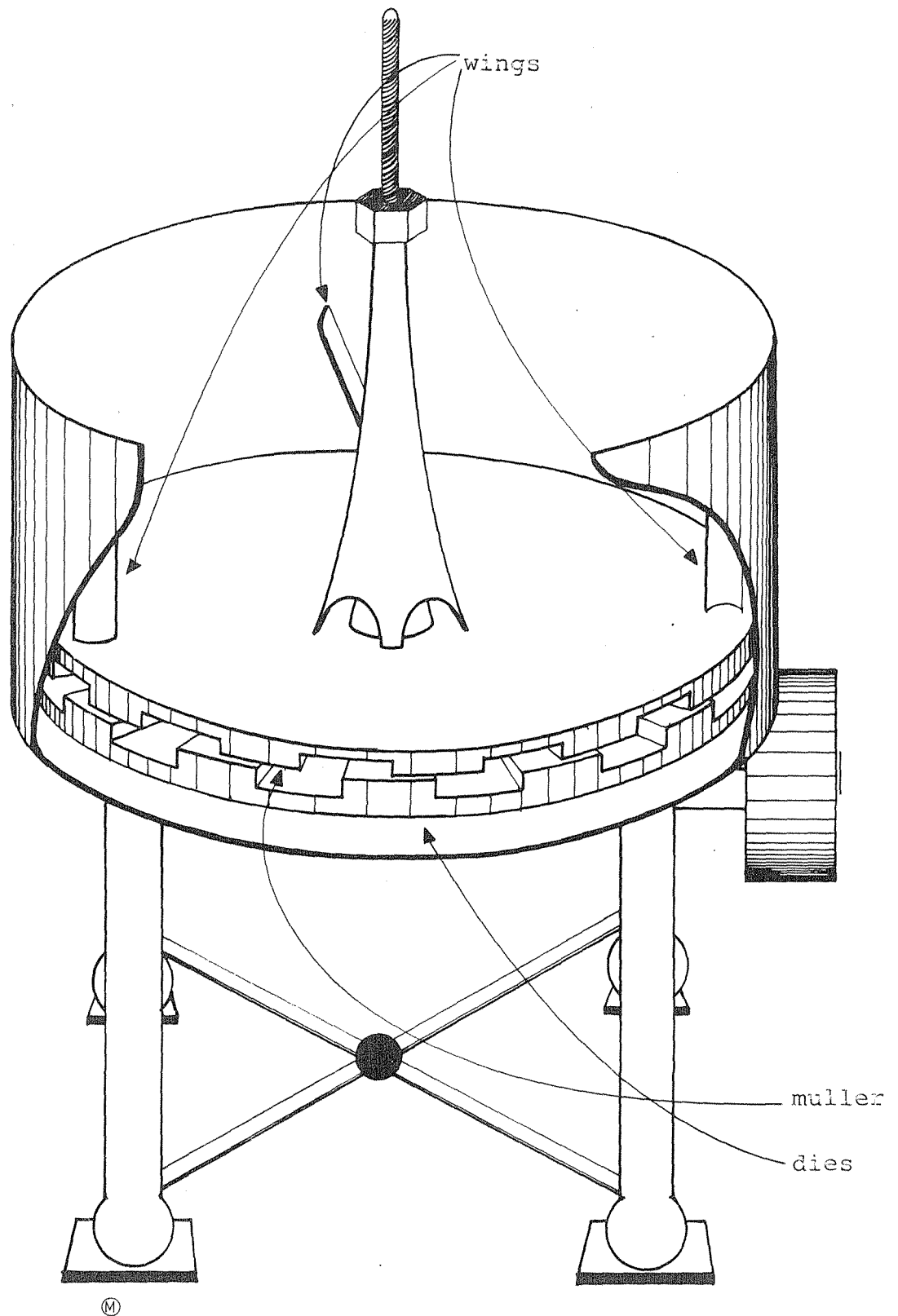


Figure 9: Wheeler pan

The contents of the Wheeler pan were discharged into a settler or iron basin about five feet in diameter. A constant stream of water was added to the pulp which was gently agitated to keep the lighter particles in suspension while the metals and amalgam settled on the bottom. The stirring device consisted of a central column bearing four arms equipped with paddles which terminated in blocks of wood resting lightly on the bottom of the pan. A discharge hole near the top of the settler allowed the water carrying the lighter portion of the pulp to run off, and at successive intervals the point of discharge was lowered by removing plugs from a series of holes in the side of the settler. After about four hours only the metal and the amalgam remained.³³ Settlers were used in only four mills during 1878, the other plants reground the product of the Wheeler pan without further concentration.

The final comminution and amalgamation was invariably carried out in Berdans. These were iron pans about three and a half feet in diameter fitted with two iron drags attached by chain to a central axle. Unlike the Wheeler in which the pan remained stationary while the muller rotated, the Berdan pan itself revolved at about thirty revolutions a minute and grinding was effected by the ore passing between the moving pan and the stationary drags. These machines were set at an angle which allowed the lighter particles to be sloped over the side while the gold, as it was released and scoured, amalgamated with mercury in the bottom of the pan.³⁴ the Berdan was an American invention dating from the Californian gold rushes. Although

33. See figure 10.

34. See figures 11 and 12.

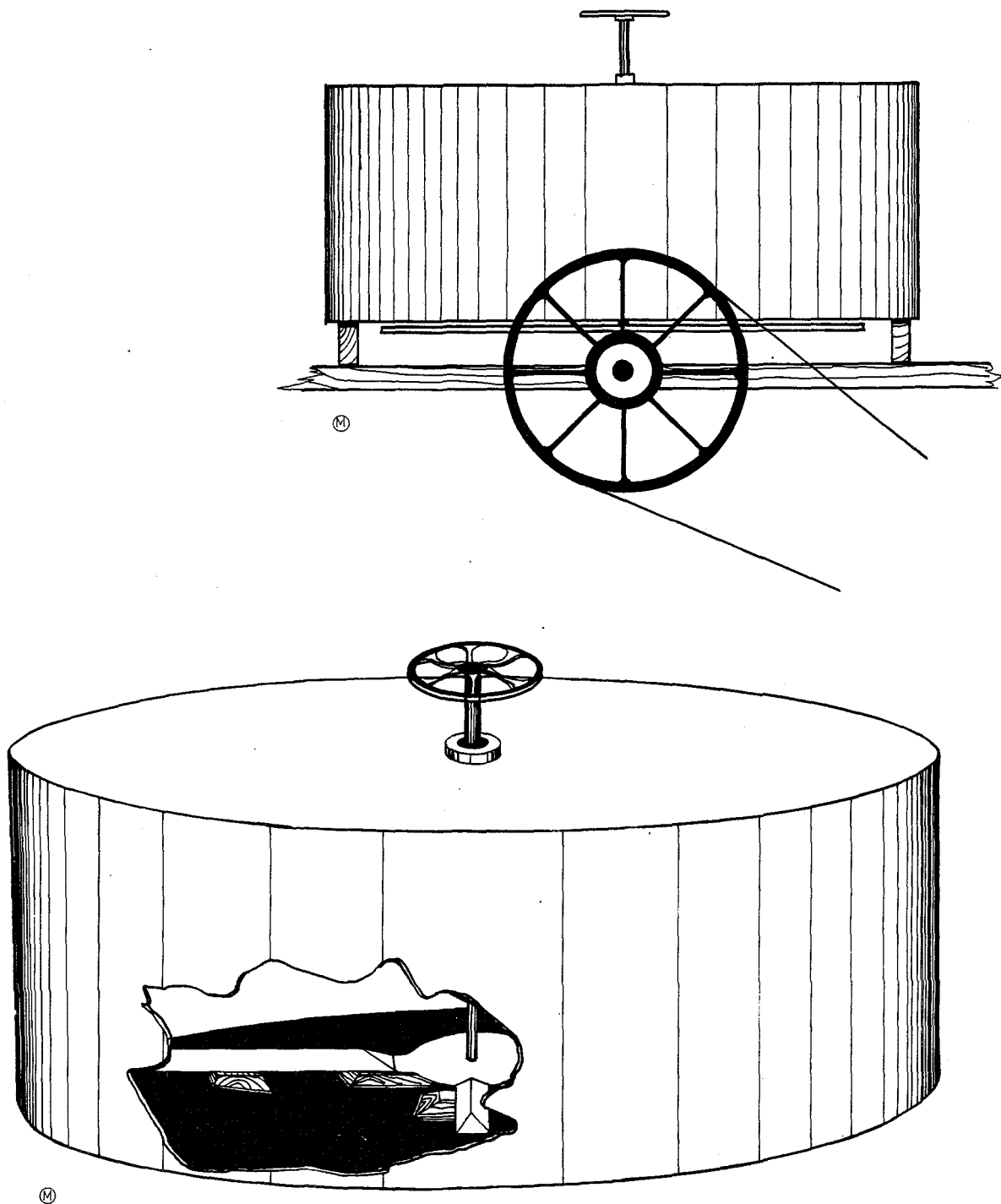
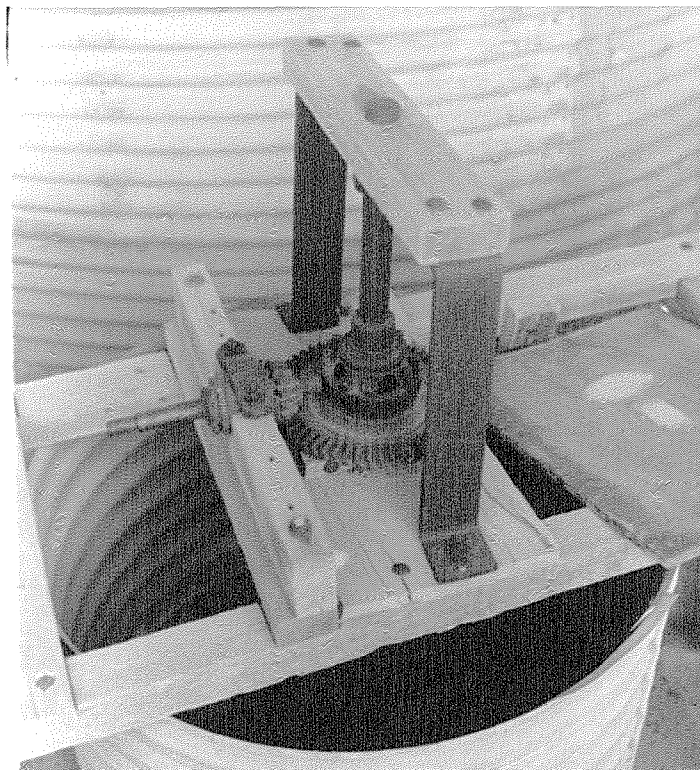
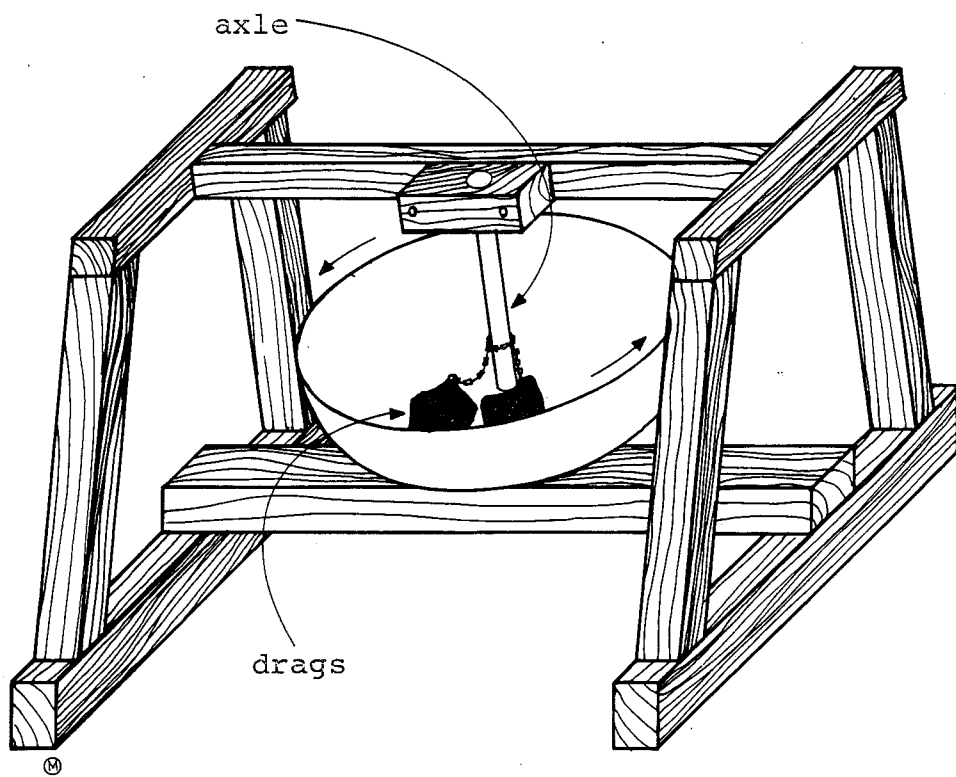
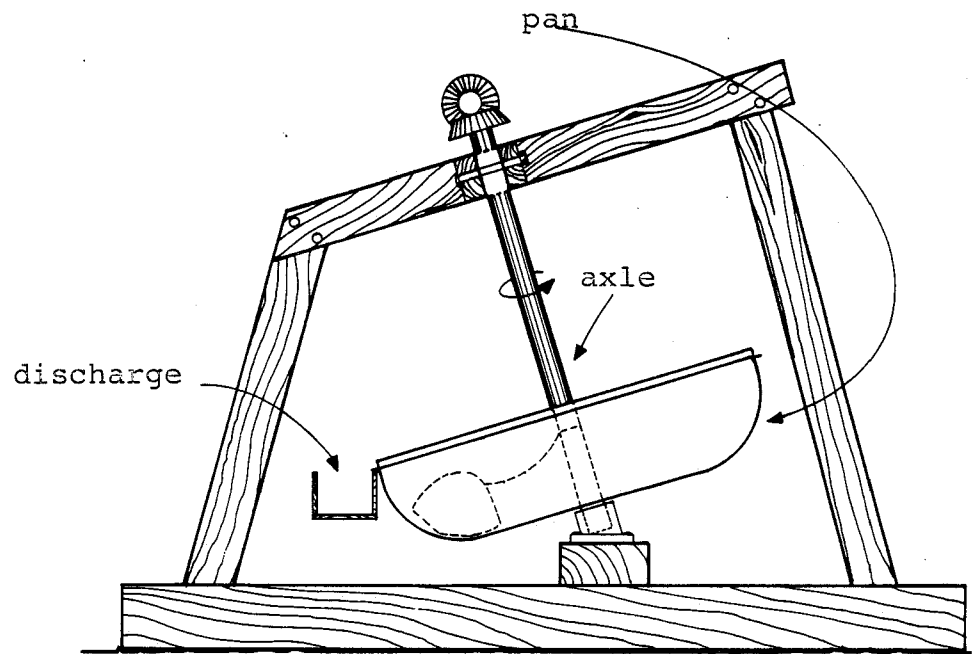


Figure 10: Settler



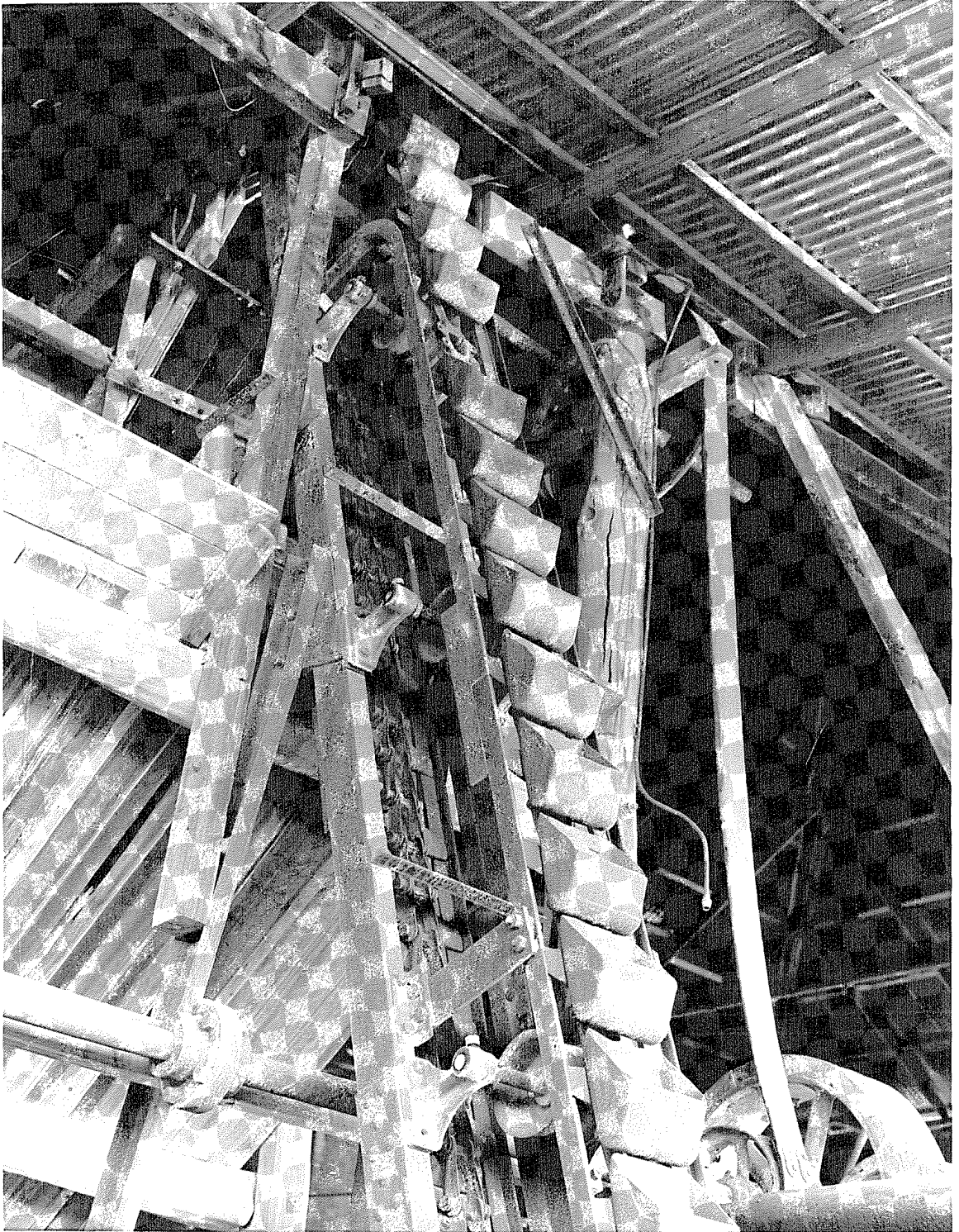
Settler - Venus battery



Figures 11 and 12 : Berdan Pans



Berdan pans - Venus battery



Bucket conveyor - Venus battery

it attracted much attention during the 1850s it was never adopted in Europe and had lost favour with American millmen by the 1870s.³⁵ In North Queensland, however, with local modifications to the original design, it was the favourite grinding pan: ninety-five of these machines were in use in Charters Towers by 1878.³⁶ The iron balls of the original were replaced as drags by blocks of cast iron weighing about 280lbs each, or even by lumps of granite, and rejected pans on the Venus site suggest an unsuccessful attempt to fit liners to reduce wear on the pan. The popularity of the Berdan on the Charters Towers field is understandable in terms of its cheapness and simplicity: it was the first machine to be manufactured locally after the establishment of a small foundry by Deane and Sadd during 1878.³⁷ Moreover it fitted admirably into local milling practice which demanded ever finer crushing and continued to rely totally on amalgamation for the recovery of the gold.

With the establishment of additional mills minor variations to the crushing-amalgamating-grinding process were introduced. At Thomas Mills' Wyndham, where the batteries from the London Mill at Ravenswood were set up to crush the ore from his General Wyndham mine, a reverberatory furnace was built. In this the concentrates from the buddle were oxidised to convert the pyrite (iron disulphide) into iron sulphate before grinding. Hutton

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35. They are not mentioned by André in his exhaustive *Treatise on Mining Machinery* of 1878. For the history of the Berdan pan see L.W. Hall, *Gold Mines of Merioneth* (Gloucester n.d.), pp. 23-24.
36. *AR*, 1878, p. 15. Other varieties of grinding pans were tried on the field but the Berdan remained the most widely used device.
37. Berdans were also made at Walkers Limited and at Brand and Drysbrough's Townsville foundry which was set up during 1877.

and Whitehead also introduced a furnace into their Venus mill, while Thomas Buckland used a revolving iron calciner. In 1880 E.H.T. Plant, who had bought into the Mary Louisa two years earlier, experimented with concentrating in Brown and Stanfields direct from the mortars. Nevertheless the assayers continued to demonstrate a gold loss of up to fifty percent.³⁸ To some observers, including Charters Towers Goldfield Warden, Philip Sellheim, these figures were unacceptable. With so much excellent machinery on the field, argued Sellheim, loss in the mills could not possibly exceed fifteen percent. The assay results, he claimed, were due to faulty sampling of the tested ore.³⁹ He was apparently vindicated by the disappointing yield from parcels of buddlings shipped to metallurgical works in Victoria, Swansea and Freiburg during 1883.⁴⁰ That he was wrong was ultimately demonstrated in later years when chemical methods of tailings treatment harvested much of the gold lost during this period. The real significance of the smelter results was that they showed the loss was occurring before the pulp reached the buddles - probably within the battery itself.

The strong tendency of sulphide ores to slime, as well as the more obvious requirements of mill economy, necessitated fast crushing and discharge. The longer the stone remained in the mortar the more likely it was to be pounded into slimes. In Charters Towers the method of ore preparation, the size of the mortars, the weight, speed and drop of the stamps and the depth, area and mesh

38. *Queenslander*, 7 December 1878.

39. *AR*, 1880, p. 10.

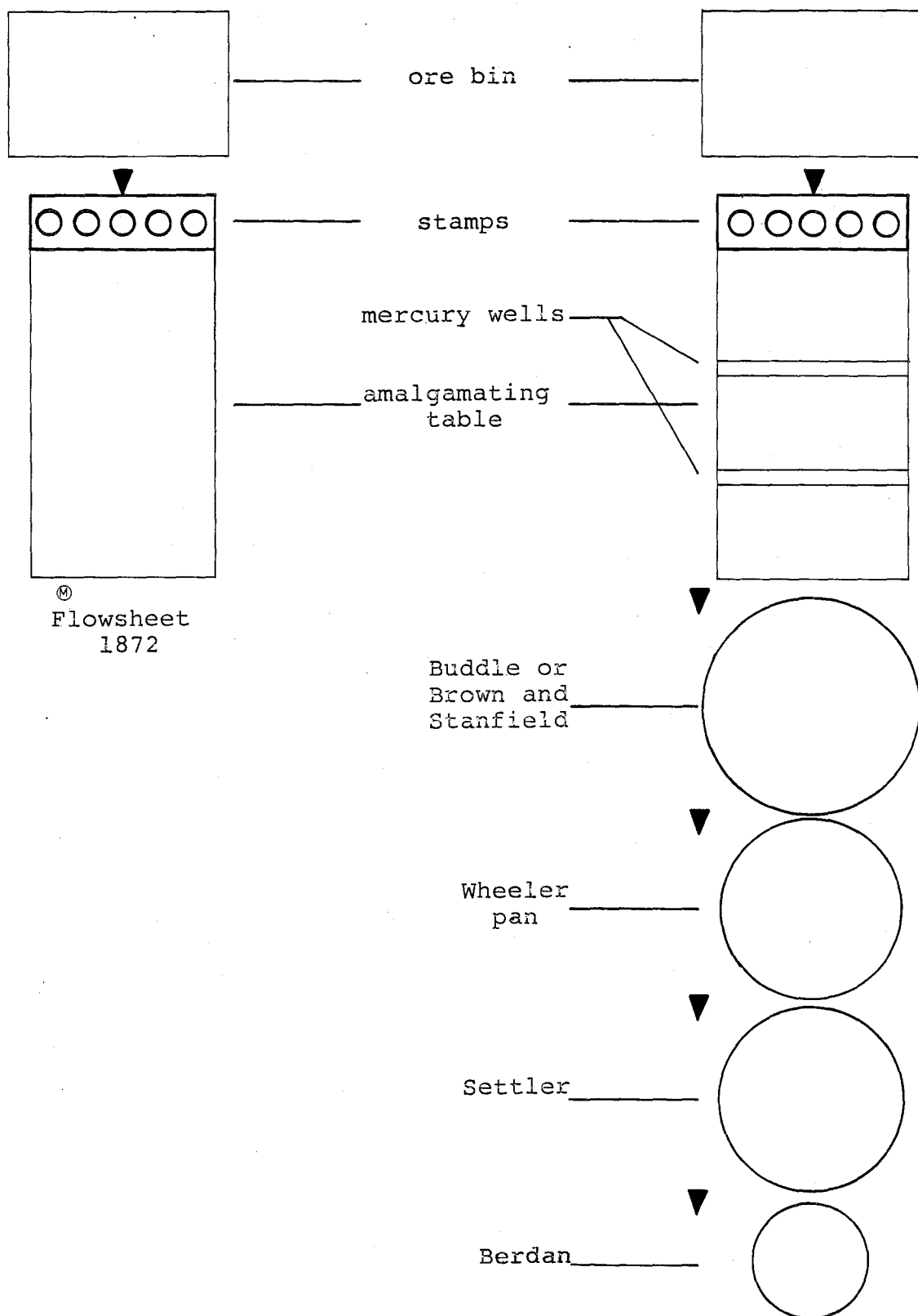
40. *AR*, 1883, p. 15.

of the discharge screens all contributed to the retention of the pulp in the box and the consequent production of unamalgamable slimes. Rock breakers to reduce the stone to small, evenly sized pieces before it was fed to the stamps, arrived late on the field. The first was installed during 1885 and they were not in common use until the end of the decade.⁴¹ Prior to this only rough hand breaking of the largest rocks was effected, a procedure which led to uneven feeding and inefficient operation of the stamps. Because of the general practice of inside amalgamation, mortars were too large, and so encouraged the pulp to remain in the box for a second, unnecessary, pulverisation. The stamps themselves were too light, had too long a drop and worked too slowly. Californian stamps could be as heavy as 1,400lbs, and MacLaren noted that 1,200lb stamps could be operated through a six inch drop at a rate of 110 blows per minute.⁴² While the type of ore crushed must ultimately determine the speed of the mill, the Charters Towers average of an 850lb stamp dropping ten inches seventy-five times a minute must be seen as an anachronism in the late nineteenth century. Further, the depth of discharge, that is the distance between the top of the dies and the bottom of the effective discharge screen surface, was too great.

Because the ore particles depend on the splash created by the stamps in the mortar to wash them up through the screen, it follows that the lower the screen is set the larger will be the particle that the splash is capable of lifting up to it. With discharge depths of between six and ten inches, as in the Charters Towers mills, only the smallest particles escaped; the others fell back onto the dies and were recrushed. Finally, regardless of how quickly

41. See figure 13.

42. MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, p. 20.



®
Flowsheet
1872

Flowsheet 1878

®

Figure 13

the ore is crushed the rate of discharge is still limited by the area and mesh of the discharge screen. On Charters Towers a divided screen with a mesh of 225 holes per square inch was used, another false principle. The entire battery was designed to crush the stone into the finest possible particles. As a result, slimes were the constant problem of the Charters Towers millmen, and a very considerable percentage of the gold was rendered unamalgamable before it reached the tables. Consequently the introduction of Wheeler and Berdan pans, although somewhat increasing the capture of free gold, compounded rather than cured the problem of loss through sliming, the extent of which was not fully recognised for at least another decade.⁴³

43. The principles of stamp milling are discussed in André, *A Descriptive Treatise on Mining Machinery*; Preston, *California Gold Mill Practices*; Richards, *A Textbook of Ore Dressing*; and S.J. Truscott, *A Textbook of Ore Dressing* (London 1923). American practice is discussed in T.A. Rickard, *A History of American Mining* (New York 1932). Charters Towers practice is discussed in Blane, "Report on the Conditions and Modes of Working on the Goldfields of Queensland"; MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*; and Donald Clark, *Australian Mining and Metallurgy* (Melbourne 1904).

CHAPTER 5. BUILDING A SOCIETY

Among these mines and mills a society was being created. By the mid-seventies the business area of Charters Towers, as laid off by Commissioner Charters in May 1872, was firmly established. When the municipality was declared in 1877 it embraced one square mile centred on Mosman Street. Millchester did not fall inside its boundaries, and later became the administrative centre of the Dalrymple Shire. Within the municipality much of the land was still unsurveyed, being occupied for domestic purposes under Miners' Rights. The business life of the field, however, focussed on the grid pattern of Gill, Deane, Bow, Ryan, Hodgkinson, Church, Aland, School and, particularly, Mosman Streets. By 1877 Mosman Street was divided into eighty-two allotments, many of them with very small front-ages. They contained nineteen of the municipality's twenty-one hotels and all but six of its fifty-seven shops. Also in the main street were the School of Arts hall, the Good Templar's Club, the post office and temporary police barracks, three banks, the offices of the *Towers Herald* newspaper, ten homes and five vacant allotments.

An examination of the valuation register for the municipality in 1877¹ reveals the pattern of land ownership in the first decade of the field. Only thirty-six of the Mosman Street blocks were owner-occupied, including those housing institutions such as the School of Arts, the banks and the post office. Of the other one hundred and forty-one freehold blocks in Charters Towers a mere forty-two were being used by their owners, the remainder being tenanted or vacant, probably held for speculation. In all one hundred people owned nearly all available land;

1. Charters Towers City Council, Valuation Register, 1877. 11 CHA/N1, QSA.



Aerial photograph of Charters Towers looking south-west from Millchester.

forty-five percent of which belonged to some fourteen firms and individuals. In other words, one and a half percent of the people listed as living within the municipality by the census of 1876² owned nearly half the land. A quarter of all available freeholds was held by fewer than half a percent of the population.

The two largest land holders at this time were Thomas Buckland and Thomas Mills. Thomas (later Sir Thomas) Buckland owned seventeen allotments in 1877. Four of these, including those occupied by his two businesses, were in Mosman Street where he also owned dining rooms and an undeveloped block of land. In other surveyed streets he rented out two houses and owned ten vacant allotments. Despite a sleeping partnership in the rich St. Patrick Block mine, Buckland was a businessman rather than a miner, having opened an assay office and a butcher's shop in Mosman Street in 1872. He had a network of useful connections including a merchant uncle in Sydney who had given him employment on his arrival from England during 1863, and a brother-in-law in the Queensland Cabinet.³ While in Charters Towers he played an important part in local affairs, becoming mayor in 1880. After 1892 he was to live in Sydney where, from 1922 to 1937, he was president of the Bank of New South Wales. He was knighted in 1935.⁴ Thomas Mills also owned seventeen blocks of freehold land, two of them in Mosman Street. Apart from his own home and offices,

2. Census of 1876, *V&P*, 1877, Vol. 2.

3. H.E. King, MLA Wide Bay 1870-4, Ravenswood 1875-83; Secretary for Mines and Public Works 1874-6; Speaker 1876-83; Crown Prosecutor Central District Court 1890-1910.

4. G.C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920* (Canberra 1972), p. 112.

The Census of 1876

%	North Kennedy	Queensland
Under 5 years old	16	15
Under 15 years old	28.57	36.9
Under 21 years old	34.98	29.61
Over 50 years old	3.78	5.79
Female	32.06	39.4
Adult Female*	14.73	16.78
of males unmarried	83.89	69.75
of females unmarried	54.59	60.58
of adult males unmarried	63.4	49.93
of adult females unmarried	3.42	11.75
of males widowed	2.61	2.93
of females widowed	3.94	7.34
illiterate	21.2	26.77
of adults illiterate	7	12.6
colonial born#	34.53	40.92
of males colonial born	26.52	35.07
of females colonial born	51.51	49.92
born in Great Britain	45.09	40.67
of males born in Great Britain	47.88	40.03
of females born in Great Britain	39.17	41.65
born in continental Europe	11.65	8
of males born in continental Europe	13	8.47
of females born in continental Europe	8.79	7.28
Church of England	41.24	35.76
Roman Catholic	27.74	24.9

* Adult is here used to mean 21 years of age and over

Colonial includes New Zealand

The census covers the entire North Kennedy district. Nevertheless the figures from this census have been used to generalise about the population of the goldfield since some ninety percent of the respondents lived on the field.

which extended over four allotments, and a two roomed wooden house which was tenanted, all his blocks were undeveloped speculations. Mills was also an Englishman, reputedly from London, who had arrived on the field in 1872. A shrewd and hard-headed businessman, he was also a very efficient mine manager. Two of his properties, the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham and Mills Day Dawn United, eventually ranked among the top four producers on the field. Although Mills was to return to England after the sale of the Block mine to an English company in 1886, he continued working as a London director of the company, and retained his interest in Charters Towers, which he was to visit periodically for many years. Indeed Mills became the promoter of the town's last great scheme, the proposed Lissner Park shaft, during 1913.

Other major landholders were Hamilton Rutherford, a Mosman Street chemist and speculator who owned four shops and a tenanted house in Mosman Street and seven unimproved allotments elsewhere, and the merchant firm of Brodziak and Rodgers which had interests spread throughout the northern goldfields. Apart from a house in Gill Street all of their property was in Mosman Street, and consisted of their own store, three other shops and four hotels. Indeed, of the twenty-one hotels in the municipality during 1877 only seven, the Southern Cross, the Royal, Owen's, the Sportsman's Arms, Gard's Clubhouse, the All Nations and the Canton, were worked by their owners. The rest were leased from local businessmen and women, including mill owner John Deane who owned the West Coast and Hishon's. Twenty-four of the fifty-seven shops were owner-occupied, the remainder being rented to their occupants by investors such as Alexander Malcolm, who had freehold title to five shops in Mosman Street, and James Burns of Burns, Philp Company, which firm had yet to open a branch in Charters

Towers. Fewer than half the houses erected on freehold land were owner occupied. However, outside the surveyed area, where settlers in possession of a miner's right could take up a quarter of an acre of land for residence purposes on the payment of a small fee, almost all the occupants had a chattel interest in their homes.⁵

Political power in the municipality tended to reflect the disposition of ownership of real and personal property. Under the Local Government Act of 1878 any person over the age of twenty-one who was responsible, either as owner or tenant, for the payment of rates, was allowed to vote in municipal elections. The balance of power was weighted in favour of business interests by the practice of multiple voting. An elector was entitled to one vote if he was rated on property valued at less than £50, two for valuations between £50 and £100, and three votes if higher rates were paid.⁶ This system ensured that some ten percent of the population of the municipality controlled sixty percent of all votes.⁷ It is not, therefore, surprising that the Council which was elected at the first municipal poll, held in 1877, was composed almost entirely of businessmen of substance. The exception was Henry Wyndham Palmer, a not very successful mining agent whose connections, however, were impeccable. The Palmers were a landed Northern Irish family. Henry's brother, Sir Arthur Palmer, was MLA for Port Curtis from 1866 to 1878 when he won the seat of Brisbane which he held until 1881. During this period he

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5. Homes on protection areas were personal rather than real property but could be rented, leased or mortgaged. 38 VIC No. 11, Sec. 9.
 6. C.P. Harris, *Local Government and Regionalism in Queensland 1859 to 1977* (Canberra 1978), p. 16.
 7. Charters Towers City Council, Electoral Roll 1878. 11 CHA/7, QSA.

held a variety of Cabinet positions including the Premier-ship, which he filled from 1870 to 1874. Arthur Palmer was married to Cecilia Mosman; another of Hugh Mosman's sisters, Harriette, married a later Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith. The other members of the Council were Thomas Buckland, Thomas Mills and Hamilton Rutherford; mill owner John Deane and auctioneer William Jackson; and John MacDonald, a Charters Towers merchant, became the first mayor.⁸ Plural voting was also used for elections for the Colonial legislature, although this may have been less important than the non-payment of members in assuring that only the wealthier citizens were elected.

Two colonial polls were held during Charters Towers' first decade. In 1873 John Macrossan was elected for the seat of Kennedy, and in 1878, under the new Electoral Act, Henry Wyndham Palmer and Francis Horace Stubley were voted into what was by then a two member constituency. Macrossan was an Irish gold immigrant to Victoria in 1853. After following the rushes through Victoria, New South Wales, New Zealand and Queensland, he arrived in Ravenswood during the early days of the field. He became politically active in the Ravenswood Miners Protection Association, a lobby group set up during 1871 by the politicians MacDevitt⁹ and King. While secretary of this Association he was convicted of an assault on the Gold Commissioner of Ravens-

8. *Northern Miner*, 22 August 1877.

9. Edward O'Donnell MacDevitt, a barrister, emigrated from Ireland and arrived in Brisbane in 1865. He was MLA for Kennedy from 1870 to 1873 and for Ravenswood from then until 1874, in which year he was Attorney-General. D.B. Waterson, *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament 1860-1929* (Canberra 1972), p. 114.

wood, William Hackett, during 1872.¹⁰ Although described by his biographer¹¹ as a miner, and indeed generally known as a "hatter" or solitary digger, his ability to finance an election campaign and to support himself as an unpaid member of parliament suggests a broader financial base. Certainly he owned substantial interests in at least one Charters Towers mine, the Dan O'Connell, and bought into a pyrites treatment plant while in office.¹² Further he owned a controlling interest in the *Northern Advocate* and, according to an admittedly hostile Thadeus O'Kane¹³ also controlled the *Townsville Herald*.¹⁴ In the Assembly Macrossan began by sitting on the cross benches, but in 1876 threw his weight behind the conservatives led by McIlwraith.

In 1878, after a rowdy campaign, Macrossan was outpolled by Henry Palmer and mining magnate, Frank Stubley. Neither was an active member, and after a series of poor mining investments Palmer was forced to return to Charters Towers before his term was up in order to recoup his finances. During his time in the Legislature he too supported McIlwraith. Stubley, though born in England was, like Macrossan, a Roman Catholic and was helped to victory by the vigorous campaigning of the Irish sector of his

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10. See John Josephski, "Hackett vs Macrossan", unpublished typescript.
 11. Harrison Bryan, "John Murtagh Macrossan: Jack the Hatter", in D.J. Murphy and R.B. Joyce (eds.), *Queensland Political Portraits 1859-1952* (Brisbane 1978).
 12. *Queenslander*, 28 August 1878.
 13. Editor of the *Northern Miner*.
 14. Bryan, "John Murtagh Macrossan", fn. 11. See also James Manion, *Paper Power in North Queensland: A History of Journalism in Townsville and Charters Towers* (Townsville 1982), pp. 25, 33, 151.

electorate. Unlike Palmer he supported the liberal party led by Samuel Griffith but was rarely in the Assembly as he had taken up residence in Melbourne during his term.

It is probably pointless to speculate about why, during this first decade, a community of miners so often supported conservative politicians. In the first place the division between the parties was imprecise, support being given on an issue or even a personal basis. Secondly the Charters Towers vote was dominated by property owners rather than by working miners. In any case these groups at this time believed that they had a community of interest: if the mining industry flourished all would prosper. Macrossan won his Kennedy seat on a promise of support for the industry and, as Bryan pointed out, later lost it through a failure to vote for a rail link between Charters Towers and the coast.¹⁵ He was replaced by Stubley who vowed that "he would do for the miners what was never before done for them in Australia".¹⁶ Stubley was not harmed by Griffith's announcement on 15 November 1878 that tenders were to be called for supplying sleepers, piles and sawn timber for the Charters Towers railway.¹⁷ It was in part due to the lack of a rail link that most of the housing at this time was still somewhat flimsy. More than seventy percent of domestic accommodation utilized primitive building materials such as bark and saplings, wattle and

15. *Ibid.*, p. 102. Macrossan was a strong supporter of North Queensland separation, which he worked for during his later career. See also Chapter 7.

16. *Queenslander*, 21 December 1878.

17. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1878.

daub, slabs or logs. By far the most popular was bark from which nearly half the houses in the municipality were constructed.¹⁸ Most had either one or two rooms although bark huts of four or five rooms were not unknown. Approximately eighteen percent of all homes in Charters Towers had one room, while about sixty percent had two. However of the houses built of primitive materials the figures would be about twenty-three percent and sixty-five percent respectively. The living conditions of the working miner were described by the mining correspondent of the *Queenslander* who visited Charters Towers during 1878:

[T]he houses, or rather the substitutes for houses, in which the working population reside, are not at all what one would expect to find on so old established a goldfield. Old battered wrecks of places, built of bark and old kerosene tins, are scattered throughout the district; indeed I have not seen one decent dwelling owned by a working miner. It is not that wages are low, for from £3 to £3/10/- are the current rates. Men who have been here for years live in bark gunyahs similar to those constructed upon a new rush; and they look much worse than the latter, because the bark has been shrunk and split by the weather, and pieces of old kerosene tins cover the bare places. Gardens there are none, save those cultivated by the Chinese. 19

Kitchens were rare, and where they did exist were normally housed in detached bark huts. However many residents, particularly single men, bought full board at one of the hotels for around one guinea a week.²⁰

18. Charters Towers City Council, Valuation Register, 1877. 11 CHA/N1, QSA.

19. *Queenslander*, 8 November 1878.

20. *Northern Miner*, 27 January 1877. See also Peter Bell, *Houses and Mining Settlement in North Queensland 1861-1920*, PhD. Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland 1982.

Accommodation however was emerging as a class indicator. There were a small but growing number of weather-board cottages.²¹ Mainly two-roomed, iron roofed structures (although some still used bark for their roofs), a few already had verandahs if only to their front elevations. A very few five or six-roomed weatherboard homes had been constructed to house the more prosperous. Thomas Mills' house on the corner of Mosman Street and Rainbow Road had five main rooms and a verandah as well as a detached kitchen with two servants' rooms and another three-roomed building used for offices. Next door to Mills the squatter James Kirk had a town house of five rooms, a verandah, bathroom and kitchen. Brodziak and Rodgers housed their Charters Towers representative Israel Lemel, in Aland Street in a six-roomed verandah cottage while mine-owner William Thomas Smith had a six-roomed house in Gill Street. Nearby, at the corner of Gill and Ryan Streets, Dr. Joseph Harvey Little, the surgeon, occupied a neat double fronted cottage of six rooms. Another three of these substantial homes stood on Crown land outside the surveyed area. Two belonged to mill owners: John Deane and E.H.T Plant each occupied five rooms and a kitchen adjacent to their works. The third, near Mosman Street, was the five-roomed home of Antonio Glover.²²

Despite the ramshackle appearance of the bulk of the town's domestic buildings, the population of Charters Towers during its first decade achieved a degree of stability unusual for a North Queensland mining town. During 1873 nearly seventy percent of the original miners left the field, either returning south after the disastrous rush of the previous year, or setting out for the great new

21. Bell, Houses and Mining Settlement, Chapter 4.

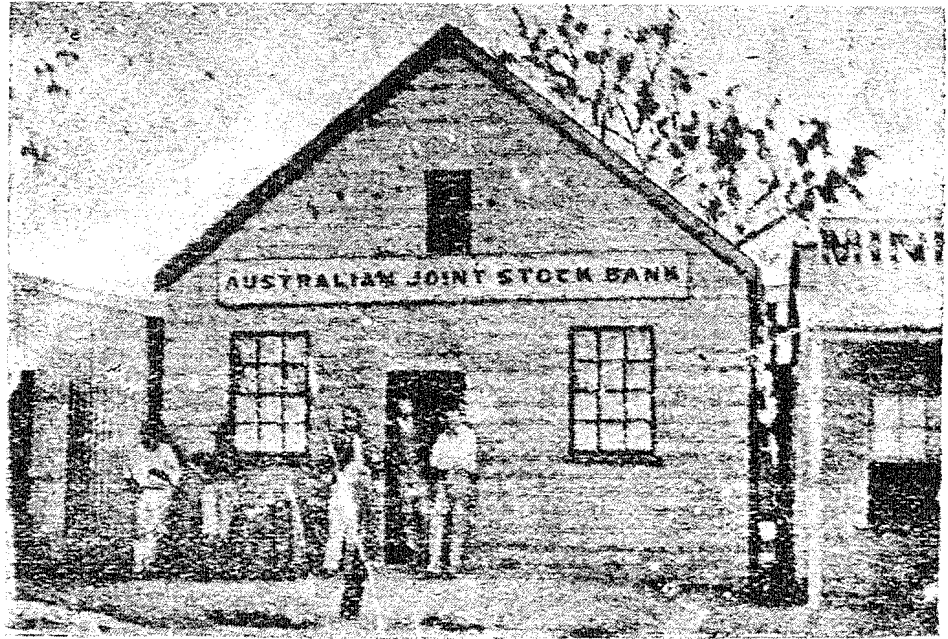
22. Charters Towers City Council, Valuation Register, 1877. 11 CHA/N1, QSA.

alluvial field on the Palmer River. Although the business community was not diminished the population was halved and did not reach its 1872 level again until 1879. The newcomers were less transient, and although other rushes were to disturb the town, the number of families arriving testified to its growing stability. At the end of 1872 adult males made up nearly ninety percent of the population.²³ When the first census was taken in 1876 the proportion had dropped to less than half.²⁴ An unusual number, particularly of the men, were immigrants. Only twenty-six percent of males had been born in Australia or New Zealand, and many of these would have been children - a third of all males on the field were minors. Interestingly fifty-two percent of all females were native born, two percent more than for the colony as a whole. This suggests that many of the men had migrated as diggers in earlier years and had married in the colonies before travelling to Charters Towers. Nearly forty percent of the population of North Kennedy had been born in England, Ireland or Wales. A further five percent were Scottish. The district also had a significantly higher proportion of immigrants from continental Europe and from China than had Queensland as a whole.

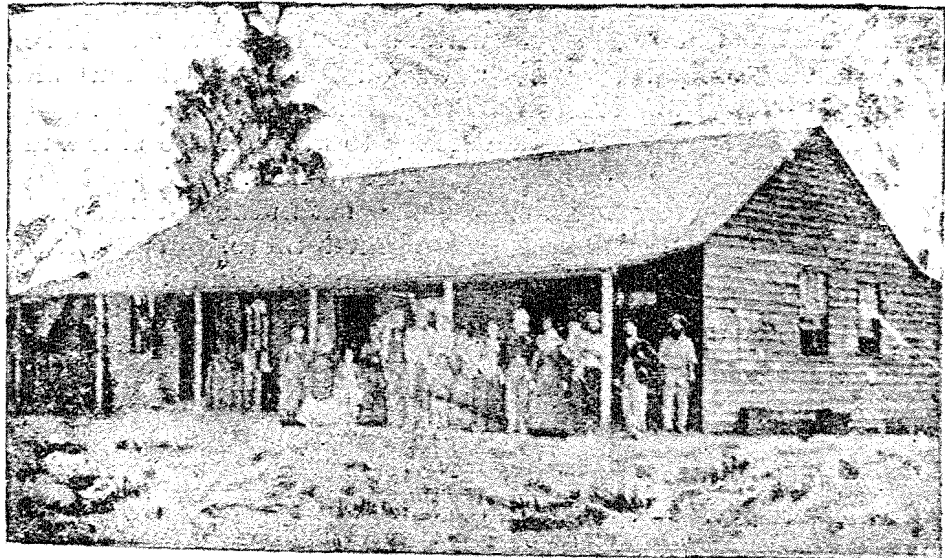
These origins may be reflected in the unusual strength of the two main religious denominations in the district: forty-one percent of the population described itself as belonging to the Church of England, while a further twenty-

23. *Statistics of Queensland*, 1872, p. 6.

24. See figure 11. In 1876 the adult (over 21 years) male population of North Kennedy comprised slightly over forty-two percent of the whole. However these two percentages are not directly comparable since the first is an estimation by the Gold Commissioner of the total population minus "women and children", a description which may have included males between the ages of 15 and 21. Moreover the districts are not identical since the census covers the entire North Kennedy district.



A.J.S. Bank, Milchester, 1873.



ROYAL HOTEL, 1874.

eight percent was Roman Catholic. However this may have been influenced by the slowness with which the smaller non-conformist churches established themselves in Charters Towers,²⁵ where sectarianism early became a social and political force. The Roman Catholic community, which built a small chapel on the field during its first year,²⁶ was large and influential. Its members included three of the four politicians in office during the first decade: MacDevitt, Macrossan and Stubbley. The first manager of the Queensland National Bank, which played an important part in financing the early development of the field, arrived in 1873 to take up his post in the company of the visiting priest, Fr. J.P.M. Connolly, and had set up a committee to finance a permanent church building in Charters Towers before he started work in June.²⁷ The Presbyterian congregation, on the other hand, embraced only ten percent of the population and was inactive as a separate organisation until 1873 when the Rev. James Carson was appointed visiting minister to the northern rural communities by the church at Rockhampton.

Neither Fr. Connolly nor Rev. Carson was a tolerant man. While Connolly thundered from his pulpit denunciations of Catholics who had joined insurance schemes set up by the Manchester Unity (Oddfellows) and other lodges, Carson founded a branch of the Orange Lodge in Charters Towers. Connolly's refusal to preside over the funeral of

25. Sharon Ann Hayston, *Interaction of Religion and Society in Charters Towers 1872-1900*. BA Hons. Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland 1976. Chapter One.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

27. *Queenslander*, 10 May 1873.

a negligent parishioner shocked the community, while Carson's virulent letters to the press condemning Catholicism and alcohol as instruments of the devil, alienated his more moderate parishioners. St. Patrick's Day was celebrated on the goldfield with parades, sports and an evening ball. The Battle of the Boyne celebrations were smaller and grimmer, a parade followed by a lodge meeting.²⁸ In July 1877 the *Northern Miner* reported that there "are establishments in Charters Towers which contain Orange employees who have already driven Catholic customers away."²⁹ Later in the year both Carson and Connolly were replaced. Denis Fouhy became Charters Towers' first resident Roman Catholic priest while Carson, who had been resident since 1874, was relieved by Rev. C.E. Amos. Two years later Amos left the Presbyterian Church to become an Anglican deacon and no new minister arrived for another three years.³⁰ Even so Carson and Connolly left a legacy of intolerance which festered within the community for many decades.

Predictably the population of the field was relatively youthful, about thirty-five percent being under twenty-one and only seven and a half percent over forty-five. As on most mining fields there was a decided social imbalance: nearly two thirds of the adult males but only three and a half percent of the females were unmarried. Indeed there was no single female over the age of forty. It is likely that many of the marriages were fairly recent since the proportion of the population under five years of age was higher than that for Queensland generally, while the

28. *Northern Miner*, 14, 18 and 27 July 1877; also *Queenslander*, 20 March 1875.

29. *Northern Miner*, 18 July 1877.

30. Hayston, *Interaction of Religion and Society*, pp. 6-12.

number of school age children was nearly ten percent lower. Interestingly the 1876 census suggests that Charters Towers was an unusually literate community. More than eighty-eight percent of the adults on the field could both read and write, while another four percent could read. To some extent this may be explained by the comparative youth of the population; however it should be noted that the Townsville district, with a significantly lower average age, also had a lower literacy rate.³¹

As the number of family units on the field increased a recognisable nineteenth century urban society slowly took shape. For many years social life centred around the hotels, a fact which distressed some sectors of the community. Early in 1873 B. Palmer, who occupied the chair of the Charters Towers Committee, a progress association which appears to have exercised some influence as a lobby group in the years prior to the election of a local authority, complained that almost every second house was licenced "saying in effect 'Come in and drink; participate in the revelry of the dance and song; admire our barmaids'... bedaubed with the glitter of the stage and decked out in all the colours of the rainbow, flitting about as decoy birds and enticing the hard-working miner to join them in their hollow laughter and noisy revelry....Undermining the moral and domestic welfare of the community."³² Late in 1875 the Millchester correspondent of the *Queenslander*, probably James Carter Spencer a Charters Towers solicitor, reported that no "goldfield in the colonies of the same

31. Census of Queensland, *V&P*, 1876.

32. *Queenslander*, 11 February 1873. Palmer states that during a recent visit Roman Catholic Bishop Quinn had also condemned the number of hotels on the field.

importance in point of population and resources was ever so devoid of the means of rational, social and intellectual enjoyment, during the hours of relaxation from labour, as this field has been until very recently".³³

These middle class complaints demonstrate the extent to which the social order was already in place. For working people in urban communities the public house throughout the nineteenth century was the main source of relaxation, not only in the colonies but also, as Paul Thompson has pointed out, in the parent society.³⁴ Further, on the northern goldfields these institutions had acquired functions other than the provision of alcohol and company. For many they also provided accommodation, a function implicitly recognised by the temperance movement when it opened a Good Templars Club and accommodation in Mosman Street. In 1877 the twenty hotels within the municipality ranged in size from five to seventeen main rooms, averaging ten. Another function was the provision of meals for non-residents. As Peter Bell has noted, considerable numbers of people, both married and single, regularly ate in hotel dining rooms, paying a weekly tariff.³⁵ This is further supported by the existence of only one eating house ("dining rooms") not attached to licenced premises in the municipality. The hotels also provided much of the field's entertainment. They hosted committee meetings, indoor sporting events and "settlements" after the many foot, horse and goat races enjoyed by the towns -folk. In

33. *Queenslander*, 11 December 1873.

34. Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians* (St. Albans 2nd Edition 1977). In the late nineteenth century the city of York had one public house for every three hundred people.

35. Bell, *Houses and Mining Settlement*, Chapter 4.

August 1874 W.T. Toll's North Australia Hotel added to its dining room a theatre to accommodate three to four hundred people.³⁶ Shortly afterwards, Arthur St. Vincent opened a theatre at his Sportsman's Arms Hotel where he provided vaudeville style entertainment and melodramas, occasionally using visiting players, but more often performed by Arthur and "Madam" St. Vincent themselves. Charters Towers audiences were indulgent of the quality but demanding as to the quantity of their entertainment, and particularly enjoyed locally written material spiced with references to goldfield identities and events.

During 1875 the hotels experienced competition when the Oddfellows and the Masons erected large corrugated iron halls. These were used for a variety of "intellectual treats and enjoyable entertainments"³⁷ organised by church groups as well as by lodge members. The Mason's hall was used by the Anglican community for Sunday services, while the Good Templars held open meetings there, ameliorating their didactic purpose with songs and recitations. During the daytime it was, when required, used as a court house. The Masons and the Oddfellows conducted the earliest public balls, which attracted the attention of both local and Brisbane newspapers. The Oddfellows' hall was also hired out to visiting theatre troupes as a "place of public entertainment". Until their first church was built Presbyterians also used the building for services each Sunday evening.³⁸

36. *Queenslander*, 15 August 1874.

37. *Ibid.*, 11 December 1875.

38. *Ibid*; also 25 September 1875. See Chapter 2 for reference to the early use of an hotel as a courthouse.

Lodge membership was a significant social indicator in both Britain and the colonies. While lodge office bearers were drawn almost exclusively from the white collar sector, the membership included all "respectable" social groups. Insurance was the prerogative of those in regular employment, the upper echelons of the nineteenth century working class. It indicated stability and settled habits and was a hedge against the dramatic decline into absolute poverty which was a constant threat and frequent reality in an era which provided little public assistance for the old, sick, injured, unemployed or incompetent. Moreover it reflected an important social division arising within the working class between the fully and respectably employed and the casually or disreputably employed. For the respectable working class the field provided comparatively high wages, home ownership (or at least a chattel interest in a bark hut) and a perception of opportunities for advancement for themselves and their children. For a significant proportion of the population however there was a constant threat of mines laying off men when stoping gave way to shaft sinking or transport problems lowered profitability; of mills closing from machine breakdowns or water shortages; or of business fluctuations when new fields were rushed. The men and women thus affected faced a high cost of living or a long and impossibly expensive journey back to the coast. Not everyone prospered in Charters Towers.

SECTION 2. PRIMITIVE CAPITALISM

CHAPTER 6. COMPANIES AND CAPITAL

Although some very sound properties, including the Band of Hope and Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, were floated during the 1882 boom many of the companies, designed to reopen mines whose surface workings had been unable to finance their development at depth, were unsuccessful. Their nominal capital was generally £24,000¹ which should have been adequate for the work, however in the tighter monetary conditions of 1883 and 1884 the local speculators, who made up the majority of their shareholders, soon lost patience with the "dead work" entailed and refused to pay repeated calls on their shares. The Warden's Court dealt with a constant stream of applications for exemptions from labour requirements as new companies postponed the inevitable forfeiture of ground. Confidence, though, was restored by an enormous increase in production during 1884 when the field's output rose by fifty-seven percent.² Despite the fact that this increase was almost entirely due to the yield from two mines, the Day Dawn PC (30,130 ounces) and the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham (15,956 ounces), and encouraged by an easing financial situation and a sharp drop in the prices of wool and wheat which reduced their attractiveness as an investment area,³ the number of companies on the field rose during 1885 from thirty-nine to ninety-three.⁴

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1. Register of Companies, Charters Towers. MWO 11A/T1, QSA.
 2. AR., 1884, p. 5. The confidence inspired was reflected by the publication, in May 1884, of the *Charters Towers and North Queensland Mining Herald*, a monthly which ran for five issues.
 3. Wheat prices were forty percent and wool prices fifteen percent below those prevailing at the end of the 1870s. Hall, *The Stock Exchange of Melbourne*, p. 120.
 4. AR., 1885, p. 16.

Estimated Production from Principal Lodes

Lode	Ore in tons	Gold in fine oz.	Remarks
Brilliant	2,300,000	2,100,000	Including "New Queen Cross", Victoria Queen & Caledonia
Day Dawn	1,600,000	1,400,000	Including the Mexican
Queen	160,000	185,000	Including Sunburst
Victory	125,000	165,000	Including Papuan
St. Patrick	64,000	85,000	Incomplete. Total Probably exceeds 100,000 ounces
Rainbow	64,000	80,000	Incomplete
Stockholm ("Cross" lode)	72,000	58,000	
Lady Maria	26,000	56,000	
Identity	33,000	43,000	
North Australian	25,000	42,000	Incomplete
"Old" Queen Cross	37,000	41,000	
John Bull	44,000	41,000	
Wellington	36,000	36,000	
St. George	20,000	32,000	
Columbia		32,000	
Golden Alexander	25,000	28,000	
Just-in-Time	24,000	27,000	Incomplete
Ruby	21,000	23,000	
Stockholm (Comstock)	26,000	23,000	
Black Jack	19,000	19,000	
Moonstone ("Cross") lode		14,000	
Clark's Moonstone		14,000	
Moonstone		13,000	

Source: *Levingston, Ore Deposits and Mines of the Charters Towers 1:250,000 Sheet Area, p. 26.*

Again, many of the companies were unsuccessful; this time, however, the failures were more predictable. The *Northern Miner* remarked that "a perfect mania has seized on the people for forming companies on every available piece of land there is a chance of striking a reef on, and others have been taken up where there is not the slightest chance of ever getting on a reef."⁵ The warden expressed concern about "wild cats" and about the share manipulations of unscrupulous secretaries and mine managers.⁶ Partly as a response to such practices an attempt was made to regularize the market by opening a public stock exchange. The short-lived Charters Towers Mining Exchange which opened on 1 August 1885 was unusual in that its initiators were businessmen and mine managers rather than brokers. Indeed it is likely that the refusal of the established brokerage firms to participate was largely responsible for the failure of the enterprise.⁷ In any event it would appear that Charters Towers' success in attracting British capital during this period owed more to developments in Britain than to the efforts of developers in Charters Towers.

McCarty has pointed out that all capital markets have a speculative section which is mainly operative in boom conditions. He suggests that British investment in overseas mining before 1900 was largely a function of this section and was consequently dependent on upturns in the trade

5. *Northern Miner*, 6 October 1885.

6. *AR.*, 1885, p. 16.

7. In addition to the private exchanges which flourished in Charters Towers, another public stock exchange was opened in 1890.

cycle.⁸ During the boom of 1881-2 the main areas of British speculation were the Indian gold mines, but these were almost totally discredited by 1884. Thus when the cycle began another upturn in the northern spring of 1886 British investors needed a new field for share gambling. Attention had already been drawn to Queensland by the great Mount Morgan mine which, although it was not floated until later in the year, was already producing prodigious quantities of gold,⁹ and as the Day Dawn mines reached their peak it was natural that they should attract the interest of the stock market. Thus the staging of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London at the end of June was opportune.

While the timing of these events was outside local control, Charters Towers' mining men were not slow to maximise the opportunities presented. A local Working Committee of the Colonial Exhibition, funded by subscriptions,¹⁰ collected photographs, figures and maps to be displayed in the 11,400 square feet which comprised the Queensland Court, together with an impressive 1,709 ounce cake of retorted gold from the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham

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8. J.W. McCarty, *British Investment in Overseas Mining 1880-1914*, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge 1960, p. 245. This presents an interesting contrast with Blainey's theory that the initial development of mineral fields tends to "coincide with a trough in the trade cycle." See Blainey, "A Theory of Mineral Discovery".
 9. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining* (Melbourne 2nd Edition 1969), p. 237.
 10. The subscribers were so enthusiastic that the Committee had to dispose of a surplus of ninety-seven pounds after the Exhibition had closed. *Northern Miner*, 17 June 1887.

mine. The focus of the display, however, was a fully equipped ore treatment plant which, amid great noise and excitement, treated 200 tons of quartz to produce bars of fine gold.¹¹ The quartz consisted of half ton samples from leading Queensland mines including Mosman, North Queen, Day Dawn PC, Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, Queen No. 2 and Victory, as well as mines at Gympie, Ravenswood and the Palmer. A group of local businessmen, Hugh Mosman, E.H.T. Plant, James Stirling, George Ievers, Thomas Mills, John McDonald and L.W. Marsland, who were at "home"¹² at the time assiduously fanned enthusiasm by relaying news of dividends cabled from Charters Towers to London throughout the Exhibition.¹³

With the economic climate ripe for speculation and the investors' attention drawn to the field, company formation was further assisted by new legislation: *The Mining Companies Act of 1886*¹⁴ brought "no liability" and "limited liability" companies under the same Act and simplified their winding up by giving sole powers of dissolution and administration to the warden. The new Act also made provision for foreign shareholdings by requiring six months notice of forfeiture of shares held outside the colonies as compared with twenty-six days for local owners. Further legislation extended the ambit of the companies' operations by authorising the issue of gold mining leases on reserve lands. The Act allowed

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11. "Report on the Colonial and Indian Exhibition", reprinted in the *Northern Miner*, 10 August 1886.
 12. It is interesting to note that both the Irish editor of the *Northern Miner*, Thadeus O'Kane, and the German-born warden, Philip Sellheim, used "home" as a synonym for England.
 13. *AR.*, 1886, p. 17.
 14. 50 VIC No. 9.

reserve areas to be put up for auction in the event of more than one application being received, a provision which led to a scandal over the lease of land under the School Reserve. The presumed value of this area was great; numerous applications were received and at the ensuing auction, bidding was so keen that it realised an annual rental of £900 an acre or £4,500 a year for the lease. Eventually the Day Dawn School Reserve Company, which was the highest bidder, refused to pay more than the normal one pound an acre. The lease was declared forfeit but the company won it back at the normal rate. No gold was found under the Boys' School.¹⁵ Later in the year the *British Companies Act* of 1886¹⁶ clarified the position of British companies formed to operate in Queensland. The stage was set for overseas investors. In August, the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham was floated in London, followed by the Bonnie Dundee, No. 2 Queen and Mosman before the end of the year.¹⁷ The long awaited British investment had arrived.

While the capital inflow was welcomed by the mine owners and businessmen of the field, the wage miners were less sanguine. Some equated British money with British wages and, worse, an inflow of migrant, probably coloured labour. Undoubtedly these fears encouraged moves towards industrial organisation, although more tangible factors, both in Charters Towers and in other parts of the colonies, had a greater influence. By 1887 the population of the field had reached 11,500, including some 2,500 women and nearly 4,500 children.

15. Lees, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 20.

16. 50 VIC No. 31.

17. McCarty, *British Investment in Overseas Mining*, pp. 54-56.

About 2,000 of the men worked as miners, most of the others being employed in trade or commerce or in one of the quartz mills, sawmills, engineering works and so forth which provided the mining industry with its infrastructure.¹⁸ Although 157 mines were registered as being worked (138 by joint stock companies), the workforce was heavily concentrated in a few of the larger concerns, some six percent of which were responsible for seventy percent of the field's production. Indeed, only seventy-three of the 157 mines had crushings during the year.¹⁹ The Day Dawn PC and the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, which were responsible for forty-three percent of the total yield, employed about 350 underground miners between them, the No. 2 Queen had seventy-six and Bonnie Dundee fifty,²⁰ in addition to a large surface workforce engaged in their mills and treatment works. This concentration of labour provided suitable conditions for the industrial developments currently taking place outside the field to spread to Charters Towers. In October 1886 the Miners' Union was formed.²¹

Mine owners and government authorities evinced little concern about unions at this stage, indeed some were actively supportive. While the MU secretary corresponded with W.G. Spence about the purchase of regalia, Warden Sellheim wrote

18. *AR.*, 1887, p. 22. These figures are unusually accurate for a nineteenth century mining warden's report as a census was taken during 1886.

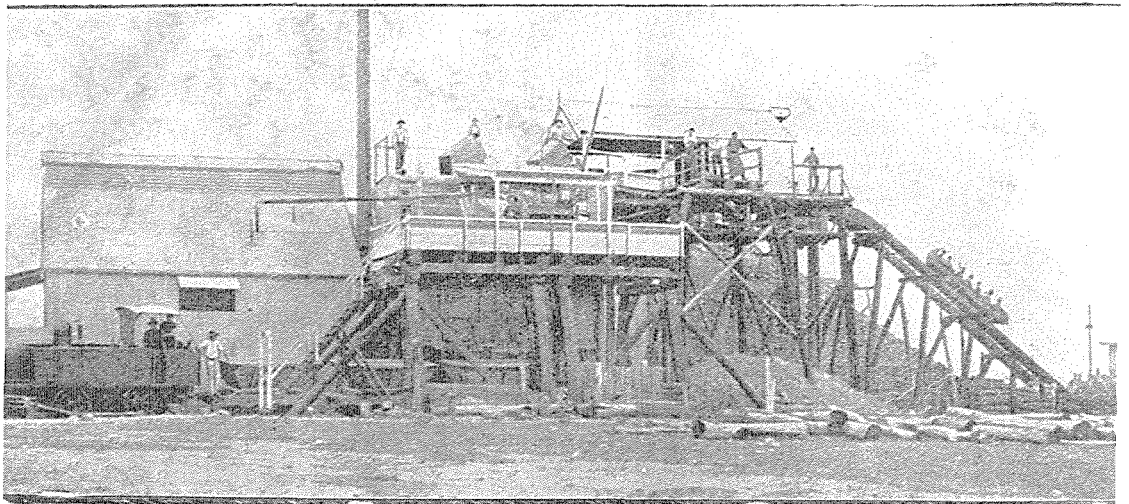
19. Production figures are computed from the Annual Reports of the Department of Mines.

20. *AR.*, 1887, pp. 20-21.

21. See Chapter 8.



GOING ON SHIFT AT THE DAY DAWN P.C.



DAY DAWN P.C.—MAIN UNDERLIE SHAFT

that it "will be beneficial to all in the long run, provided it is carried out on the same prudent lines of moderation and common sense as it has been commenced with."²² It is likely that the function of the union was seen as social and political, in line with the activities of the earlier associations. Far more absorbing was the constant threat of water shortage.

Despite the establishment of a municipality during 1877, most drinking water was still collected in corrugated iron tanks erected outside houses. When, as frequently happened in Charters Towers, the rainfall was not sufficient to replenish the tanks, residents were obliged to resort to wells dug on the flats which were often polluted by seepage from the town's cesspits.²³ As a result, each dry season brought with it epidemics, the most serious of which was typhoid.²⁴ In 1885, when only nine inches of rain were recorded, the death rate was thirty per thousand, alarmingly high considering the low average age of a mining population and the reputed healthiness of the town's geographical location.²⁵ After a vain appeal to the colonial government for £50,000 to establish a town water supply²⁶ the local authority attempted to ease the situation by importing 7,000

22. *AR.*, 1886, p. 18.

23. *AR.*, 1883, p. 20.

24. *AR.*, 1883, p. 20; 1884, p. 20; 1885, p. 21; 1886, p. 21; The drought broke in July 1886.

25. *AR.*, 1885, p. 21.

26. *Northern Miner*, 1 October 1885.

gallons of drinking water a day from the Burdekin River by train.²⁷ Community health problems were compounded by the decimation of the herds of cattle which roamed the grossly overstocked Homestead Leases: flyblown carcasses fouled the field. Unemployment inevitably followed the closure of mills because of water shortages and the consequent suspension of stoping at many mines.

In the wave of optimism which returned during 1887 the warden remarked that "Here poverty - excepting in cases of the sickness or death of the breadwinner - is almost unknown."²⁸ This belied the destitution experienced by widows or the families of injured workers. Under the *Mines Regulation Act* of 1881 it was technically possible for the Inspector of Mines to prosecute mine managers for negligence leading to injury or death, and the fines imposed could be awarded the victims.²⁹ In practice the clause was ineffectual. In the first place, since mines employing fewer than six men did not come under the Act, many of the smaller and poorly equipped concerns were exempt. In fact in 1887, only sixty-five of the 157 mines on the Charters Towers field came under its provisions.³⁰ Secondly, in order to obtain a conviction, the Inspector not only had to prove negligence but also had to establish the existence of a manager to whom it might be attributed. As the warden

27. *Ibid.*, 6 October 1885. Although the construction of a water scheme was started in 1887, the town's water problems were not solved until 1902 when the Burdekin Weir was completed. Even so, 157 cases of typhoid and 82 of enteric fever were reported during 1903. 11CHA/19, QSA.

28. AR., 1887, p. 27.

29 S.17. See Drew, "Queensland Mining Statutes".

30. AR., 1887, pp. 20-21.

reported in 1886: "As the matter stands at present, if any responsibility has to be taken, nobody is manager; but when any benefits are to be derived, such as immunity from serving on a jury, there is a perfect plethora of them."³¹ When the legislation was repealed in 1889, only four prosecutions had been instituted at Charters Towers, the maximum fine imposed being two pounds and with no damages. During 1886 an *Employers' Liability Act*³² provided for compensation. However it too was ineffective in the mining industry owing to clause five which removed liability in any case where the workman had been careless, had not obeyed instructions or knew of, and had failed to report, defective conditions or equipment. Evidence that at least one of these three conditions was present was given in virtually every accident inquiry heard after this date.³³ Nevertheless, for the 1880s, the legislation was very "advanced".

There can be little doubt that many accidents on the Charters Towers field were caused by technical incompetence. Although milling methods were up to date³⁴ it was admitted that "this goldfield is rather behind the world in appliances for hoisting and breaking out quartz."³⁵ In 1886

31. *AR.*, 1886, p. 18.

32. 50 VIC No. 24.

33. This evidence may have biassed the findings on miners' attitudes to safety legislation presented in Stoodley, *The Queensland Gold Miner in the Late Nineteenth Century*.

34. The chlorination process had arrived on the field by 1886, and electricity had been used to light some mills since 1884.

35. *Northern Miner*, 8 October 1886. See also *AR.*, 1885, p. 17: "...a primitive style of mining."

there were still twenty-three whips and five whims in use on the field, and centipede (or Jacob's) ladders, consisting of a single shaft into which wooden pegs were driven at intervals, were far from rare.³⁶ Safety cages were still unknown,³⁷ and although some rock drills had arrived on the field, they were lying idle because the miners had been unable to adapt them to the local granite.³⁸ Inadequate equipment resulted in accidents such as the one at the Golden Gate during 1886, in which a miner was killed by an iron column which fell while being lowered down the shaft in a rope sling.³⁹ Poor timbering, particularly on the unstable Queen line of reef, caused six accidents during 1883,⁴⁰ two of them fatal, while the lack of any complete plan of the underground workings, which horrified visitors from other mining areas, resulted in a number of casualties the following year. In one of these a group of miners drove into the disused workings of an adjacent mine; the old drive was full of gas formed by decomposing timber, which exploded on contact with the miners' candles. Two more occurred when miners unexpectedly tapped old workings full of water.⁴¹

A widespread ignorance of the properties of explosives cost many miners their lives. When the first Northern Mining Inspector, Joseph Shakespeare, was appointed in early 1883 he discovered that it was not uncommon for up to 300 pounds of unprotected explosives to be stored under-

36. *AR.*, 1883, pp. 10 & 68.

37. *AR.*, 1885, p. 79.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

39. *AR.*, 1886, p. 82.

40. *AR.*, 1883, p. 10.

41. *AR.*, 1884, pp. 17 & 66.

ground where the miners could only approach them by the light of a candle.⁴² "Black powder" was normally rammed home with metal tamping bars, and it was fairly common for powder to be used in conjunction with the newly invented dynamite. Indeed one accident investigation revealed that the dead miner had used two plugs of dynamite topped with powder which he then attempted to ram down with a copper rod.⁴³ Even more spectacular was an accident in which five pounds of explosives, which had been lying discarded at the North Queen blacksmith's shop, was recognised as potentially dangerous and dropped into a bucket of water, probably on the assumption that dynamite, like black powder, would not react when damp. After twenty-four hours the then harmless plugs were carefully disposed of and the water into which their nitro-glycerine content had leached was thrown into the blacksmith's cooling tub where it killed the first man who tried to temper a tool.⁴⁴

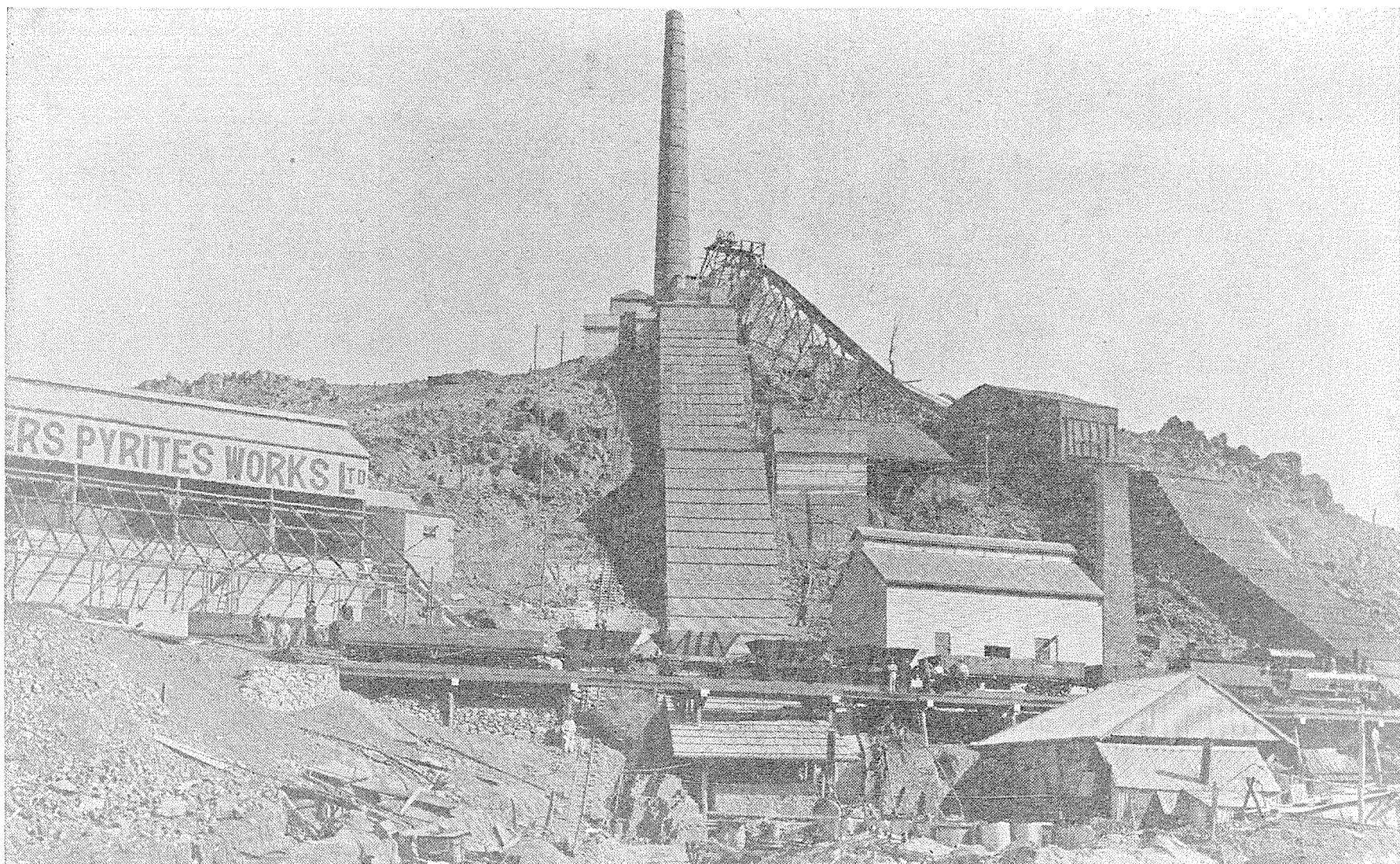
Much of the technological incompetence of the field was concealed by its consistently high yields, and production figures received a further boost when, in the middle of the decade, the first of the chemical extraction methods was introduced. In 1885 the Charters Towers Pyrites Company's engineer, D.A. Brown, was sent to South Africa⁴⁵

42. *AR.*, 1883, p. 68. This position was held by Shakespeare from 1883 to 1900. He was succeeded in 1901 by S. Horsley who held the position until 1904. M. Russell was Mining Inspector from 1905 to 1912 and he was replaced in 1913 by J.A. Thomas who presided over the demise of the field.

43. *AR.*, 1885, p. 79. The use of metal tamping bars persisted despite strong advocacy of wooden rods.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

45. South Africa, however, probably yielded little technology at this time. Certainly on the Witwatersrand (discovered 1886) amalgamation was the only recovery method used prior to 1890. Standard practice was to run the ore through a grizzly prior to stamp milling and amalgamating. By 1890 there were 1046 stamps



and England to investigate alternative metallurgical procedures. On his return he designed a chlorination plant, based on the Plattner method of gold extraction, which utilised the affinity of gold for chlorine to leach the precious metal from the tailings in the form of gold chloride. The process was complicated by the fact that sulphur and some of the base metals are also attracted to chlorine and so had to be expelled or satisfied before its introduction. This necessitated a complex roasting process which constituted the most difficult and expensive part of the operation. To expel the sulphur from the pyrites heat was applied gradually so that the first atom of sulphur volatilised and burned at a slight distance above the finely divided sulphides. Temperature control was precise: if the heat were too low the sulphur would not burn; if too high the pyrites fused into a solid mass. The next step was to stir the roast so as to bring every atom of base metal into contact with the air, oxidising the metals to reduce the amount of chlorine they could absorb. However, since the oxidised zinc blende - zinc oxide - has a tendency to form a chloride when presented with chlorine in a free state, the third stage involved satisfying this metal by feeding salt (sodium chloride) to the roast. Only then could chlorine and water be introduced to form a solution of gold chloride which was then collected and precipitated.

The Pyrites Company's plant cost some sixty thousand pounds, much of which was spent on a huge reverbatory

45 cont. (normally 900lb each) running. During 1890 chlorination was introduced. The pulp from the amalgamation plates was concentrated by blanket strakes or vanners and the concentrate chlorinated. See T. K. Prentice, "Modern Metallurgical Practice on the Witwatersrand", in *Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, Bulletin*, No. 367, April 1935, London, pp. 6-10.



"Brown's Monument" - the chlorination plant in 1984.

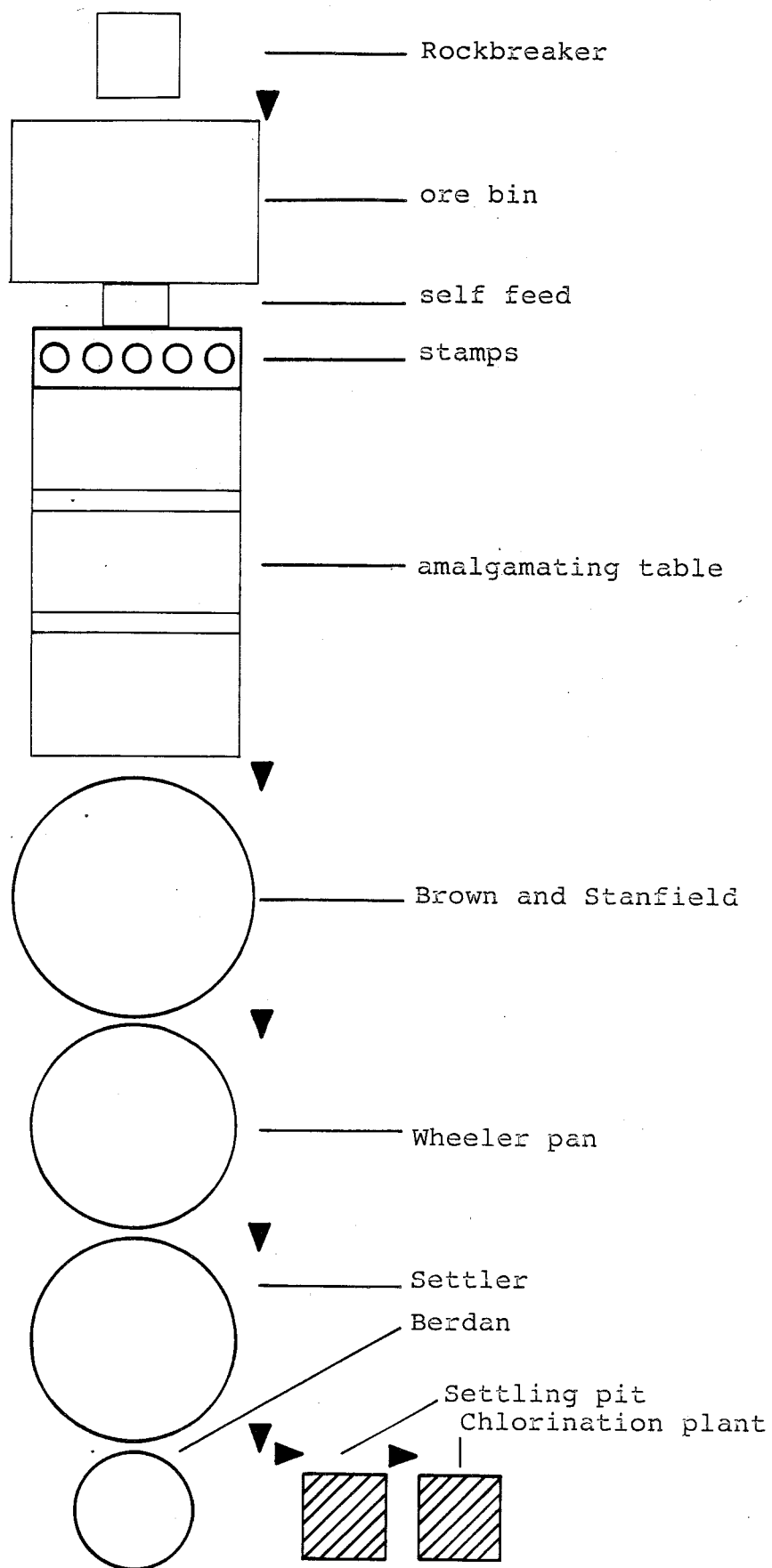
furnace built on the side of Towers Hill. The works, which included a tramway to carry the concentrates up the hill and a chlorine generating plant, were run by electricity. From bins at the top of the tramway the ore was automatically fed into the furnace and was swept by mechanical rabbles along a hearth ten feet wide by thirty-three feet long. Leaving this it began its descent at an angle of thirty-eight degrees, to be pulled up at another short horizontal floor at the end of which was a subsidiary fireplace. It was worked along this floor by another set of rabbles before making its final descent to the last horizontal hearth at the bottom of the hill. There it was fed with salt solution through a chemical spray while being worked towards the discharge door by hand rabbles. The main firebox was situated at the end of this hearth and was connected to the upper parts of the furnace by a coil of pipes through which air was forced by a Roots blower. The roasting process took three hours to complete.

On leaving the furnace the roasted sand passed through a disintegrator and was discharged into wooden vats with filter bases lined with broken glass. There it was dampened and chlorine gas was forced through from below. As the gas reached the surface a weak chlorine solution was added and the vats were left until all the gold had dissolved into the solution. This was then run off through a vertical column where high pressure steam was used to drive off the bulk of the chlorine to be saved for re-use. The gold was then precipitated from the gold chlorine solution with ferrous sulphate and the precipitate caught on filter beds of charcoal and sawdust. The filters were burned in a reverberatory furnace and the ash and gold collected and smelted. Sulphur fumes left the furnace through a monumental stack, 167' high and 17'6" wide at the base, sited on the

top of the hill.⁴⁶ The chlorination process produced gold of about ninety-eight percent fine and Brown's plant must be acknowledged as the most innovative technological achievement of the Charters Towers goldfield. Commercially, however, it was a failure; despite the high production of both this and a smaller plant operated by Arthur E. Hogue for the North Queensland Pyrites Company, on the Burdekin River, constant expensive improvements to the works eroded the company's profits. The last additions coincided with the introduction of a newer, cheaper, chemical method of treating the tailings: cyanidation.⁴⁷

Despite its technological problems there is little justification for McCarty's assertion that local inefficiency was a major contributory factor in the failure of British investment in Charters Towers.⁴⁸ Since the mid-seventies the mine owners had sought outside capital in the belief that it would enable them to explore and equip their mines without needing to gut out rich pockets of ore to finance such development. The investors of the late 1880s however were speculators rather than developers. Paper transactions became more important than mining and rich pockets were deliberately exploited to produce the dramatic dividends.

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46. D.A. Brown, "The Charters Towers Pyrites Company's Works," in *AR.*, 1895, p. 53; MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, pp. 29-31; Clark, *Australian Mining and Metallurgy*, pp. 260-264. See figure 14.
47. For a description of the cyanide process see Chapter 10.
48. McCarty, *British Investment in Overseas Mining*, p. 55. McCarty's generalisation that the old Charters Towers Boards "milked profits by sending the ore to their own private expensive customs mills" (p. 60) must also be questioned. Although this may well be true of Mills Day Dawn United, many other mines milled their own ore. For instance the other two big Day Dawns both owned mills before being floated in London, and these were improved by the English owners.



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Figure 14: Flowsheet 1886

needed to boost share prices. Certainly the London share dealers did not corner the market in cupidity. Established mines were sold by their Australian owners at inflated prices, and by the end of 1886 Sellheim was already warning that

[a]n established mine may have a most excellent record in shape of the quantity of gold that had been taken out of it: but it should be recollected that this is gone forever, and it behoves buyers to ascertain what may be left in it for *them* to bring to grass. 49

This was particularly relevant to the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham and the Day Dawn PC, floated in early 1887. These magnificent mines had both reached their peak when they were sold to British companies, the Block for £498,400 and the PC for £470,000, of which £401,600 and £450,000 respectively were paid to the vendors.⁵⁰

In addition to the established mines, many new or previously abandoned properties were floated in London at this time. Some, particularly those sold during the Black Jack rush⁵¹ of 1886, were "wild cats". As Sellheim reported: "the promoters could not have expected to strike

49. *AR.*, 1886, p. 17. See also E.H.T. Plant as reported by the *Charters Towers Times*, 16 October 1888: "There can be no mistake about it that one of the greatest causes is in the Stock Exchange dealings.... Then again the shareholders are in too much of a hurry to get dividends...perhaps the main reason of the low price of shares in many of the companies on the market arises from the way they have been 'loaded' for the benefit of promoters."

50. McCarty, *British Investment in Overseas Mining*, pp. 55-57. Other large mines floated in London by the end of 1887 included Livingstone, Bonnie Dundee, Phoebe and No. 2 Queen.

51. After some good crushings at the Black Jack PC some 203 acres were taken up in this area. *Northern Miner*, 27 September 1886.

a reef if they had penetrated the earth to its centre".⁵²
 The worst abuses were checked in November of that year when the Queensland government, in an attempt to regulate speculation, telegraphed the Agent-General in London:

Press telegrams report that attempts are being made to float in England several Queensland mining companies. There is reason to fear that some are not altogether *bona fide*.... Care should be taken by investors. 53

Others, however, were properties which might have been, and often were, profitable in more favourable circumstances,⁵⁴ but with substantial blocks of paid up shares and large sums of share capital being allocated to the vendors, insufficient money remained for their development. Often they survived only for as long as they could obtain exemption from working their claims, and confidence was further eroded by the disappearance of several company directors together with the funds and records of their companies. By the end of 1888 the number of companies on the field had dropped to 113 and the number of employed quartz miners to 1730. As large numbers of farm labourers forced off the land by the drought of 1888⁵⁵ swelled the ranks of the unemployed, and "speed-up" practices in the working mines caused a dramatic

52. AR., 1887, p. 16.

53. Cited by McCarty, *British Investment in Overseas Mining*, p. 57.

54. Many were reformed later as locally owned companies in which British investors bought shares and London Boards were set up. After this, investors were wary of paid up shares and most companies were floated with all contributing shares, thus increasing the working capital available.

55. AR., 1888, pp. 22-23.

rise in the accident rate,⁵⁶ the advantage of British capital must have seemed small indeed to the workers of Charters Towers.

56. *Ibid.*, During 1888 32 accidents resulting in 12 deaths and 26 injuries were recorded. Warden Mowbray noted that most were due to the miners have "disregarded ordinary precautions in their anxiety to push on with their work".

CHAPTER 7. ISIDOR LISSNER AND THE
POLITICS OF THE EIGHTIES

On 5 October 1883 the miners of Charters Towers elected a conservative Jewish merchant to represent them in the colonial legislature. Isidor Siegfried Lissner was born at Posen in Prussia during 1832, the son of Siegfried Lissner and Julia Gluckmann. Educated at the Wilhelm Gymnasium, he left his home at the age of twenty-four for the Victorian goldrushes. Arriving in Bendigo in 1856 he spent six years on this field before following the gold trekkers to New Zealand where he worked the Central Otago, West Coast and Thames fields. When the precious metal was discovered in North Queensland Lissner moved to Ravenswood in 1870, then on to Charters Towers in 1872.¹

By this time, however, his main interest had shifted from prospecting to trading. He had opened the first of a succession of businesses at Burnt Creek near Dunolly,² and when he arrived at Charters Towers was an experienced merchant. By October 1872 he had established a store on an excellent site in Mosman Street³ and was importing and retailing a variety of mining requisites ranging from food to miners' tools.⁴ The business was further enhanced

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1. Information about Lissner's early life is derived from Waterson, *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament*, p. 108; *North Queensland Register*, 12 April 1893; *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 22 July 1902; *North Queensland Register*, 28 July 1902; M.J. Fox, *A History of Queensland: Its People and Industries*, Vol. 3 (Brisbane 1921).
 2. *North Queensland Register*, 12 April 1893. The *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 22 July 1902, states that his first business was at Arrow on the Central Otago field.
 3. B. Palmer to J. Jardine, 22 October 1872. COL/A 4506, QSA.
 4. His decision to import the newly invented lithofracture for blasting in the mines led to a tragedy late in 1875 when his two shop assistants, George Benjamin and Ebeneser Russell were killed in an explosion of detonator caps on the premises. *Queenslander*, 1 January 1876.

when he obtained a wholesale wine and spirit licence and began to supply the many thriving hotels of Charters Towers. Nevertheless Lissner could not resist dabbling in prospecting and mining, acquiring shares in syndicates and involving himself in the formation of the early joint stock companies.⁵ He also took a lively interest in the activities of individual miners: "anyone who was working a show had no difficulty in getting six months credit at Lissner's".⁶ Although these activities gained him the lasting affection of the miners, they led, in 1877, to his bankruptcy, and only an accommodation with his creditors allowed him to remain in business.⁷ Early in April 1883 Lissner sold his premises to the rapidly expanding company of Burns, Philp; in the process he became a minor stockholder in that firm. He continued to manage his shop on the company's behalf until entering colonial politics.

As a respected member of the town's business community, Lissner was playing an important role in civic affairs in the mid 1870s. By 1883 he was president of the district hospital and the School of Arts Committees and a member of the fire brigade board;⁸ he had also presided over the Charters Towers Goldfield Committee. Charters Towers became a municipality during 1877 and Lissner was elected to the council in 1882, continuing to serve as an alderman until he became a member of the Legislative Assembly late the following year.

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5. He was a subscriber to the second company on the field, the Columbia Gold Mining Company No Liability, in 1876. Register of Companies, Charters Towers. MWO 11A/T1, QSA.
 6. *North Queensland Register*, 28 July 1902.
 7. *Northern Miner*, 29 August 1877.
 8. *Post Office Directory*, Queensland, 1883-4.

Although the party political system which operates in twentieth century Australia had not yet developed, the Queensland election of 1883 was fought on fairly clear factional lines. A conservative group led by Thomas McIlwraith had governed during the preceding five years, but fell on a proposal to authorise the construction of what was commonly called the Transcontinental Railway. Intended to link Charleville to Point Parker on the Gulf of Carpentaria, the railway was to be constructed by private enterprise under a land-grant scheme based on the American model. Although the scheme was in fact a dead letter by the time of the election, the Opposition, led by Samuel Griffith, centred its campaign on the land-grant railway and another unpopular McIlwraith proposal to introduce Indian coolie labour into the sugar industry to fill a demand left by a shortage of Pacific Islanders.

Such a campaign virtually guaranteed Griffith's success in the northern mining towns. For decades the two major political phobias of miners throughout the colonies were the alienation of large tracts of land and the employment of Asians in the mining industry. Land alienation, it was believed, impaired the opportunities of the small miner to settle on or near his claim. Opposition to the immigration of Asians had arisen during the great Chinese migrations to the Victorian alluvial fields, and for North Queenslanders, had been reinforced by the experience of the Palmer River where they had greatly outnumbered the European diggers. The miners of reefing fields such as Charters Towers and Ravenswood saw the Asians as a constant threat to their comparatively high wage levels, believing that the importation of cheap labour into the coastal sugar lands would open the door for a similar input into the mining industry. Therefore no candidate for political office in the Kennedy could do other than support Griffith's



Isidor Lissner. Top right is Lissner's first Charters Towers shop

platform, and the victory of the liberal group should have been a foregone conclusion. However, as the campaign opened, it became apparent that complicating factors were to intrude.

The Kennedy electorate, which included Charters Towers, Ravenswood, Ravenswood Junction (Mingella), the nearby mining camps and their surrounding pastoral areas, had two representatives in the Legislative Assembly: Palmer and Stubbley. After his financial problems had forced him back to Charters Towers, Palmer did not seek re-election. Stubbley was delayed in his return to contest the poll and telegraphed the Liberal Association to select a running mate and begin his campaign. The Association approached Thadeus O'Kane, a vehement supporter of Samuel Griffith and a wielder of considerable influence in the area through his editorship of the *Northern Miner*.⁹ In the meantime, however, other plans for the Kennedy were being hatched in Brisbane

Confident of victory, Griffith proposed to appoint James R. Dickson to the Treasurership of the ninth parliament, while his choice for Attorney-General was the barrister Arthur Rutledge. Both Dickson and Rutledge, however, represented Enoggera, and in a period of increasing agitation for separation¹⁰ the liberal leader deemed it politic to make one of these important appointments from a northern electorate. It was privately agreed that Rutledge should contest the seat of Kennedy, and early in the year he was despatched on a tour of that electorate to speak

9. *Northern Miner*, 27 August 1883.

10. The Northern Separation League had been launched in Townsville in July 1882. Christine Ray Doran, *North Queensland Separation in the Nineteenth Century*. PhD thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland 1981, pp. 142-144.

against the Transcontinental Railway Bill.¹¹ The candidacy of a "southerner" increased O'Kane's determination to secure the seat, but it was Stubley's obduracy that ensured that the liberal vote would be split between three candidates. On his arrival in Charters Towers, two weeks before nominations were to be finalised, the member for Kennedy was asked to attend a meeting of the Liberal Association. Some three hundred supporters went to the meeting. Stubley, on being asked some pertinent questions about his stewardship during the eighth parliament, when he had taken up residence in Melbourne and so was rarely in the House, walked out without addressing them. Thereupon the Association voted and endorsed O'Kane and Rutledge.¹² Rutledge, however, preferred to run with the sitting member rather than with the eccentric O'Kane, and appointed a joint committee from outside the Liberal Association.¹³

When writs were issued there were, in addition to the three Griffithhite candidates, two Independents: Thomas Buckland and Isidor Lissner. Buckland's candidature was hampered by a long-standing feud with Thadeus O'Kane;¹⁴ this ensured that he was black-balled by the *Northern Miner*. Lissner on the other hand received coverage equal to that of Griffithhites. Indeed his platform, on issues considered

11. *Northern Miner*, 13 January 1883.

12. *Ibid.*, 25 August 1883.

13. Secretary of the joint committee and organiser of Rutledge and Stubley's campaign was E.D. Miles, a prominent Charters Towers Griffithhite.

14. The feud stemmed from the theft of gold from a mill managed by Buckland in 1880. The *Northern Miner* had implicated Buckland himself in the theft and Buckland had successfully sued O'Kane for libel.

To the Electors of Kennedy:

Gentlemen - In reply to the numerously signed requisition with which you have been pleased to honour me, I feel it my duty to become a Candidate for your suffrages at the ensuing General Election. At present I do not purpose entering fully into my political views, but will take the earliest opportunity of addressing you at various places throughout the Electorate. I have decided to solicit your suffrages as an INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE, having an aversion to being "bossed" by anyone, and being no believer in the infallibility of either Mr. Griffith or Mr. McIlwraith. I shall, if elected, vote for any measure which I consider conducive to the best interest of the Colony generally and to the North and our Mining Districts particularly. I pledge myself, if elected, to vote straight against the Transcontinental Railway, or any other similar scheme which may be brought before Parliament.

With reference to the Labor question I am decidedly opposed to the introduction of either Coolie or Chinese labor, and will make it my special business to watch jealously any measure that may be brought before the House tending to endanger the legitimate white labour, either of the Coast or Inland. I would, further, vote for increasing the Poll Tax on Chinese to £25, and return no money for going back to Hong Kong. I would vote that the duration of Parliaments should not exceed three years and also that Members should be paid expenses during the time they attend to their Parliamentary duties. The Land Laws have engrossed the attention of the greatest statesmen of the day, and I must decline to argue for or against their opinions at present, but will vote for any clear and practical measure doing away with monopoly, and be favourable to the settlement of the poorer classes on the lands of the colony. In conclusion, Gentlemen, I may say that, although at present a member of Burns, Philp and Co, about which so much capital has been made by unprincipled Competitors I can assure you that I am what I say - a thoroughly Independent Candidate, and not an Office-seeker. I need not, therefore, trouble you with any humbug about my individual merits. I know your requirements from experience, and will, if elected, do my best for you. Entrusting my Candidature to your unbiassed consideration,
I am, Gentlemen,
Yours Truly,
Isidor Lissner:

important in Charters Towers, was identical to that of the liberals; on all other points he remained either non-committal or silent. He advertised that he was "an INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE, having an aversion to being 'bossed' by anyone," pledged to promote northern mining interest, to oppose Chinese labour and to parliamentary reform. Shrewdly he highlighted his long-standing links with the community: "I need not, therefore, trouble you with any humbug about my individual merits. I know your requirements from experience, and will, if elected, do my best for you."¹⁵

Despite the handicap of the Burns, Philp connection¹⁶ and his ambiguous statement about "legitimate" white labour, which were quickly seized upon by his opponents, Lissner's campaign was conducted with a dignity and humour rare in nineteenth century goldfield's politics. Indeed, his personal qualities constituted his main political advantage, allowing him to brush aside even an attack by the Towers' formidable temperance movement.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is unlikely that he could have won the seat had not the liberal vote been split, for the three Griffithite candidates between them polled nearly sixty-seven percent of the total vote. In Charters Towers itself the liberal movement was so strong that even with the handicap of the third candidate Rutledge and Stubley topped the poll. However Lissner had great support in Ravenswood and Ravenswood

15. *Northern Miner*, 24 August 1883.

16. Burns, Philp Company ships were engaged in the labour trade. The *Hopeful* whose master was tried for murder in 1884 was a Burns, Philp ship. Further, Philp was politically affiliated to McIlwraith.

17. *Northern Miner*, 19 September 1883. The attack concerned his wholesale liquor licence.

Junction, and when the poll was declared on 8 October the senior and junior members for Kennedy were respectively Arthur Rutledge and Isidor Lissner.¹⁸

The election of 1883 resulted in a landslide victory for the liberals; Griffith became Premier for the first time when Parliament opened in November. As an Independent Lissner sat on the cross-benches, but his political loyalties were revealed on the opening day of the first session when he voted with McIlwraith on the election of a Speaker, and in subsequent divisions he voted consistently with the conservative opposition. He was, however, scrupulous never to violate his election promises and opposed the introduction of coloured labour with vigour and even eloquence.¹⁹ Although his partisanship normally placed him on the minority side of the House, his gentle personal style was as effective as it had been in Charters Towers. Bernays later remembered him as "the humorous little Isidor Lissner who told the House in confidence, when making his maiden speech, that he was a very poor speaker but a very good 'list'ner'".²⁰

During his first five year term, one of Lissner's main preoccupations was the separation debate. The idea that North Queensland might one day be politically separated from the Brisbane-oriented south dated back to the 1860s, but underwent a vigorous revival during the 1880s. Although sometimes seen as a conservative movement connected with the desire of the sugar industry to retain its coloured

18. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1883.

19. *V&P.*, 1883-4.

20. Charles Arrowsmith Bernays, *Queensland Politics During Sixty (1869-1919) Years* (Brisbane n.d.), p. 101.

plantation labour, separation was never in fact supported by any party leader. Rather it manifested itself in terms of dissatisfaction with the government of the day, and drew its support from a variety of northern interest groups. It gained considerable impetus in coastal districts from the slump which began in the sugar industry late in 1883,²¹ but aroused only minor interest in mining districts at that time. When the debate became general in Charters Towers during the drought year of 1885, support for separation derived largely from those who were disenchanted with the Griffith government, and therefore, for a short time, followed party lines. Maurice Hume Black visited the town during April, and a Separation League was formed with prominent conservatives John Deane and H.R. Rutherford²² as office bearers. Simultaneously an Anti-Separation League was set up by the liberals' L.W. Marsland and E.D. Miles.²³

Later in the year however these party lines began to blur as the general feeling of dissatisfaction with the government heightened. Two major local issues in Charters Towers were the government's failure to provide a Burdekin irrigation scheme, and the imposition of a five percent tax on all imported machinery. Lissner complained bitterly in the House that the tax disadvantaged northern miners to protect southern machinery manufacturers, while in Charters Towers a public meeting convened by one of his strongest political opponents, L.W. Marsland, carried a motion condemning the tax. This discontent fostered the separationist

21. Doran, *North Queensland Separation*, pp. 147-156.

22. Rutherford had presided over Lissner's election campaign committee during 1883.

23. Miles had been secretary of Rutledge's campaign committee during 1883. For these meetings see Doran, *North Queensland Separation*, pp. 159-161.

cause, which was taken up by O'Kane and his *Northern Miner* in November. Early in 1886 Isidor Lissner publicly declared his support for the movement.²⁴

The only representative of a northern electorate who consistently opposed separation was the Attorney-General Arthur Rutledge whom Lissner described as being the member for a northern seat rather than a northern member.²⁵ Rutledge was responsible for the petition which circulated in North Queensland concurrently with the 1886 separation petition.²⁶ In the meantime Lissner and the other northern members were constantly raising the subject in parliamentary debates; this culminated in a motion put by John Macrossan, by then member for Townsville, that the Houses petition the Queen "to cause the Northern portion of the Colony to be erected into a separate and independent Colony with representative institutions."²⁷ Macrossan's eloquent and impassioned speech to the motion was complemented by Lissner's characteristically down-to-earth contribution. Among other things he said:

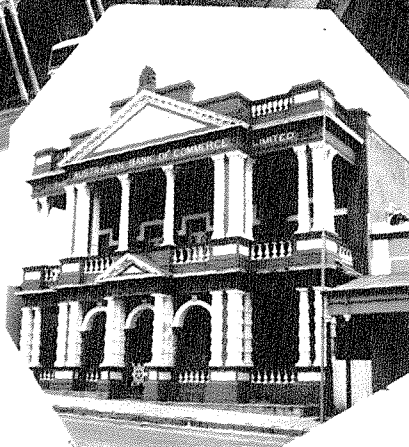
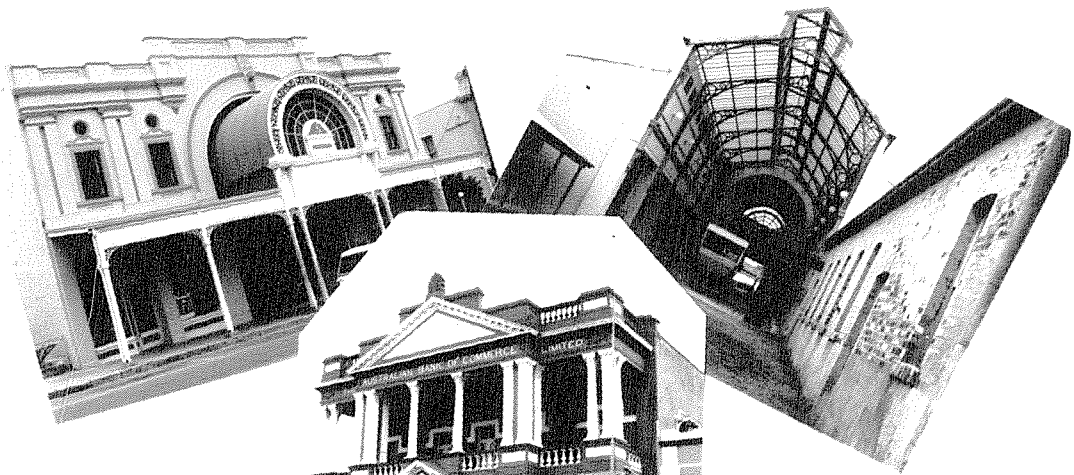
The fact is that the majority of the people wish to part from their friends and brothers in the South because this extensive business is too large, and some of the customers in the far North are getting very much neglected, and it is better to give them a chance of doing their own business, and going on their own hook; if they are allowed to do that they will be better satisfied. Some people here, especially the Government, seem to think that if we get separation, we shall go to ruin. Well let us go to ruin; it will not

24. *Ibid.*, p. 172-175.

25. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 1886-7.

26. Doran, *North Queensland Separation*, p. 162.

27. Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 516.



These are the buildings that have been built up
 and in the same way as the others, they have
 been built up with the same materials and
 with the same care and attention.

affect the South very much. The Minister for Works says we shall have to pay our share of money down; possibly he means in a cheque, or at least with an endorsed bill for the amount. I do not believe Her Majesty does that sort of business; I do not think that would be good enough for Her Majesty. But we have securities sufficient to square the financial position of the colony. 28

The motion was defeated by 40 votes to 9.

The separation petition eventually collected more than ten thousand signatures.²⁹ The document, over six hundred feet in length, was placed in a box made out of northern silky-oak and cedar, with a plate of Ravenswood silver, and despatched to the Colonial Secretary in England, where it arrived early in 1887.³⁰ Despite the League's optimism it was decided that Samuel Griffith's presence in London at that time needed countering. To this end the committee selected two delegates, Mackay's Maurice Hume Black to represent the sugar interests and Isidor Lissner to speak for the miners. The two travelled to England and, on 17 May, waited on Sir Henry Holland, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Bernays recorded their "laying the case for the petitioners before him with great particularity and leaving no stone unturned to impress him with the urgency of their claim and the justice of their cause."³¹ Their petition was rejected three days later; the separationist cause had been dealt a blow from which it never completely recovered.

28. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 1886-7, p. 560.

29. However the legitimacy of some of the signatures was questioned.

30. Doran, *North Queensland Separation*, pp. 262-3.

31. Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 517.

General elections were due early in 1888. During the previous year the Assembly had passed an Electoral Districts Act which redistributed the seats to raise the number of representatives to seventy-two. The Act created the electoral district of Charters Towers, with two seats, leaving but one for the greatly diminished electorate of Kennedy, centred on Ravenswood. Lissner opted for the area which had given him so much support in 1883. Again standing as an independent, he easily won the Kennedy from his sole opponent, George Simpson of Townsville, while the Charters Towers liberal-laborites busied themselves splitting their votes between no fewer than five candidates.³²

The paradox of the tenth parliament, which ran from 1888 to 1893, was that it witnessed both the ultimate manifestation of the nineteenth century political system and the rise of the party politics which were to prevail during the following century. McIlwraith returned to the Premiership on 13 June but, after his victory in a major constitutional confrontation with the Governor, Sir Arthur Musgrave, ill-health forced his resignation on 30 November. He retained his seat in the cabinet formed by Boyd D. Morehead, but again resigned on 16 September over a disputed item on the loans estimates. In June 1890 the Government fell on a proposal to introduce a property tax; Griffith came to an accommodation with his long term rival McIlwraith which allowed him to form a government and assume the Premiership. This so-called Griffilwraith lasted until 1893, a political oddity which epitomised the fluidity of the political divisions of the nineteenth century, when neither philosophical nor practical differences between the factions were as clear cut as many of their supporters believed.

32. Lissner won 240 votes to Simpson's 163. *Northern Miner*, 15 May 1888. See Chapter 8.

It is in the light of the Griffilwraith and its political implications that Lissner, essentially a nineteenth century politician, must be judged. Despite his apparent acceptance of patronage from Robert Philp³³ and his consistent support of McIlwraith in routine divisions, his claim to be an independent cannot be dismissed out of hand. He was above all a North Queensland representative, and as such as a conscientious and active Member of the House. He invariably contributed to debates on matters affecting the mining industry, northern railways and water supplies, decentralisation and separation, and the sugar industry. When factional loyalties conflicted with his perception of his duty to his electorate the latter dominated. Further, for the ten years during which he represented the Kennedy he remained true to his election promises of 1883, supporting Griffith on measures such as the introduction of triennial parliaments and the payment of members.³⁴ As a speaker he was never inspiring, but he retained the humorous, matter-of-fact style which had first invoked the confidence of the northern miners. His career was apparently crowned with success when, after the appointment of Samuel Griffith as Chief Justice, and the consequent accession of McIlwraith to the Premiership, he was appointed Minister for Mines and Public Works on 27 March 1893. That he was unable to leave his mark on mining legislation was a function of the changing political style of the northern miners which lost him his seat in the May elections.³⁵

33. G.C. Bolton, "Robert Philp: Capitalist as Politician", in Murphy and Joyce (eds.), *Queensland Political Portraits 1859-1952*, p. 199.

34. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 1888-1892.

35. For details of Lissner's later career see Diane Menghetti, "Isidor Lissner, M.L.A.", in *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* Vol. IX, No. 4, November 1982.

CHAPTER 8. THE RISE OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

By 1886 the Victorian-based Amalgamated Miners' Association (AMA) was firmly established and reaching out to mining fields in other colonies in an attempt to "unite all miners - gold, silver, copper and coal - in one body."¹ In Queensland this aim was encouraged by the formation of a Trades and Labor Council during 1885,² and by *The Trade Unions Act*, 1886³ which gave belated legitimacy to unions in the colony.⁴ Nevertheless the Miner's Union was not Charters Towers first attempt at organisation. A Miners' Protection Association had been formed there during 1872 and this was followed by a miscellany of associations, the last of which faded away during 1882. These organisations had combined their protective function with one of initiating civic and industrial progress and were better suited to the needs of the alluvial miners and small proprietors than to those of the wage miners. They became increasingly inappropriate as company mining took over the field and, in later years, attracted little attention except when miners perceived a threat to their wage levels. There was, therefore, a poor response to the inaugural meeting of the union which was held at the Odd-fellows' Hall on 16 October 1886. Only forty attended, of whom twenty-five signed up. Despite one fiery but quickly

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1. W.G. Spence, *Australia's Awakening* (Sydney 1909), p. 33. Spence was General-Secretary of the AMA for sixteen years from 1882.
 2. Robin Gollan, *Radical and Working-Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia 1850-1910* (Melbourne 1960), p. 93.
 3. 50 VIC No. 29.
 4. See also R.J. Sullivan, *The ALF in Queensland 1889-1914*, MA thesis, University of Queensland 1973; and June Stoodley, "The Development of Gold Mining Unionism in Queensland in the Late Nineteenth Century", in *Labour History*, 11 (November 1966).

suppressed speaker, the initiators do not appear to have had radical or militant intentions. Indeed, the meeting passed a resolution that the union be a "Miners' Association within the true acception [sic] of the term."⁵ Further, when the infant organisation was faced, some three weeks later, with its first strike, doubts were expressed as to whether it came within the ambit of the union's legitimate concerns.⁶ Nevertheless, the dispute in connection with mass sackings at the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, in response to alleged gold theft, was conducted with considerable aplomb.

Throughout his Charters Towers career Warden Sellheim was tormented by unaccountable differences between mill returns and actual bank purchases of gold: in 1886 some 6,000 ounces remained unaccounted. The focus of suspicions changed however as company mining became more prevalent. From about 1882 it was widely believed that at least some of the surplus carried by the Gold Escort derived from samples stolen by the wage miners. In that year much excitement ensued from the theft, from the Day Dawn PC's mill, of a red-hot retort full of gold, and in 1883 the same company failed to obtain the conviction of two men accused of stealing specimens from its underground workings. Not unexpectedly both big Day Dawn mines subsequently installed changing rooms where the miners' clothing was inspected at the end of each shift.

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5. *Northern Miner*, 18 October 1886. The committee consisted of J. Tyson, C. Cole, H. Harvey, H. Fitzpatrick, J. Kemp, J. Wresden, T. Collins, W. Griffith, W. Walters, T.M. Crompton, J. Boshop, J. Shepherd, J. Grubb, J. Waterson, J. Donohue and W. Richards (Secretary).
 6. *Northern Miner*, 1 December 1886.

Despite this precaution and regular advertisements of a reward of two hundred pounds for information about thefts, gold was still missing. The local director of the English-owned Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, E.H.T. Plant, began sacking batches of five or six men a week in the apparent belief that this would lead to a betrayal of the culprits by their workmates. A strike against his methods began on 30 November 1886, with a procession in Mosman Street followed by a "stump meeting" at the Number Two Shaft. There are no indications that the Miners' Union was involved in the initiation of the action but, amid discussion about whether unions should confine themselves to questions of wages and hours, committee members joined the deputations which waited on Plant.⁷ The affair ended quickly in a compromise, with the warden arbitrating;⁸ but the union gained confidence and membership from the confrontation. A further 250 were enrolled during the strike⁹ and by March the following year the union had 1,300 members.¹⁰

The MU backdated its affiliation with the AMA to its inauguration,¹¹ and in October 1887, a year after its inception, amalgamated with the Miners' Accident Association.¹²

7. *Ibid.*

8. *AR.*, 1886, p. 18.

9. Stoodley, *The Queensland Gold Miner*, p. 367.

10. *Northern Miner*, 31 May 1887. This number however, appears to have fallen during the following year. Capitation fees to the AMA at a rate of 1/- per member per month amounted to £14/15/4 for February 1888. Minutes of the Miners' Union, 2 March 1888.

11. Stoodley, *The Queensland Gold Miner*, p. 367.

12. Minutes of the Charters Towers Mining & Accident Association, 8 October 1887 (General Meeting); 15 October 1887 (Committee Meeting); 22 October 1887 (Poll); 12 November 1887 (Combined General Meeting). The accounts and correspondence of the two groups continued to be kept separate. For information about the Miners' Accident Association see Chapter 9.



E. H. T. PLANT, Charters Towers.



Mr. T. Buckland, Managing Director.



MR. RICHARD CRAVEN.



R. JOE MILLICAN, MAYOR OF CHARTERS TOWERS.

This adoption of an insurance function enhanced its acceptability in the town and district. Not only did other groups of miners turn to it for guidance in setting up a union¹³ but also non-unionised workers in other trades sought its help in redressing grievances.¹⁴ Even the churches were influenced by its success; early in 1888 the "Ministers' Union" appealed to the miners to act against the pyrites company's plan to work a seven day week.¹⁵ In part the confidence it inspired was due to the cautious policy pursued by the early presidents, James Kemp (1886), Thomas Collins (first term 1887) and John Weevill (second term 1887). Where possible disputes were avoided; indeed the co-operation of employers and bureaucrats was enlisted and they were frequently included in the organisation's social functions. At the first union sports meeting held on 28 July 1887, Philip Sellheim, the Warden, and businessmen Robert Russell and A.W. Wilson agreed to act as judge, clerk of the scales and starter respectively. "Firebrand" speeches at union meetings were smoothed over and they often voted to donate union funds to various charities and institutions on the grounds that members might one day need their assistance.

Considerable expertise found its way into the Miners' Union through its immigrant members. Many of the older men were English or Welsh and had experience in the British

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- 13. See for example a letter from P. Whelan of Georgetown who sought information on possible constitutions for a miners' union on that field. *Charters Towers Times*, 14 April 1888.
 - 14. Note the timber-getters' appeal reported to the *Northern Miner*, 15 October 1887.
 - 15. Letter dated 3 April 1888 and signed by William Harrison of the Wesleyan Parsonage. Minutes of the Charters Towers Mining and Accident Association, 12 April 1888.

labour movement. One of these was William R. (Bill) Richards who was undoubtedly its most influential early member. Richards had become secretary of the Accident Association at the hotly contested election of July 1886¹⁶ and was inaugural secretary of the union when it was formed later that year. He held this position until October 1891. He was, wrote the editor of the *Charters Towers Times*, "a man of caution, yet full of grit and determination. A Unionist from the tip of his head to the sole of his foot, but a discreet, vigilant, thoughtful and heedful Unionist."¹⁷ Richards was certainly no fire-eater. Later he was to tell the Mount Leyshon miners that "I have a holy horror of strikes. I have seen the misery caused through them, and the wretchedness following in their wake. What we ask for in the event of a dispute is fair and square arbitration.... There is not the slightest hostility between our organisation and the capitalists.... Capital and labour can work harmoniously together...."¹⁸ Under the constitution drawn up by this secretary, membership of the union was open to all; Thadeus O'Kane was an early member of the union and at least two members of the first committee, T.M. Crompton and John Grubb, were mine managers. Continuity was ensured by the retirement of six of the eighteen committee members at the end of each six month period.

Such a constitution simplified the union's entry into colonial politics at the 1888 elections. In March of that year the fifth ITUC agreed that delegates would urge their unions to attempt to secure direct political representation, and the Brisbane Trades and Labor Council responded by

16. Minutes of the First Half-Yearly Meeting, Charters Towers Accident Association, 1 February 1886. See Chapter 9.

17. *Charters Towers Times*, 26 September 1890.

18. *Northern Miner*, 3 September 1889.

sponsoring five candidates: Albert Hinchcliffe,¹⁹ Colbourne,²⁰ Valentine and Johnstone in Brisbane and Thomas Glassey²¹ in Bundamba. In Charters Towers there was no official labour nominee, but members of the union requisitioned William Levi Davies to run as their candidate. Davies was a mining agent rather than a working miner, and his manifesto was almost indistinguishable from those of the liberals, Robert John Sayers, Arthur Rutledge and Thadeus O'Kane.²² In fact there was remarkably little to distinguish the platform of even the McIlwraith candidate, John McDonald, which too was composed of the well-worn promises with which the miners were traditionally wooed.

Davies, in announcing that he was the "labor Candidate", stated that "the time has arrived when the working classes ought to be represented in Parliament". Given the general acceptance of Griffith's liberals as the enemies of privilege,

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19. Albert Hinchcliffe (1860-1935) was born in England but came to Queensland as a child. He was a printer, and helped to found the Queensland Typographical Association in 1884. Late in 1887 he became secretary of the Trades and Labor Council and from there moved to the position of secretary-general of the ALF and secretary of the CPE. He entered the Legislative Council in 1904. Waterson, *A Biographical Register*, p. 85.
 20. William Colbourne (1859-1945) was also born in England. He was a printer and an official of the Queensland Typographical Association and Printing Industry Employees' Union and President of the Trades and Labor Council. He entered the Legislative Council in 1904. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
 21. Thomas Glassey (1844-1936) was an Irish miner. After a career in local politics and the co-operative movement in England he arrived in Queensland in 1884. He was first secretary of the Bundamba Miners' Association and important in the formation of the Queensland Labor Party. MLA Bundamba 1888-1896, Burke 1894-1896, Bundaberg 1896-1901, then entered the Senate. Glassey left the Labor Party in 1899. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
 22. O'Kane ran as the local man in protest over Rutledge's candidature. See Chapter 7.

it was probably not unreasonable for him to add "I now declare myself positively Liberal, but maintain my right to independence in favour of North Queensland." He favoured "decentralisation", opposed the alienation of land and advocated the imposition of a land tax to prevent the "creating of landed estates and landlordism." The fiscal arguments of the period raised a problem which Davies solved by supporting protection provided it did not entail immigration of any sort, particularly from China. Lip service was paid to the revision of the mining laws, an elective Upper House, the payment of members and "one man one vote". The two new problems raised during this election were federation and the Naval Defence Bill. Davies found himself in favour of both.²³

Rutledge and Sayers' platforms were virtually the same as that of Davies, while O'Kane expressed his undoubted individuality by opposing the liberal government's Naval Defence Bill on the ground that reliance on British sea-power would be dangerous in the event of a British-Chinese alliance. The conservative McDonald also opposed this Bill. He was in favour of the alienation of land, an extremely unpopular stand which he attempted to ameliorate by supporting a progressive land tax.²⁴ The labor candidate clearly aroused some confusion in the minds of the electors; he was accused of being controlled by the conservative party, his function being to draw off the liberal vote. Perhaps this confusion was shared by Davies himself who, in answer to a hostile question, indignantly informed a Queenton audience that the question was "intended to raise a content-ion between master and man."²⁵

23. *Northern Miner*, 18 April 1888.

24. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1888.

25. *Charters Towers Times*, 4 May 1888.

On polling day 2,663 people were eligible to vote out of a population of 11,660 - 4,310 of whom were adult European men. The Electoral Act, which had been consolidated and amended during 1885, still favoured property owners. Firstly it allowed for plural voting on the basis of property ownership; one thousand more votes were cast than there were voters on the roll. While plural voting probably did not greatly benefit the conservative candidate who only won 664 votes, it may have affected Davies' result. Secondly, the Act required voters to reside in the electorate for six months prior to the closing of the roll and set up a complicated enrolment procedure, both of which favoured the more stable property owner and disenfranchised the itinerant miner and those men who worked in outlying districts. Nevertheless the outcome in Charters Towers was clear. The two Griffithite liberals won easy victories despite the triumph of McIlwraith in the colony as a whole. Sayers and Rutledge were returned to the Tenth Parliament and the labor candidate, who won less than eight percent of the vote, took O'Kane's usual place at the bottom of the poll.²⁶ In Brisbane, the four metropolitan labor candidates between them polled around sixteen percent; only Thomas Glassey was elected.²⁷

Not everyone in Charters Towers was as ideologically confused as William Davies. The great ideas of the late nineteenth century were avidly discussed and disseminated

26. For details of the elections in Charters Towers see the *Northern Miner* of April and May 1888.

27. D.J. Murphy, "Queensland", in D.J. Murphy (ed.), *Labor in Politics: the State Labor Parties in Australia 1880-1920* (St. Lucia 1975), p. 135.

by Thadeus O'Kane and, in particular, by a group which centred on the bookshop of John Henry Dunsford. Dunsford was born in Victoria during 1855. After a primary school education he worked on pastoral properties before going to Charters Towers in 1873. He left three years later for the gold mines of Madagascar and South Africa, returning in 1878 when he opened a tobacco and stationery shop from which he sold books and operated a free circulating library of radical literature.²⁸ His pamphlets and books explained and enlarged on the ideas of Henry George, Edward Bellamy and Lawrence Gronlund tempered by a strong dose of William Lane racism. Karl Marx arrived late in Queensland, although an account of the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Samuel Griffiths, appeared in the *Boomerang* during 1888, five years before the first Australian publication of extracts from the book.²⁹

Henry George's ideas were particularly influential throughout the colonies. T.A. Coghlan recalled in 1918 that "on the question of social reform his words were received throughout a very wide circle, and by the working class generally, with a respect that almost amounted to veneration."³⁰ His key idea was to replace all taxes with a single tax on land with a view to eliminating the non-productive land-owner and fostering the productive sector of society. This was highly acceptable to the Charters Towers radicals and to the trade union movement generally.

28. Waterson, *A Biographical Register*, p. 51.

29. Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism* (Blackburn 1970), p. 189.

30. T.A. Coghlan, "Labor and Industry in Australia", reprinted in L.G. Churchward (ed.), *The Australian Labor Movement* (Sydney 1960), p. 55.

At the Fourth Intercolonial Trade Union Conference in 1886 a large majority of the delegates carried a motion calling for a tax on the unimproved value of land³¹ and at the Fifth ITUC in 1888 the conference voted unanimously to "abolish all taxation save that on land values".³² The Charters Towers Land Nationalisation League was set up in August 1888³³ only eighteen months after the first Australian League (later the Single Tax League) was established in Sydney during February 1887.³⁴

Wide acceptance was also accorded the work of Edward Bellamy whose book, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887*, according to J.D. Fitzgerald, "sold by the hundred thousand, and few of that generation who claim to be readers at all have failed to read it. It was the theme of conversation and debate in every workshop."³⁵ *Looking Backward* describes an utopian Boston run by an industrial army. Bellamy rejects Marx's theories of class war and economic determinism while accepting his diagnosis of capitalism as the cause of the ills of society. In his Boston of the year 2000 the populace has undergone a sort of religious conversion to a co-operative system.³⁶ Like Gronlund, Bellamy was a utopian socialist rather than a Marxist. His ideas were taken up by

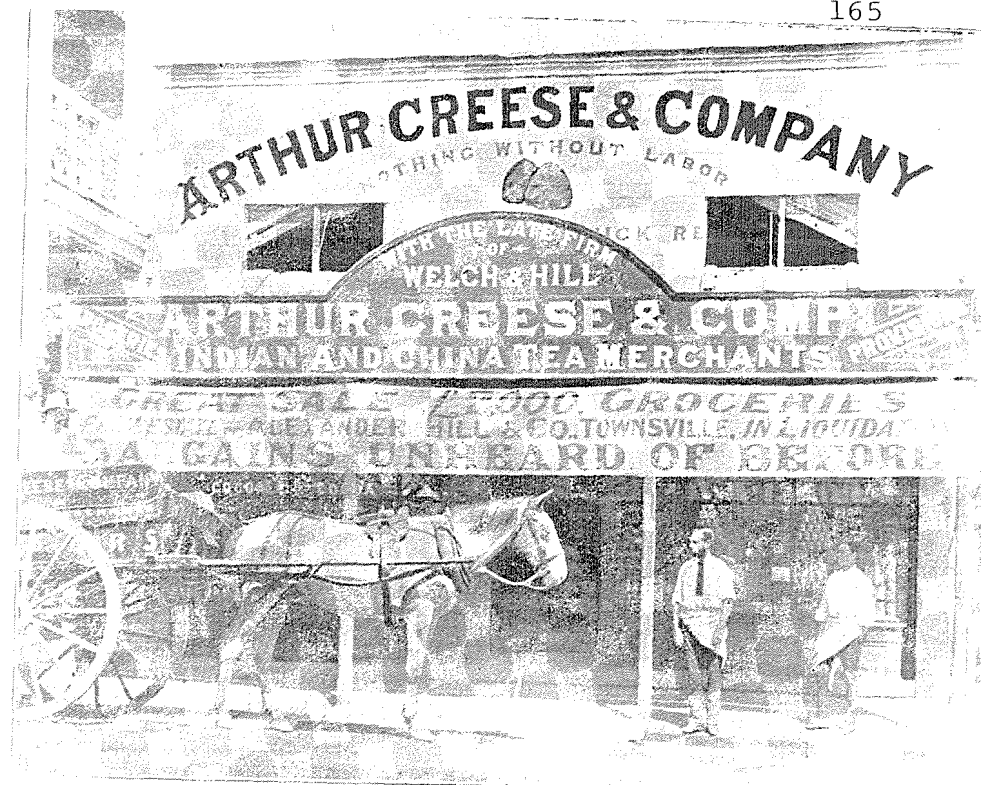
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- 31. C.M.H. Clark (ed.), *Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900* (Sydney 1955), p. 564.
 - 32. A.G. Vagg, Progressive Society of Carpenters and Joiners, in Clark, *Select Documents*, p. 559.
 - 33. *Charters Towers Times*, 20 August 1888.
 - 34. Clark, *Select Documents*, p. 555.
 - 35. J.D. Fitzgerald, "The Rise of the Australian Labor Party", reprinted in Clark, *Select Documents*, p. 564.
 - 36. Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (Harvard 1967 edition).

William Lane³⁷ who, in 1887, founded a Bellamy Society in Brisbane, and popularised the books in Queensland through the *Boomerang* and, later, the *Worker*.

The political attitudes which resulted from this mix of utopianism, socialism and the older notions of the One Big Union, were not confined to colonial capital cities. That they had been quickly taken up in remote Charters Towers is well illustrated by a letter to the editor of the *Northern Miner* published late in 1887:

SIR - One of your evening contemporaries made a remark a few days ago, to the effect that the principle of binding the Australian miners together in one vast and solid phalanx, with a community of interest and of objects, was a fraud, a delusion and a snare.... I would appeal to the men of Charters Towers to trample down this Barrier that has so long stood between them and those with whom they should be marching hand in hand towards that first object of desire, the universal brotherhood of labor.... I think it is better that labor should be united in one solid, cohesive mass throughout Australia, capable of being used with crushing and irresistible force against all objects; or that it should be split up into impotent sections an easy prey to the restless, sleepless enemy that only waits his opportunity for destruction. Why should we not form the same factor in politics that the American Labor Council does, that the German Socialist League does? The one has its dozen members in the Reichstag, sworn to forward the great movement, which absorbs millions upon millions throughout the world today. The other slowly organising, harmless and passive in exterior, wide-spreading and still growing, and threatening to become an awful factor for retribution

37. William Lane was born in Bristol during 1861. He was a journalist and founded and edited the *Boomerang* between 1887 and 1890. He was editor of the *Worker* 1890-1893. In 1893 he led some five hundred Australians to Paraguay to set up New Australia on utopian socialist lines. See Murphy "Queensland", p. 220.



ARTHUR CREESE AND CO'S PREMISES, MOSMAN STREET



A. DAVISON, BOOT MANUFACTURER & IMPORTER, 5-11 GILL STREET, CHANCERY TOWERS.

The Unity of Labour and Capital

and reform, as it really is.... Has this new expounder of human motive ever heard of the science of political economy. I am not an able editor, nor yet a presuming idiot. Still I know there is a law of wages and a law of interests and rent. That if wages be lowered as a whole on Charters Towers, so by an inexorable fiat will they be lowered in Gympie, Ballarat and Bendigo. Let the producers of Charters Towers, through the Miners' Union adopt the programme laid down by George. Let our apparently defunct Debating Class rise up from its ashes and din this lesson into men's ears, that they must unite, unite through all Australia; they must have fixed objects and fit expounders of them. They must bind the bitter truths contained in "Progress and Poverty" in the hides of those who would spurn them. They must break down the prejudice and storm our rotten legislatures ere they can rid themselves of the landholders that batten on them and their life-wrung sweat ere they can call themselves aught but slaves. 38

The temperance movement probably affected Charters Towers' thinking rather less than that of most centres during this period, despite the fact that some labor leaders, notably Bill Richards and Charlie McDonald, were strong advocates of the cause. The Rechabites and the Good Templars had established themselves during the 1870s, but their membership fluctuated and most lodges were short-lived. The non-conformist churches had Bands of Hope, but these were aimed at their juvenile members, while the Catholic St Columba's Temperance Society of the early 1880s did not survive the decade. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was organised in 1888, but lapsed for two years in 1890. This movement, however, in alliance with the "Ministers' Union" did have some successes in enforcing sabbath observance. Nevertheless, when sabbatarianism came into conflict with racism it became abundantly clear which of these ideas

exerted the greater influence on the intellectual life of the town. As O'Kane wrote after a crowd of 2,000 had attended a Sunday anti-Chinese rally during 1886:

[I]t is a man's duty to protect himself, his wife and children also, from evil influence, that is natural law and Christianity, too. To meet and organise against the Chinese is a sacred duty. It cannot, therefore, be against God's law, or any law, to meet on Sunday to take legal and constitutional measures for our own protection against the Chinese.... 39

The sabbatarian movement provoked the formation of the North Queensland Secular Association whose fifty-odd members attended lectures on subjects such as "The Soul, What? - Heaven, Where?" and "The Follies of Theology", during 1890.⁴⁰ Debates were held by the School of Arts Debating Class, the Literary and Debating group of the Early Closing Association, and the Australian Natives Association. The Land Nationalisation League, under the presidency of Thadeus O'Kane, provided a springboard into local politics for a brash young newcomer, Charlie McDonald. McDonald was born in Melbourne during 1861 and, after early training as a printer's assistant and later as a watchmaker, he moved to Charters Towers with his father who opened a confectioner's shop there in 1888. McDonald junior set himself up as a jeweller in the town, but most of his energy was devoted to political debate. He joined the Mining and Accident Association and became secretary of the Land Nationalisation League within months

39. See Sharon Hayston, "Wowers and Diggers: The impact of Puritan Ideals upon Charters Towers, 1872-1900", in B.J. Dalton (ed.), *Lectures on North Queensland History: Second Series* (Townsville 1975).

40. *Northern Miner*, 3 July 1890.

of his arrival.⁴¹ Meanwhile another young debater was sharpening his wits and his tongue under the tutelage of John Dunsford who had become president of the Republican Association. Andrew (Anderson) Dawson was born at Kalka Creek, Rockhampton in 1863.⁴² His parents died during his infancy and he spent the first nine years of his life in a Brisbane orphanage. From there he was taken by an uncle to Gympie and had three years of primary education before moving to Charters Towers where he worked in a series of bush jobs before becoming an amalgamator. He took part in the Kimberley rush of 1886 but quickly returned to Charters Towers where, late the following year, he married Caroline Ryan.⁴³ Despite the shortcomings of his formal education Dawson quickly built for himself a reputation as a lucid but cautious orator and laid the grounds for his later meteoric political career.

The vehicle for this career, the labour movement, was growing rapidly during the last years of the decade. Immediately after the elections of May 1888 the Brisbane Trades and Labor Council began to draw up a new constitution to assist union federation and extend its political functions. The document was complete by the end of September and was presented at the Sixth ITUC early in 1889. The scheme met with little interest or enthusiasm and it soon became clear that the Queensland delegates, Albert Hinchcliffe, Charles Seymour,

41. See Waterson, *A Biographical Register*, p. 114. Also remarks and advertisements in the *Northern Miner* and *Charters Towers Times* during 1888 and 1889.

42. *North Queensland Register*, 10 December 1906.

43. Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Serle (Gen. eds.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (Melbourne 1981), Vol. 8, p. 244.

William Mabbott, A.J. Vagg, J. Snell and J. Hall, were regarded as something of an "extremist bloc" by the rest of the conference. On their return to Brisbane it was decided, therefore, that Queensland would have to act alone; in June 1889 the Australian Labor Federation was launched.⁴⁴

The aim of the ALF was to secure direct representation in parliament, and in preparation for this a vigorous organising campaign was initiated throughout the state. In Charters Towers a rash of new unions appeared. Among the earliest were the Charters Towers branch of the Railway Employees Association⁴⁵ and the Queensland Typographical Association (Towers Branch) which was formed under the guidance of a Brisbane organiser in July 1888. This union dented O'Kane's radicalism by organising its first strike, over pay rates, among the employees of the *Northern Miner*.⁴⁶ The following year the Engineers' and Engine Drivers' Association and the Mount Leyshon miners set up branches of their unions in the district,⁴⁷ inspiring several non-unionised groups to organise. In June 1890 the shop assistants, the cordial makers' employees, the European cooks, the licenced carters, the butchers' employees and the tailors formed trade unions.⁴⁸ Perhaps the most interesting development, however, was the establishment of the Women Workers' Union. Arguably the first domestic servants' union in Australia⁴⁹ it was formed at a meeting held at the Town Hall on 10 June 1890. Its driving force, despite lip service paid to McDonald,

44. See Sullivan, *The ALF in Queensland, 1889-1914*, pp. 111-133.

45. *Northern Miner*, 3 June 1890.

46. *Charters Towers Times*, 18 July 1888. O'Kane died in June 1889.

47. *Northern Miner*, 3 and 12 September 1889.

48. *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 18 and 19 June 1890.

49. Stoodley, *The Queensland Gold Miner*, p. 371.

was a Mrs Shoyer who became the first president. By the end of the year branches of this union had been formed in Townsville and Hughenden where it had sixty members.⁵⁰

Within the Mining and Accident Association not all members were entirely happy about the direction taken by the Queensland labour movement. Money sent during September 1888 to the Maritime Labor Council and the Newcastle coalminers caused some controversy;⁵¹ the Newcastle lockout in particular split the committee. One group, led by John McLaren and Hugh Grant, whose loyalties lay primarily with the insurance section of the union, strongly opposed remitting funds south. Their stand was supported by Dunsford and Dawson.⁵² Richards, however, was anxious to emphasise solidarity within the labour movement, and he found a temporary ally in McDonald who used this issue to promote his aspirations. To raise money for the families of the locked-out miners he organised mass rallies, complete with brass bands⁵³ and street stalls, the latter being operated by a women's committee.⁵⁴ Probably as a result of this spectacular campaign, McDonald was elected to the committee of the union at the half-yearly meeting of July 1889. It was about this time that the loose links which existed between the Queensland branches of the AMA were formalised by the setting up of a Queensland AMA District consisting of seven member branches; Charters Towers, Gympie, Georgetown, Cloncurry, Croydon, Eidsvold and Ravenswood. Almost immediately the Croydon affiliate struck over reductions in the wages of some of its members.⁵⁵ This

50. *Charters Towers Times*, 28 November 1890.

51. *Northern Miner*, 7 September 1888.

52. *Charters Towers Times*, 26 September 1888.

53. *Northern Miner*, 17 September 1888.

54. *Charters Towers Times*, 26 September 1888.

55. *Northern Miner*, 18 September 1889.

was a foretaste of the troubles to come.

The Croydon strike set the pattern for the second half of 1889. Within weeks of his election McDonald was leading a strike of Day Dawn PC miners over changing room conditions. He then took on the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham about the employment of youths underground, before moving on to do battle with Mills Day Dawn United on the matter of exemptions, again successfully.⁵⁶ In September however it became necessary to impose a levy for the support of the thirty-seven members at Croydon who were still on the strike fund. In the meantime the British Maritime Strike had erupted. Perhaps due to the comparative modesty of the strikers' demands, or maybe because of their safe distance from Charters Towers, the union, town and business community presented a united front on this issue. Collection booths were set up in Mosman and Gill Streets during Saturday night shopping periods and various churches took up offerings for the strikers. Even so, Charters Towers only sent £215 to Reynolds, the London paper which co-ordinated the appeal. Although union leaders expressed some surprise it was clear that their members were troubled by their involvement in so many disputes.⁵⁷

The problems surfaced at the half-yearly general meeting of January 1890. Some four hundred people packed the School of Arts to watch McDonald fight for his political life and for Charters Towers' increasing involvement in the politics of the colony. Certainly Association membership was rising and the funds of the Accident branch were healthy. On the

56. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1890.

57. *Ibid.*, 6, 7, 10, 18 and 23 September 1889.

other hand, union funds were low and yet another levy was about to be struck to make all members subscribers to the *Worker*. Further, demarcation lines between employers and unionists were being drawn in a way which shattered the hopes of many members that "labor and capital would march forward hand in hand."⁵⁸ Already a Mine Managers' Association had been formed and its members had expressed strong objections to their employees belonging to the union.⁵⁹ The attack on McDonald took the form of a motion that only *bona fide* miners could be nominated for positions on the committee of the miners' union. There was a heated debate in which Richards supported McDonald and gradually forced the withdrawal of the motion. McDonald pushed home his victory with a series of motions culminating in "that no Member of this Association shall be allowed to work with a non-union man, in any mine, unless the said non-union man agrees to become a member of this Association on receiving his first pay. This said rule to come into force after March 31st 1890."⁶⁰ The day of the closed shop, however, had not yet arrived and McDonald eventually withdrew his motion. Nevertheless his victory was complete. At the following committee meeting he became vice-president of the Mining and Accident Association, and Charters Towers' entry into the ALF was no longer in doubt.

On 15 April 1890 Gilbert Casey was elected full-time organiser for the Brisbane Council of the ALF and was despatched on an organising tour of North Queensland; he arrived

58. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1890.

59. *Ibid.*, 28 September 1889.

60. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1890.

in Charters Towers at the end of May. There was little for him to do. A Trades and Labor Council, initiated by McDonald and by Dunsford's Republican Association, had been set up on 1 April, and union organisation was spreading rapidly. Encouraged by the success of the Jondaryan strike during May,⁶¹ the key union, the Mining and Accident Association, was addressed by Casey late that month and, on the motion of McDonald, agreed to join the federation. The Charters Towers District Council of the ALF held its first meeting on 23 June 1890.⁶²

61. Queensland Shearers' Union members at Jondaryan station on the Darling Downs jumped the gun on Spence's negotiations to completely unionise the sheds by 1891. They won their dispute when the Brisbane wharf labourers refused to handle "black" wool from Jondaryan.

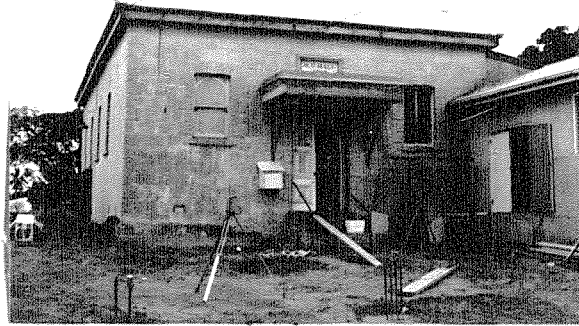
62. Sullivan, *The ALF in Queensland*, p. 162.

CHAPTER 9. COLONIAL VICTORIANS

By the mid-1880s the population of Charters Towers differed remarkably little from that of Queensland as a whole. During the 1870s a large number of young men aged between fifteen and twenty-one years lived on the field; by the census of 1886 the statistical hump was much less noticeable and what was left had shifted to the twenty to thirty age group - suggesting perhaps that many of the young diggers had remained on the field. There was still a somewhat smaller number (two percent lower than the colonial figure) of people over fifty. The number of adult women on the field had remained low; it was less than seventeen percent of the population, but this proportion was similar to that for the colony in general. On the other hand the percentage of single adult females had risen from a minute three percent to fifteen and a half percent of all women, only one percent below the Queensland figure. The proportion of adult men unmarried had, consequently, fallen from sixty-three to thirty-eight percent - still ten percent higher than the colonial average.¹

Throughout Queensland the percentage of residents who had originated in Australia or New Zealand had risen significantly. This trend was even more pronounced in Charters Towers where there was a particularly steep rise (eleven percent) in the proportion of colonial-born men. While women were still far more likely than men to have been born in the colonies the number of Australian-born women was almost identical for the Kennedy and for the colony as a whole. Overall, the colonials had reached a parity with those born in Great Britain although British-born adults still greatly outnumbered their colonial counterparts. There had also been a drop in

1. Census of Queensland, *V&P.*, 1877 and 1887.



The Manchester
Unity Hall (1882).

The Church of Christ. This
was originally built as a
Lutheran Church by the Ger-
man members of the Day Dawn
syndicate.



The Civic (formerly
Londoners') Club.



The Census of 1886

%	Kennedy	Queensland
Under 5 years old	15	13.99
Under 15 years old	34.84	35.34
Under 21 years old	43.51	47.1
Over 50 years old	5.47	7.24
Female	38.20	41.33
Adult Female*	16.6	18.19
of males unmarried	75.17	73.16
of females ummarried	62	61.5
of adult males unmarried	38.44	27.79
of adult females unmarried	15.51	16.68
of males who were widowed	2.11	1.68
of females who were widowed	2.9	8.23
illiterate	26	26.88
of adults illiterate	14.8	14.96
colonial born#	43.63	46
of males colonial born	37.73	40.73
of females colonial born	53.19	53.16
born in Great Britain	43.71	39
of males born in Great Britain	44.68	38.98
of females born in Great Britain	42.14	39.37
born in continental Europe	5.22	7
of males born in continental Europe	6.15	7.49
of females born in continental Europe	3.7	5.8
Church of England	42	34.99
Roman Catholic	25	23.87

* Adult is here used to mean 21 years of age and over

Colonial includes New Zealand

The census district is that of Kennedy. The area is slightly larger than that of North Kennedy but includes the same population centres.

the proportionate size of the population born in continental Europe though the Kennedy still possessed sizable German and Scandinavian communities. There were also smaller groups from France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Greece, Canada, the USA and India; families from Belgium and Russia and single men from the West Indies, Malta, the Faulkland Islands, Borneo, the Netherlands, Poland, Finland, Mexico, South America, Africa, Polynesia and Malaya. Only six percent of the population was non-European by race, many of these being Chinese of whom there were about eight hundred, mainly engaged in gardening and trading.²

Whether due to the increase in the proportion of wage miners and general labourers or to the coming-of-age of the children born to the itinerant life of the early goldfields, there was a noticeable decrease in the literacy rate during the decade. Among adults the rate was doubled and men were significantly less literate than women. Certainly this cannot be laid to the account of the Charters Towers schools since among the ten to fifteen year olds only one percent of the population was designated illiterate. Indeed, by the 1880s the education system was becoming well established. There were two state schools, one for boys and another for girls and boys under eight years. Between them they accommodated six to eight hundred children early in 1884. This number was rising rapidly at this stage and the total number of children being educated on the goldfield was estimated at 2,500 by Sellheim in 1887.³ Three years earlier, however,

2. *Ibid.*

3. Sellheim, "History of the Charters Towers Gold Field", p. 23.

another three hundred were being taught at the convent school run by the Sisters of Mercy who added singing, music, dancing and fancywork to the state school curriculum, thereby attracting some non-Catholic students whose parents had pretensions to gentility. Perhaps more significant of the changing ideas of the goldfield was the establishment, early in the decade, of two private schools in Charters Towers. Miss Sue Howell-Griffith set up a "Ladies' High School" in the old Church of England building to teach French, drawing and music to some twenty to thirty "delicate children, as there they will escape all the rough and tumble which is unavoidable in a large public school". A corresponding school for boys whose parents "would be very glad of the chance to send their boys to a grammar school but...cannot afford to send them South"⁴ was opened by A.E. Binks, from Tasmania, in the Oddfellows' Hall. The most advantaged youths of the town were despatched southwards where they could be instructed in "Music, Painting, Dancing, French (Parisian) and German", "at a cost of fifteen guineas a quarter."⁵

Clearly the triumph of company mining had far reaching effects on the social as well as the business life of Charters Towers. Although class differences had been strong during the 1870s the possibility, however remote, of discovering a new, easily worked lode held open the vision of upward social mobility. The increasingly capital-intensive mining operations of the following decade sealed off the class lines, and the successful began to close their ranks. A recognisably middle-class life-style was the outward sign of their superiority.

4. *Northern Miner*, 28 January 1884.

5. *Ibid.*, 4 July 1887.

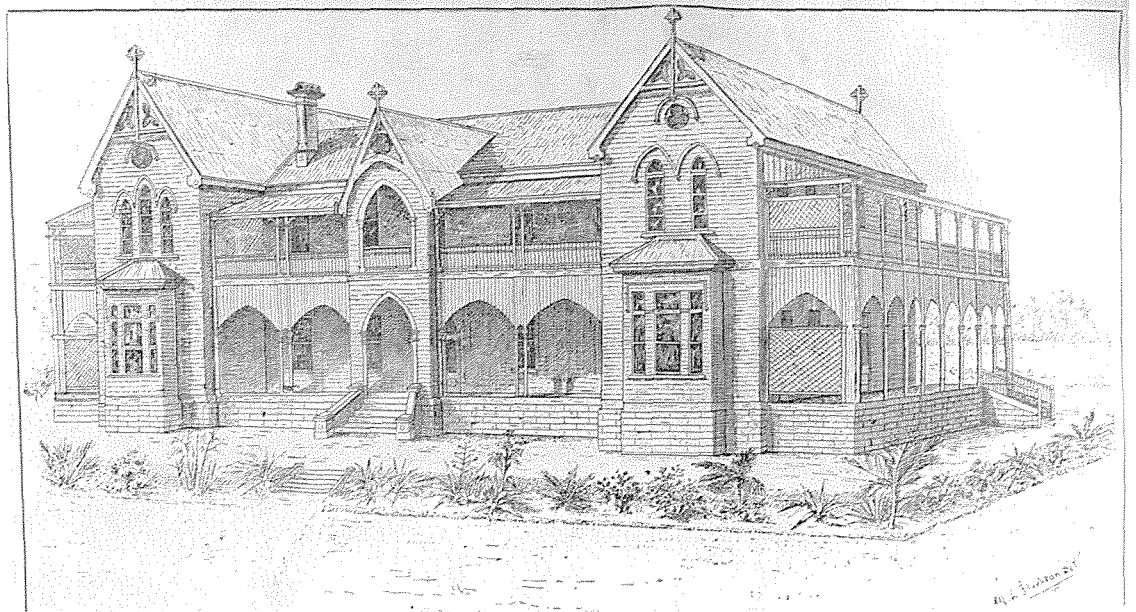


THE MINUET DANCERS AT THE CONVENT CONCERT.

Miss E. Donovan, Miss E. Stanley, Miss M. Gulliver, Miss A. Sullivan, Miss Irwin, Miss A. Crowley, Miss K. Griffen, Miss M. Irwin, Miss M. Ma gan.

Photo from Marion Studio.

THE CONVENT OF MERCY, CHARTERS TOWNS—A HANDSOME EDIFICE



One important social indicator was a knowledge of the "right sort" of music - a point stressed by the syllabi of private schools. Musical societies were fostered and visiting opera companies encouraged. Concerts were conscientiously reviewed by local newspaper editors, anxious to display their membership of the knowledgeable élite. "The Anglican Church concert on Friday night", reported the usually intolerant Thadeus O'Kane, "drew a crowded house and was the best concert we have seen here. This church has drawn within its circle of attraction a number of stars, some rising with growing brilliancy, others 'fixed' stars, shining down from the zenith with a mild, steady, though distant radiance... Herr Becker was a trifle too *prononcé* and dominant as an accompanist; our idea of what an accompaniment should be is, that it should be something secondary and subordinate, when forced to the front it takes the wrong place. The Herr Professor achieved a triumph in his "Danse Niger". It is to be regretted that he is leaving Charters Towers, for it may be truly said when he goes that 'the soul of music's fled'...Bouquets were showered plentifully".⁶

The acquisition of musical skills became an essential part of the educational process, and Herr Becker was a forerunner of a whole tribe of music teachers who arrived to civilise the goldfield. Pianos were imported by the score. Costing, when new, around one hundred guineas they were a major investment to be paid for on terms and used in the future to secure loans and mortgages. With the pianos came the teachers: Miss A.M. Hulm begged to announce that she was now prepared to instruct pupils in the pianoforte at their

6. *Northern Miner*, 8 April 1883.

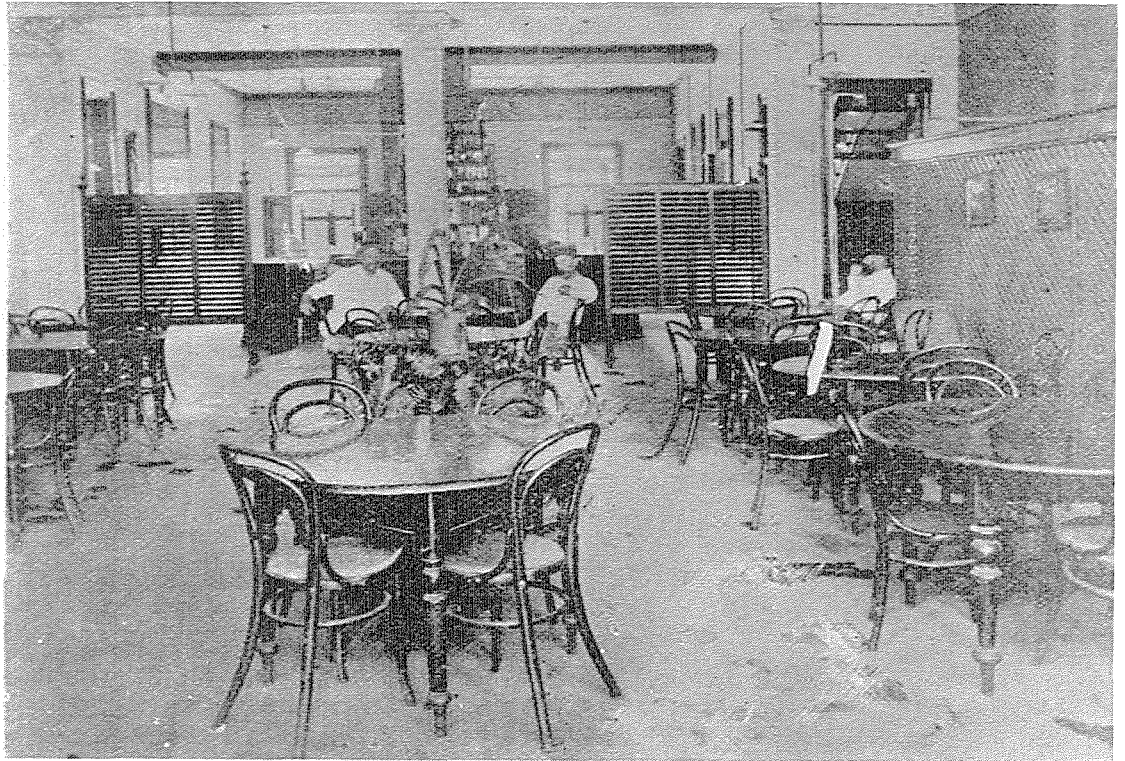
residence or her own;⁷ Mr. S.G. Benson, R.A.M., Pianist and Conductor, late Sub-Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London, more ambitiously received and attended pupils for pianoforte, singing, organ and theory of music in all its branches.⁸

More tangibly this new middle class fastidiousness was imposed upon the municipal environment. No longer could the coarseness of the early settlement be tolerated within those areas used by gentlefolk, and new standards were demanded of the local authority. During 1887 one outraged citizen protested "one of the grossest outrages of the municipal bye-laws that I have witnessed; a flash ped drive an unbroken colt with one rope and one rein, up the centre of Mosman-street, at about 11am today, turned into Bow-street, returned through Gill and Mosman-streets, and lashing the colt into a hand-gallop, turned the corner at that pace in Elizabeth-street. If men can do these things in the centre of town, what is the use of the municipal bye-laws?"⁹ Despite such critics the Council won many victories over the decade in its march towards respectability. A Health Committee was set up and an Inspector of Nuisances appointed to take care of the less pleasant aspects of the town, often at the request of right-minded citizens. Though much of his time was spent harrassing Chinese storekeepers and rounding up stray goats, much needed improvements to hygiene standards were enforced. The Health Committee was, for instance, at the centre of a protracted public debate on the town's sanitary problems, during which much fact and fantasy was

7. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1886.

8. *Ibid.*, 22 February 1887.

9. *Ibid.*, 11 February 1886.



Social life - the real and the ideal

aired concerning the respective merits of the single or double pan systems versus the "deep pit".¹⁰

Such debate acquired urgency from the ever-present water problems of the city. These added considerably to the dangers from disease in general and typhoid in particular. It was not until February 1887 that the Charters Towers Waterworks Board was set up jointly by the Municipal Council and the neighbouring Dalrymple Divisional Board. After a great deal of discussion about engineering, and the borrowing of nearly £80,000, the town's first reticulated water services began operations in December 1890. The scheme depended on a Davey 75 horse power compound engine capable of pumping 20,000 gallons an hour. This was erected on the banks of the Burdekin River.¹¹ The pump lifted the water 570 feet above the river enabling it to be piped to the town where mains ran down Mosman and Gill Streets with sub-mains along Marion, King, Plummer and High Streets. The system allowed for the daily consumption of fifty gallons per head of population. So long as water was available from the Burdekin River, householders in the surveyed area were relatively well served.¹² Problems of failure of supply from this source however were not solved until the completion of the Burdekin Weir in 1902.

Nevertheless, by the mid-eighties the middle-class viewed with pride the city it believed it had created out of the wilderness. Warden Sellheim reviewed its achievements in 1887. He wrote: "The town of Charters Towers derives its name from the goldfield. It is a municipality a mile square, with a population of about 7,000, chiefly

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, Christmas Edition, 1891.

12. Lees, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 4.

engaged in trade and occupations connected with gold mining... The east boundary of the municipality joins the township of Queenton, which has a population of 4,000, and a mile further is the town of Millchester with a population of 500. Queenton and Millchester are under the control of the Divisional Board. The town is connected with its seaport, Townsville, by a Government railway, distance 82 miles; the station is at Queenton. The railway, which is a narrow-gauge line with sharp curves and steep gradients up to 1 in 25, but it answers admirably the requirements of the district, and is thoroughly appreciated by all who experienced the inconvenience and delay in the delivery of goods by horse or bullock teams. The rough two days coaching for passengers, with the night passed at the roadside inn, are circumstances to be remembered without any wish for repetition....

"There is a school of arts with a circulating library of 2,500 volumes, and a reading room supplied with the principal papers and periodicals of the day. There is a first class and well-kept hospital, and a number of halls belonging to Masons, Oddfellows, and other lodges; a jockey club which holds four race meetings in the year; and a Mining, Pastoral and Agricultural Association that holds a show annually. Cricket, football, lawn-tennis, and rifle clubs also exist. The town possesses an efficient fire brigade - which has done good service in checking the spread of fires - and a corps of the Defence Force and Mounted Infantry. There are 3 newspapers - the *Northern Miner*, a morning daily, first established in 1872; the *Charters Towers Herald*, established in 1878; and the *Times*, established in 1887 - both evening dailies. Two brass bands dispense their melody, one generally playing on Saturday evening in the main street, where everybody seems to make a point of congregating, the street being crowded from side to side, and presenting a very lively appearance. The buildings are mostly one-story and built of

wood, but there are a few good two-story ones of both wood and brick...."¹³

Sellheim went on to describe the industries of the town which included two iron foundries, several engineering works, a soap factory, brick works, chlorination plants, gas works, two printing shops, four steam saw-mills and a brewery. This latter was "situated on the Burdekin River, twelve miles distant, which has gained celebrity for the quality of its brew, its situation having been chosen on account of the good quality of the Burdekin water."¹⁴ On the watercourses closer to town some five hundred Chinese worked about seventy gardens which "occupy for miles around nearly every available flat along the creeks where water can be got by sinking."¹⁵ They grew potatoes, beans, peas, cabbages, lettuces, carrots, turnips and pumpkins as well as bananas, pineapples, watermelons, grapes, oranges and lemons. Apart from the costly fruit imported from the south and the produce of a single Italian fruit farmer who grew grapes, oranges and lemons on a considerable scale, almost all fruit and vegetables consumed on the field were the produce of Chinese market gardeners. Very few of the settlers kept their own gardens.

As class lines hardened a collective middle class conscience began to emerge. It took the form of initiating and controlling institutions and societies for the protection and uplifting of the working population. Friendly Society

13. Sellheim, "History of the Charters Towers Gold Field", p. 23.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

15. *Ibid.*

SOUTHERN CROSS HOTEL.



THE TOWERS BREWERY, CHARTERS TOWERS.

lodges, run by the middle class and subscribed to by the working families of the town, were immensely popular during the 1880s. The MUOOF, the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF), the Protestant Alliance Society, the Rechabites and the Hibernian Society provided "lodge doctors", chemists and, in the event of their failure, funerals for their subscribers, as well as contributing to the social life of the town. In 1886 the procession leading up to the United Friendly Societies' annual sports was half a mile long.¹⁶ Despite their origins as working class organisations, it is clear that in Charters Towers officership of one of the lodges carried considerable status, for the list of office-bearers is a veritable "Who's Who" of the northern mining world.

Though excluded from many occupations, middle class women were also ready by the 1880s to demonstrate that they had a social conscience. This appears to have been done under the guidance of their husbands and pastors as the following report from the *Norther Miner* of 11 February 1886 suggests:

A meeting of ladies interested in the formation of a Ladies' Benevolent Society on Charters Towers was held in the School of Arts yesterday afternoon. About 30 ladies were present, and also Revs. White, King and Foggan. Mrs Plant was appointed president of the society; Mrs Beattie, vice-president; Mrs Greig, treasurer and Mrs Paull, secretary. The meeting was then about to appoint a committee when Rev. Mr White said they were acting informally as that meeting had no authority to elect a committee.... The President said that she

16. *Northern Miner*, 24 May 1886. In 1888 the Manchester Unity alone had over 5,000 members on its books in Queensland. See *Charters Towers Times*, 3 April 1888.

did not see why they should not appoint a committee at once, and proceed with the work, from what she could learn it had been done in Rockhampton and other places.... All the ladies present formed themselves into a Provisional Committee for the purpose of canvassing for subscriptions, and then several districts were allotted to them. The President announced that Messrs Paull, Greig, Miles and Plant had kindly consented to act as a Reference Committee in conjunction with the ministers of religion.

The hospital committee offered another outlet for charitable inclinations. Beginning as a bark and sapling hut in Mosman Street, the hospital had moved to a six acre site in Gill Street by about 1875. During 1883 and 1884 all but two of its wooden wards were replaced by the town's first brick public building. It was presided over by Mrs and Mr Fraser as matron and dispenser, and was served by two visiting surgeons, Drs Paoli and De Vis. Between them during 1884 they cared for 182 in-patients and 200 out-patients, suffering from a variety of diseases, some of which were fatal. The hospital's budget for that year was around £3442 and it had a pauper grant of £200. The running costs were provided by public subscription, the Executive being elected by donors of £1 or more, who thereby constituted the General Committee. The Executive appointed the medical and other staff and controlled all expenditure. Not only was the possession of surplus cash the only qualification required to run the town's hospital, it also gained for the contributor the right to decide who should receive medical care. The visiting surgeons were only allowed to admit emergency cases, others being admitted on the recommendation of a member of the General Committee, provided they paid 2/- in advance. Sufferers who could prove that they were unable to pay received treatment only if provided with a ticket by a committee member. Contributions of £1 or more

Number	Diseases	Deaths	Number	Diseases	Deaths
1	Anthrax Septicaemia	1	1	Synoritis of wrist	0
2	Necrosis of bone	0	4	Cerebral Congestion	0
48	Typhoid Fever	11	1	Hysteria	0
3	Continued Fever	0	2	Enlarged Glands	0
15	Malarial Fever	0	3	Iritis	0
6	Phthisis	2	1	Pharyngitis	0
2	Pleurisy	0	2	Aneurism	1
1	Pneumonia	0	1	Alcoholism	0
3	Bronchitis	0	2	Heart Disease	0
4	Cystitis	0	2	Cellulitis	0
1	Carcinoma	1	2	Paralysis	0
1	Nephritis	1	1	Abscess	0
1	Amputation of Leg	0	1	Sunstroke	0
1	Pemphigus	0	1	Ulcer of Stomach	0
1	Urticaria	0	1	Stricture of Urethra	0
3	Dysentery	0	5	Ulcerated legs	0
1	Cataract	0	1	Laryngitis	0
16	Rheumatism	1	1	Eczema	0
1	Tonsillitis	0	3	Gastritis	0
3	Syphilis	0	1	Concussion of brain	1
8	Fractures	0	1	Obstruction of bowel	1
15	Miscellaneous injuries	0	1	Asthma	0
3	Hepatitis	0	1	Abdominal tumour	0
2	Synoritis of knee	0	1	Orchitis	0

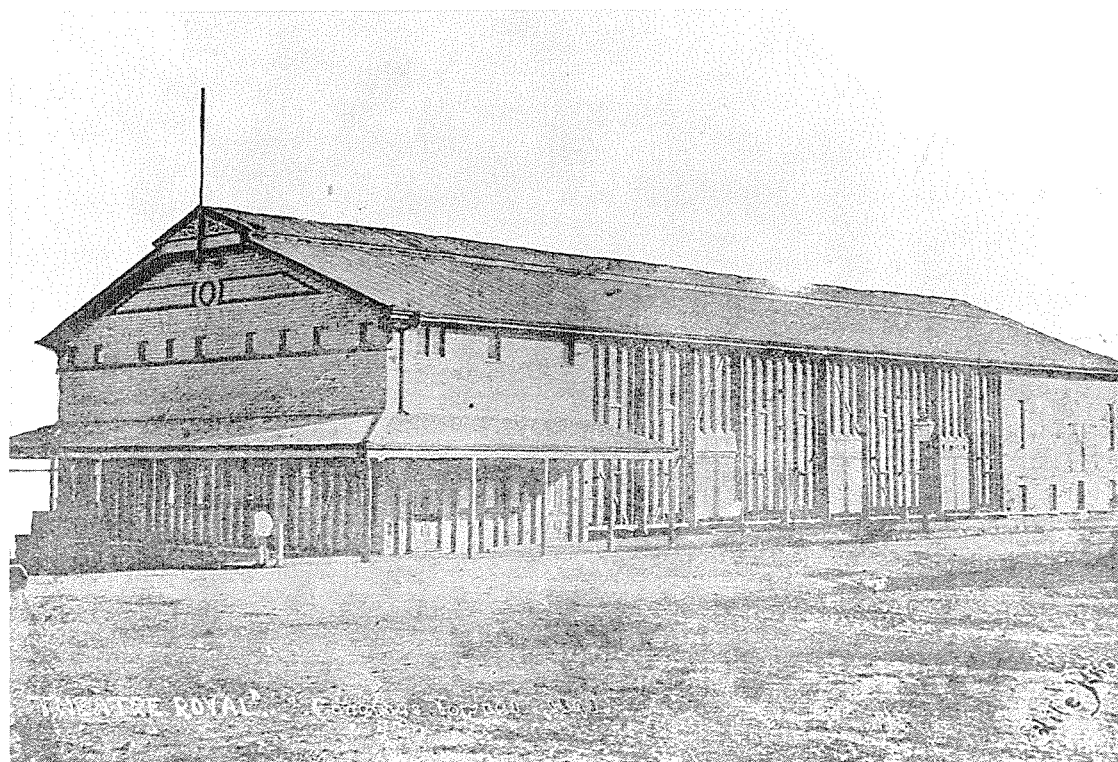
Source: Surgeon's Report for the year ending June 30th 1884, *Rules of the Charters Towers District Hospital As Gazetted 23rd September 1880, And Reports and List of Contributors for the year ending June 30th 1884*: (Charters Towers 1884).

a year were allowed to give away one A (in-patient) ticket and one B (out-patient) ticket for every pound donated.¹⁷

Even the Miners' Accident Association, which was set up early in 1886, received its initial impetus and early patronage from the middle class. The public meeting at which the Association was formed was called by company director, sharebroker and insurance agent E.D. Miles¹⁸ who, with Charles Hoare, mine manager Richard Kirkbride, B.D.

17. *Rules of the Charters Towers District Hospital*, u.p.

18. E.D. Miles came from Wales and began his Australian career in Ballarat in the 1860s. He arrived in Charters Towers in 1875 and worked briefly as an engine driver before beginning his career as a mining investor in 1876. He was Town Clerk from 1880-1882, then opened a brokerage firm which he rapidly built into the most important mining agency on the field. Very active in local government, he was Mayor in 1897 and MLC 1902-1922.



The Theatre Royal and the Hospital

Andrews, manager of the Excelsior Mill, James Kidney, John Rixon and Day Dawn discoverer Fred Pfeiffer, was elected on to the provisional committee. Initial donations were received from mine owners Thomas Mills, Fred Pfeiffer, Tom Buckland and Joseph Moore and from the boards of the Bonnie Dundee, North Queen, Old Identity and Day Dawn Block and Wyndham mines.¹⁹ It was only at the Association's first half-yearly meeting in July 1886 that working miners won control in a vigorously contested election. By that time there were 750 members.²⁰ One year later the Association began to share an office with the Charters Towers Miners Union²¹ and an amalgamation of the two groups was effected in October 1887.²²

Notwithstanding such omens of political change, the 1880s were essentially a decade of *embourgeoisment*: Jon Romberg, the largest landholder in the municipality, personified the ideal. Romberg had arrived on the field in 1872 and worked on the Just-in-Time,²³ in 1878 he was living in

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19. Minutes of Public Meeting held 1 February 1886. Charters Towers Mining Accident Association.
 20. Minutes of First Half-Yearly Meeting held 24 July 1886. Charters Towers Mining Accident Association.
 21. Minutes of Meeting held 23 July 1887. Charters Towers Mining Accident Association.
 22. Minutes of General Meeting held 8 October 1887; Committee Meeting held 15 October 1887; Poll held 22 October 1887; and Combined General Meeting held 12 November 1887. Charters Towers Mining Accident Association.
 23. Reefers, Merchants, Storekeepers and others to John Jardine, 22 October 1872. COL/A 4506, QSA.

a two-roomed bark hut on Crown Land and described himself as a hawker.²⁴ However, sometime before 1879 he purchased a tenth share in the Day Dawn PC and so, in the electoral roll of 1881, was able to describe himself as "John Romberg, Gentleman".²⁵ After the sale of this great mine to an English company in 1886, and his accumulation of the largest real estate empire on the field, he is listed triumphantly in the Valuation Register of 1888 as "John Romberg, Capitalist."²⁶ *Embourgeoisment*, however, gave rise to a self-satisfaction which was not always justified. Aleck Ivimey, who passed through the town during 1887, described Charters Towers as "Physically, flat; morally, first class; and socially, cliquey."²⁷ It was an apt description. However he went on to state that it was the "richest community per head in Queensland; possessing finer prospects of progress than any place between it and Melbourne - a town absolutely without poverty with an average wages rate of over £3 per head."²⁸

Ivimey elaborated in a subsequent publication in 1889 when he wrote that a miner "can live in a house put up by himself, the rent of which is a miner's right that costs only 10s a year; and his household expenses, wife, family and all, don't mean more than 30s a week, while he can feed on excellent meat thrice a day; and he can have the satis-

24. Electoral Roll 1878, 11 CHA/7, QSA:

25. Electoral Roll 1881, 11 CHA/8, QSA:

26. Valuation Register 1888. QSA:

27. Aleck Ivimey, *Mining and Separation in North Queensland* (Brisbane 1888), p. 163.

28. *Ibid.*

faction of seeing his children growing up a great deal more sturdy and more independent of their surroundings than the little ragged urchins of any mining village at home."²⁹ Warden Sellheim was only a little less sanguine: "Here too the working man soon becomes his own landlord, and his board is daily spread with articles that in the old home he would have deemed luxuries...."³⁰ Nearly every miner owns the home he lives in."³¹ When the mines were on gold and the batteries were thudding the message of high employment across the town there was, indeed, cause for optimism, particularly among the quartz miners, engineers and skilled tradesmen who really did command the famed £3 a week. For the mining industry élite, the underground stopper, the engine driver and the amalgamator, home ownership within the municipality was high: 64.78 percent. In general, however, owner-occupier rates for the area controlled by the council were lower, at forty-two percent, than the Australian average which was "substantially over 50%".³² There were no unsurveyed blocks left within this "golden" square mile and the Miners' Right system of homesteading was no longer in use, though it still existed outside the municipality. In fact twenty men owned twenty-five percent of all properties, while the biggest landholders, Jon Romberg, Hugh Ross, Thomas Mills, John Archibald, Thomas Buckland and Israel Lemel, between them owned 148 blocks of land.³³

29. Aleck Ivimey, *Mining and Descriptive Queensland* (Brisbane 1889), p. 99.

30. Sellheim, "History of the Charters Towers Gold Fields", p. 27.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

32. Charters Towers City Council, Valuation Register, 1888. 11 CHA/N3 QSA. Owner-occupier rates in Australia are given in N. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development* (London 1964), p. 259.

33. Valuation Register 1888. Fewer than two percent of the population owned nearly half of all real estate.

Ivimey may have allowed romanticism to cloud his judgement, for he also reported: "There is practically no crime, as there is no poverty among the Towers men, for what few misdemeanours that transpire are generally the work of some loafing outsiders."³⁴ Had he looked outside the surveyed area he might have found in the grog shanties, and tents of the prostitutes, poverty and violence enough for any mining town. "There are", thundered Thadeus O'Kane, "eleven shanties now on the railway line, they are provided with fighting rum warranted to kill at long range. Those devil's dens are also provided with seraphs in petticoats, who converse on equal terms with the navvies on the line. These combined attractions proved too strong for the men after last pay night; there was a big drunk and an orgy only to be witnessed in Australia. The 'navvies' were lying drunk all Saturday, celebrated Sunday, in high old style, and were unable to resume work on Monday. Thirty-seven of them were sacked by the contractors on that day and the work is at a standstill."³⁵ Later in the year, however, when a woman named Wolfe accused of sly grog selling, came before the magistrate, the incident was reported with greater compassion - a tacit confession that the woman's situation was not one which was unknown in the community: "His Worship stated that as prisoner only resorted to grog selling to enable her to support her large family he would be as lenient as the case would allow; he would fine her only £4 and costs."³⁶

More serious cases were heard in the Circuit Court, and evidence given there reveals the true horrors of the shanties.

34. Ivimey, *Mining and Descriptive Queensland*, p. 99.

35. *Northern Miner*, 8 February 1883.

36. *Ibid.*, 4 July 1883.

One particular example was, in May 1887, of James Keegan, Ephraim Collinson and Hugh Hams "for the charge of the murder of one Ali, an Arab:"

William Richard Alurs...sworn on the Bible deposed: Am a shepherd; remember yesterday evening three weeks (Sunday 8th instant); went to Mrs Taylor's that evening; went there at about half-past seven o'clock; then left town and started to come back to my own camp; passed by Mrs Taylor's place; saw a lot of men in front of her house; waited in the paddock for about 15 minutes to see what they were going to do; it was a bright moonlight night; saw white men go to Mrs Taylor's and knock at the door; the door not being answered, three of these men went round to the back door; then I came up to an outhouse, and saw these three men knocking at the back door; the three prisoners now in the dock are the same three men; one of the prisoners (Hams) struck Mrs. Taylor and knocked her down three times; prisoner (Hams) then came outside; Ali said to prisoner "It is not fair to hurt a woman like this"; prisoners then pulled Ali from the door; saw one of the men throw sand in Ali's face; the man I now point (Keegan) is the man; another of them struck Ali on the head with an iron bar; prisoner Hams was the man who struck Ali with the bar; Ali then fell down; another man sat on Ali's chest and struck him in the face with a bottle; prisoner (Collinson) is the man; I then ran away being frightened to stop any longer; was only 10 yards away from the row and was hiding behind a blanket in another humpy." 37

The charge was reduced to one of manslaughter and bail was allowed. The charges were later dropped - probably reflecting the race of the victim.³⁸

37. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1887.

38. *Ibid.*, 2 June 1887 and 14-20 October 1887.

Thus, despite the eight established churches - two Anglican, two Roman Catholic, one Methodist, one Presbyterian, one Wesleyan and one Lutheran³⁹ - and the sanctions of polite society, there was plenty of work for the Salvation Army when it marched into the Towers on 20 June 1888. Captain Smith and Lieutenant Jacobs quickly gathered a small Corps of immigrant Salvationists, their first Charters Towers meeting being held in "John Holt's dining room...our Bro. being very wealthy having a Gold Crushing Mill of his own."⁴⁰ Despite some early problems the Army made rapid ground in the town. "Perhaps," recalled John Robinson of this time, "the greatest trophy of grace won on Charters Towers was Tom Tafe (Happy Tom). He was a hard drinker and a notorious fighter (though a good miner), he was never one who you would think would be religious, - but he got amongst the roughs who were out to battle against the opening of the Army in Charters Towers and God moved upon him and he was gloriously saved. He felt that the Devil's master fighters should be silenced from attacking our open air meetings - so Tom was allowed by the officers to lay a few of them out and with the assistance of the Corps officers Captain Dave Buckingham and Captain Flannigan (both old pugilists) within 12 months settled this kind of opposition. Tom got sanctified then and in no time was the talk of the town for his bold Godly life. He would lead prayer meeting for souls during Sundays between meetings, get over a dozen comrades to fast and pray, going without food. God blessed the Corps with rich outpouring of His Spirit, Envoy John Holt backed him up. The City was at the Army's feet so to speak in no time. No Church got the people to their Meetings as the Army did and raised the money we did. Thank God for the praying Brigade."⁴¹

39. Sellheim, "History of Charters Towers Gold Field", p. 23.

40. Salvation Army, Charters Towers. Corps History, 1888-1981, p. 287. Unpublished manuscript in the possession of the Officer in Charge, Salvation Army, Charters Towers.

41. *Ibid*:

SECTION 3. INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM

CHAPTER 10. THE BRILLIANT REEF

The third decade of Charters Towers found the town dependent upon a reef which had not been affected by the boom of 1886-87 and its aftermath. During 1878 the field had been mapped by the Government Geological Surveyor, Robert Logan Jack. He developed two theories which were to influence exploration for many years. The first of these was that because "the heavy precipitates... would tend to be deposited in the lower parts of the fissure more than the higher", the reefs would prove richer at depth than in the brownstone.¹ The second postulated that the outcrops of the Charters Towers reefs formed a horseshoe pattern, from which they dipped inwards converging in a very rich gutter of gold:

These fissures, if protracted beneath the surface, would converge along a vertical line - the 'axis of elevation', 'centre of depression', or 'seismic-vertical', according to the theory adopted for the cause of the fractures. This line... may be expected to lie to the north of Millchester, probably between the township and Mosman's Creek. 2

Although clearly a scientific version of the "mother-lode" theory, the idea attracted much attention³ and several "Junction" companies were formed. In 1886 one of the field's

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1. Jack, *Report on the Geology and Resources of the District between Charters Towers Goldfields and the Coast*, p. 26. It is indicative of the importance of Charters Towers that on the appointment of a Government Geologist his first assignment was to report on this field.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
 3. See *Northern Miner*, 19 February 1880; Wm.J. Paull, "Auriferous Veins at Charters towers", in *Institute of Engineers, Transactions*, 111, 1895, p. 244; also H. Marsland, *The Charters Towers Gold Mines*, p. 10. The theory was also invoked by Thomas Mills during the Lissner Park Scheme inquiry of 1912. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Report of the Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Proposal of Thomas Mills to Sink a Deep Shaft on Charters Towers* (Brisbane 1913), p.7.

earliest speculators, Richard Craven,⁴ took up GML 585, a twenty-five acre lease on which he believed he would find the junction of the Queen and Day Dawn reefs. He persuaded an old business associate, G.M. Ievers,⁵ to provide capital of £12,000 to finance a vertical shaft and the flotation of the Brilliant Gold Mining Company. Ievers became the main share holder with fifty-seven percent, Craven held twenty-seven percent. A further three percent were held in Charters Towers, six percent in Dalby and seven percent in Britain.⁶ By late 1889 the shaft had reached 900 feet and their capital was almost exhausted when Craven decided to explore an apparently unpromising shoot which had been passed at 765 feet. Within weeks they opened out, not on the junction of the Queen and Day Dawn, but on a new ore body: the Brilliant reef.⁷ By the end of the decade the shaft had reached a vertical depth of 1,395 feet, composed of the vertical shaft of 900 feet and 1,040 feet on the underlie.⁸ The following year the Brilliant PC had become the biggest producer on the field, and by 1899 it had yielded over £2,000,000 in gold. The Brilliant reef

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4. Richard Craven arrived in the colonies in 1865 and was involved in a series of rushes to Crocodile Creek, Gympie, "Ridley's Rush", Gayndah, Cape River, Cloncurry, Peak Downs, Normanby, the Broughton and Mount Leyshon, where he was working when Mosman's party arrived late in 1871. He arrived in Charters Towers in March 1872 and remained there until 1891 when he retired to Sydney where he died eight years later.
 5. Ievers was a major shareholder in the Day Dawn PC in 1879. He retired to Ireland on his earnings from this mine and was active on the London stock market during the 1886 boom when he floated Phoebe as an English Company. One of the vendors of this company was Richard Craven.
 6. Summary of Capital and Shares of the Brilliant Gold Mining Company, MWO 11A/01, QSA:
 7. Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 27.
 8. Green, *Mining History of Charters Towers*, u.p.

was the most productive ore shoot ever discovered on Charters Towers and was eventually mined to a depth of nearly 3,000 feet.

Craven's discovery led to an upsurge in prospecting, particularly in the vacant ground at the worked-out eastern end of the Day Dawn reef. This led to the opening up of the Brilliant reef in the Brilliant Block, Victory, East Mexican, Brilliant Freeholds, Phoebe, Brilliant Extended, Brilliant Deep Levels, New Queen, Brilliant Central, Bonnie Dundee and, most importantly in the 1890s, the Brilliant and St. George.⁹ This great mine was owned by a company formed from the amalgamation of three companies working the St. George reef during 1889.¹⁰ They sank a shaft which cut the Brilliant reef at 1,000 feet in October 1891. The announcement that there were fourteen feet of two and a half ounce stone in the No. 1 West level led to a spate of speculation unprecedented even in the boom conditions of 1891. Shares in the mine rose from 6d. to £2.14s in a few days, and collapsed with equal speed when a horse of mullock came in and the stone cut out to two feet.¹¹ Although credited with "having broken more sanguine speculators...than all the others on the field"¹² the Brilliant and St. George remained a highly productive mine throughout the decade.

In 1891 the field's returns jumped to 223,403 ounces. Although much of this increase was due to the Brilliant PC's

9. *Ibid*:

10. Lees, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 14.

11. *Ibid*:

12. Green, *Mining History of Charters Towers*, u.p.

production of 36,605 ounces, good returns were also recorded by the Golden Gate, the No. 7 North East Queen and the Victoria.¹³ Also high on the list was the giant Mill's Day Dawn United despite its dispute that year with the Day Dawn Church Lands Company which owned mining rights to three acres of ground under the Church of England. Mills United had driven a level across the corner of the Church Lands' ground and taken away one hundred tons of quartz. This gave rise to a protracted court battle in which Church Lands was at first awarded damages of £3,000 and costs, a judgement which was subsequently overturned by Mr Justice Harding who argued that as the land was freehold the gold contained in it belonged to the Crown which alone could sue. The Crown eventually took legal action, on the success of which it handed over £1,500 to the company.¹⁴

1892 also saw a large increase in returns. The Victory, which adjoined the south-east boundary of the Brilliant PC, sank a new shaft to find the Brilliant reef. It cut the fissure at 400 feet and began to follow it out towards the boundary. About 300 feet from the edge of the lease it suddenly opened out to twelve feet of stone, some of which was carrying seven ounces of gold to the ton. It was an isolated shoot, lasting only two years, but was possibly the richest piece of ground on the field. Also this year the Victoria and the No. 7 North East Queen doubled their 1891 yields while the Golden Gate achieved its maximum output of 17,802 ounces. During the next two years Mills United was the top producer on the field, giving way after 1896 to the Brilliant and St. George, the Brilliant PC, and the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham.¹⁵

13. Reid, The Charters Towers Goldfield, p. 62.

14. Lees, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 42.

15. Reid, The Charters Towers Goldfield, p. 62.

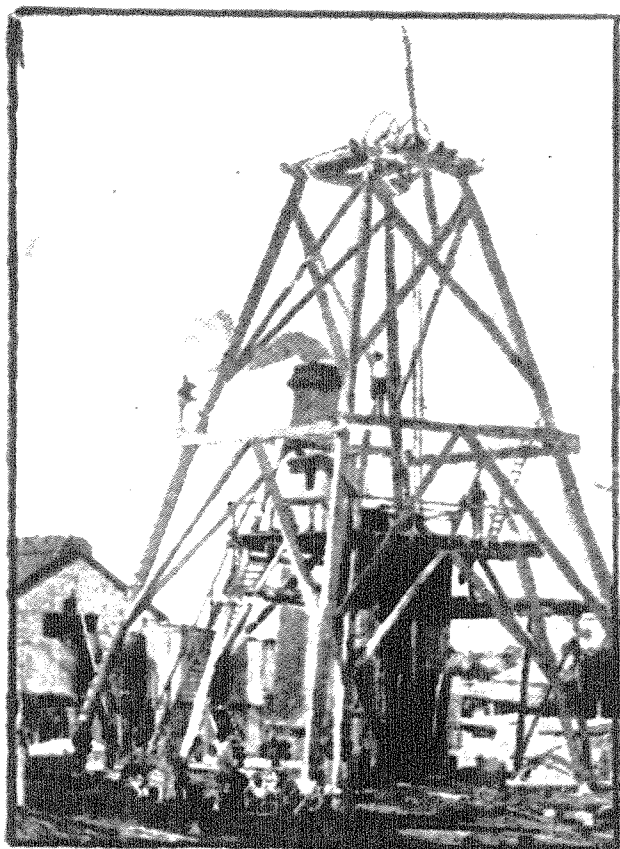
Another effect of the discovery of the Brilliant was that, for the first time since the tapping of the Day Dawn reef, vertical rather than underlie shafts began to dominate the larger mines. The underlie shaft had long been a characteristic of mining on Charters Towers. Following the formation down from the outcrop of the reef, it was originally adopted because of the unpredictability of the angle of dip of the ore bodies which varied from about 27 degrees to (rarely) 65 degrees. Although criticised on account of the expensive timbering it necessitated,¹⁶ the method remained in use even when adequate data about the lie of the shoot was available from adjacent workings. After the discovery of the Brilliant reef it became necessary to sink a deep vertical shaft on the boundary of the lease where the reef was judged to be nearest to the surface until the ore body was met. Thence the formation was, as in the earlier mines, followed by an underlie shaft.¹⁷ During the first half of the decade many successful vertical shafts were sunk and by the end of 1896 the Brilliant (Charters Towers) Deep Levels, previously known as the Brilliant Extended Block, had sunk to 2,558 feet.¹⁸

Also distinctive on the field was the "pigsty" method of timbering used in many Charters Towers mines, particularly in underlies on the Day Dawn and Brilliant reefs. This style of timbering had been used during the early days of the Victorian fields. Despite being abandoned in southern mines because of its high cost it was retained on Charters Towers where it was found suitable for coping with the "flat" lodes, wide formations and unreliable hanging walls, and the short-

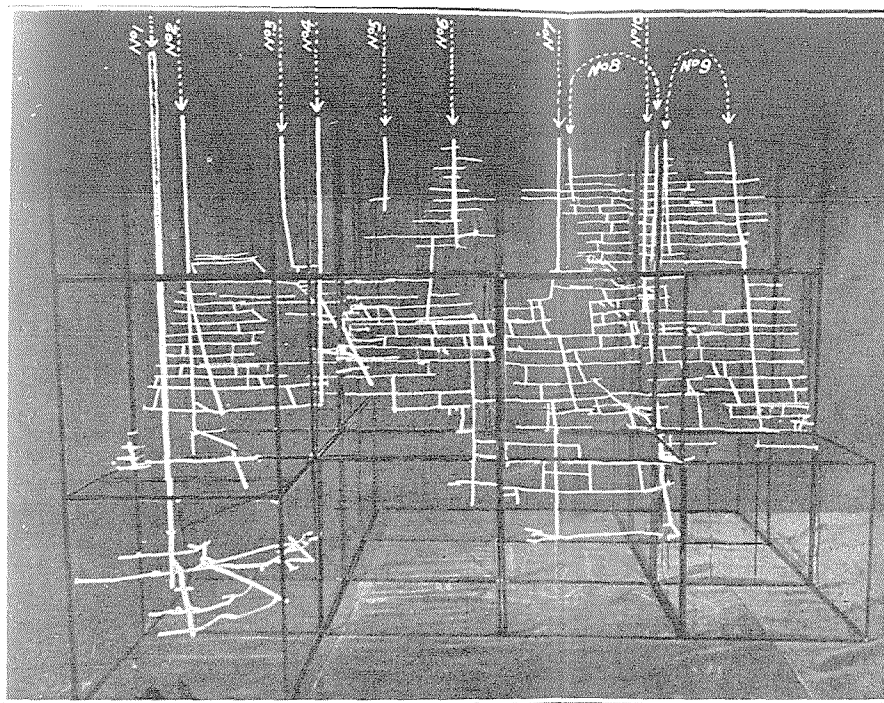
16. MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, p. 4.

17. The vertical shaft followed by the underlie was also used at Croydon and Ravenswood.

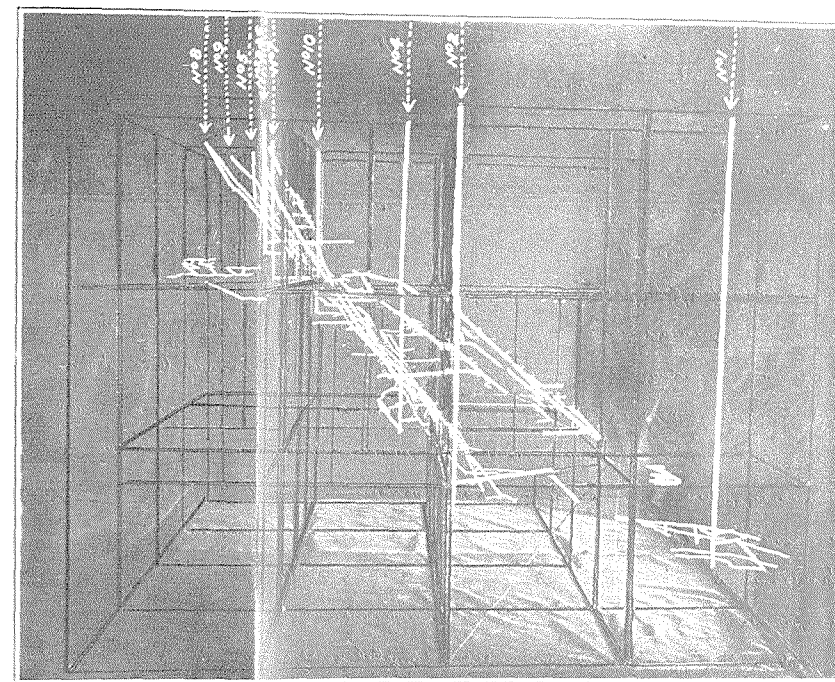
18. *AR.*, 1896, p. 133.



DAY DAWN FREEHOLD SHAFT.



LOOKING FROM THE NORTH.



LOOKING FROM THE EAST.

VIEWS OF MODEL OF UNDERGROUND WORKINGS ON THE DAY DOWN LODGE.*

INDEX TO SHAFTS.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Brilliant Deep. | 5. East Mexican. | 8. Day Down P.C. |
| 2. Brilliant Block. | 6. Mexican. | 9. Day Down Block and Wagonway. |
| 3. Great Eastern. | 7. School Reserve. | 10. Mill's Day Down United. |
| 4. New Brilliant Freeholds. | | |

* Model constructed by E. O. Marks, late Assistant Government Geologist.

age of heavy mining timber in the area.¹⁹ Indeed, much adverse comment was levelled at the high cost of mining in Charters Towers²⁰ but to some extent it was unavoidable. The geologist J.H. Reid pointed out that local conditions were responsible for much of the expense. As he explained:

The local conditions referred to are the great number of narrow branch reefs which have been exploited, necessitating considerable dead work to work them as well as the construction of separate underlie shafts, which in turn involve the use of extra numbers of air winches and two, sometimes three, separate haulages to transport ore to the surface. Secondly the flatness of the greater number of reefs necessitating a large amount of shovelling in the stopes. Thirdly, the restricted thickness of the ore bodies and the presence of loose lodestuff between the quartz reefs and the walls, entailing a large expenditure in timbering the levels, shafts and winzes. 21

More tenable were criticisms of long-term planning in the mines,²² a subject particularly sensitive to management. It was very rare in Charters Towers to find one man responsible for the entire mining operation; more frequently separate managers were appointed to work the mine, mill and after-treatment plant, and overall control was retained by the directorate. The Boards usually consisted of men who had a history of investment, and sometimes experience in mining

19. Shakespeare, "Special Report on Methods of Mining", p. 39.

20. A particularly strong criticism was recorded by the South African mining engineer Blane in his "Report on the Conditions and Modes of Working on the Goldfields of Queensland".

21. Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 41.

22. See Blane, "Report on the Conditions and Modes of Working on the Goldfields of Queensland", p. 41; also MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, p. 11.

Estimated Production from Principal Lodes

Lode	Ore in tons	Gold in fine oz.	Remarks
Brilliant	2,300,000	2,100,000	Including 'New Queen Cross', Victoria Queen & Caledonia
Day Dawn	1,600,000	1,400,000	Including the Mexican
Queen	160,000	185,000	Including Sunburst
Victory	125,000	165,000	Including Papuan
St. Patrick	64,000	85,000	Incomplete. Total Probably exceeds 100,000 ounces
Rainbow	64,000	80,000	Incomplete
Stockholm ("Cross" lode)	72,000	58,000	
Lady Maria	26,000	56,000	
Identity	33,000	43,000	
North Australian	25,000	42,000	Incomplete
"Old" Queen Cross	37,000	41,000	
John Bull	44,000	41,000	
Wellington	36,000	36,000	
St. George	20,000	32,000	
Columbia		32,000	
Golden Alexander	25,000	28,000	
Just-in-Time	24,000	27,000	Incomplete
Ruby	21,000	23,000	
Stockholm (Comstock)	26,000	23,000	
Black Jack	19,000	19,000	
Moonstone ("Cross") lode		14,000	
Clark's Moonstone		14,000	
Moonstone		13,000	

Source: *Levingston, Ore Deposits and Mines of the Charters Towers 1:250,000 Sheet Area, p. 26.*

and prospecting in the early days of the field. Having attained affluence they tended to exude a confidence in their mining knowledge which, for the complex operations they presently controlled, was often unjustified. Further, as "practical" miners, they were scornful of mining theory and reluctant to entrust their operations even to the competent graduates produced by the School of Mines after its establishment in 1901.²³ The position was not improved by the highly speculative nature of mining investment which demanded high dividends and consequently discouraged the equalisation of ores and the systematic prospecting by which the life of a gold mine might be extended. This concentration on the payment of dividends combined with the success of the cyanide process to disguise production trends at the turn of the century.

The idea that cyanide was an effective solvent of gold was not new - indeed it had for some time been used to clean amalgamation plates. Nevertheless, despite patents taken out by Alexander Parkes in 1840 and J.W. Simpson in 1884, a commercially viable process for its use in the mining industry was not perfected until December 1887 when the MacArthur-Forrest cyanide process was patented.²⁴ The sands were mixed with a very weak solution of potassium cyanide in which the gold present dissolved. The solution was then

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- 23. Report of the Director of the Charters Towers School of Mines, in *AR.*, 1905, p. 151. It should be noted, however, that graduates of the school were most successful in obtaining positions in other districts.
 - 24. W.H. Dennis, *A Hundred Years of Metallurgy* (London 1963), pp. 269-270. At a meeting of the New Zealand Institute held in 1868 a Captain Hutton "warned the miners against the use of cyanide of potassium, as the result of it would be to dissolve the gold". New Zealand Institute, *Transactions and Proceedings* (1875), p. 468.

trickled through a filter of zinc threads on to which the gold was precipitated.²⁵ Requiring neither machinery nor large amounts of fuel, the new system spelled the death of the chlorination process on Charters Towers.

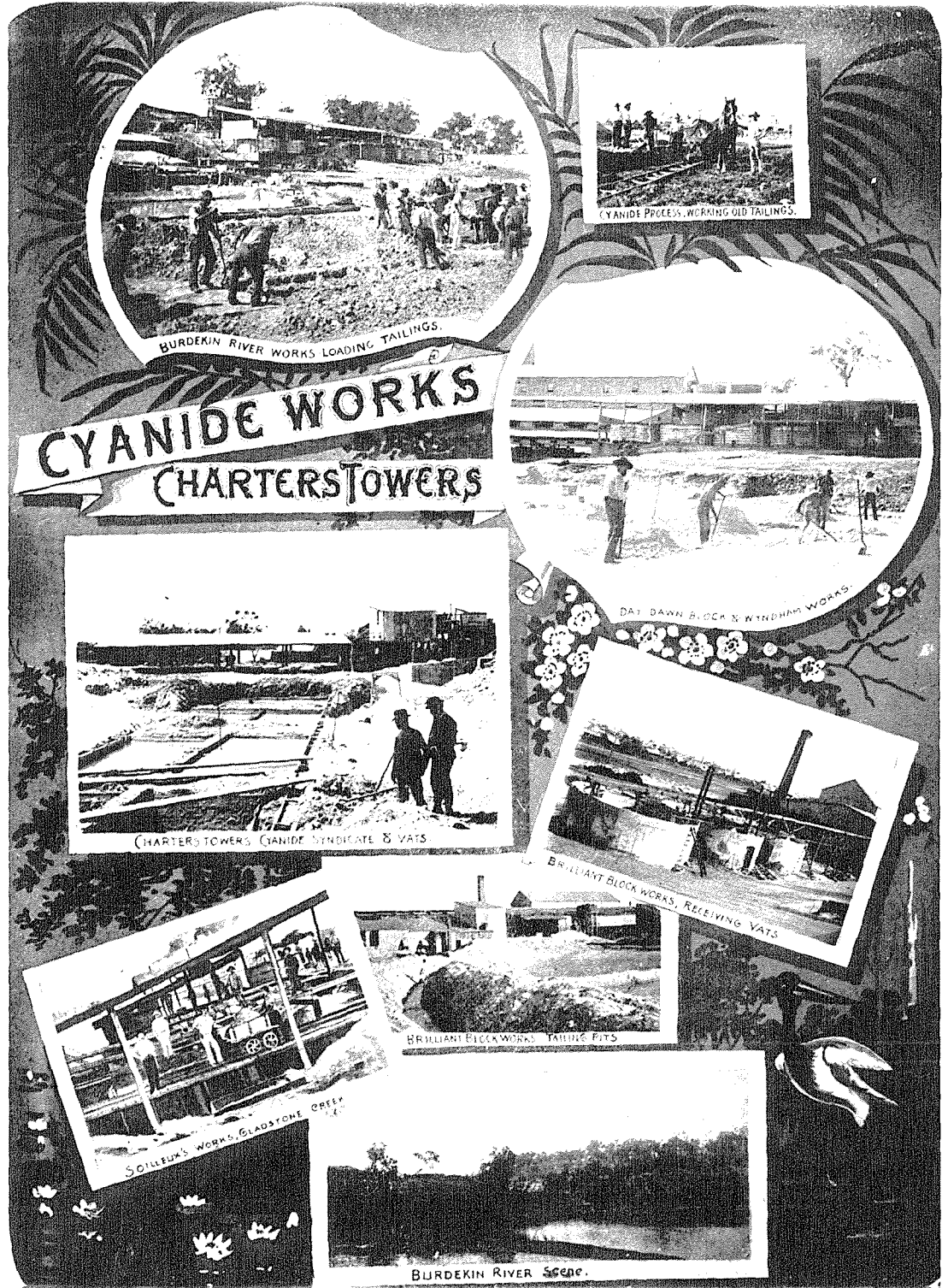
The first cyanide plant on the field was set up by the Australian Gold Recovery Company which had been formed in 1888 to purchase the Australian rights to the patent from its owner, the Cassell Company of Glasgow. A company engineer, Peter McIntyre, was despatched to Charters Towers in 1892. His plant, consisting of an engine, two pumps, a zinc cutting machine, agitators, percolators and leaching and waste-solution vats, was in operation by October. Because of the absence of copper,²⁶ cyanide treatment was extremely successful; that agitators proved superfluous further reduced the cost of the plant. At the end of 1892 the Day Dawn EC Company negotiated a right to use the patent in its Excelsior mill,²⁷ and by the end of 1897 there were some seventy cyanide plants on the field, between them treating some 25,000 tons of tailings a month.

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25. J.S. MacArthur, "The Cyanide Process", *AR.*, 1892, pp. 17-20.
 26. Copper has an affinity for cyanogens, which explains the development of the chlorination process at Mount Morgan. Conversely the low melting point of lead added to the problems of chlorination at Charters Towers. The admixture of base metals in Ravenswood ores defied the application of either process in the nineteenth century.
 27. The company, like other users of the patent, paid five percent of its gross product to the patentees until 1900, although apparently having no written agreement with them. Probably inspired by the successful avoidance of royalties elsewhere (Cassell Gold Extracting Co. Ltd v Cyanide Gold Recovery Syndicate, England 1895, and Australian Gold Recovery Company v Lake View Consols, Western Australia 1899) Day Dawn ceased payment in 1900 and was successfully sued for damages in 1902 after the patent had expired. See *V&P.*, 1896, Vol. 4, p. 271; *Queensland Government Mining Journal*, 14 June 1902; *North Queensland Register*, 19 May 1902.

The cyanide practice which developed in North Queensland consisted of sun-drying the tailings and passing them through a disintegrator - a simple machine consisting of two drums fitted with steel bars. The smaller drum was set inside the larger and they revolved in opposite directions, powdering the material between the two sets of bars.²⁸ During this process lime was added to counteract any acidity in the tailings. From the disintegrator the sands were run into vats, the size and shape of which varied with the plant, and an 0.5% potassium cyanide solution was added. This was left in contact with the sands for between twelve and twenty-four hours so that the gold formed a solution with the cyanogen. The liquid was then drawn off through zinc concentrator boxes where the gold was precipitated as a black metallic powder, the solution being caught and saved. The process was repeated with two other "washes" of diminishing strength before the sands were discarded. While most cyaniders sold the unrefined cyanide bullion to the banks, the Australian Gold Recovery Company distilled off any mercury present in a retort and smelted the powder to a base bullion, which was in turn granulated by being poured into cold water. The grains were immersed in nitric acid to dissolve the zinc, lead and silver and the residual gold was smelted into bars. The silver was saved by precipitating it with salt as silver chloride, which was subsequently decomposed by the introduction of zinc to form metallic silver and zinc chloride. Finally the silver was smelted.²⁹

28. *AR.*, 1897, p. 34. The majority of the tailings treated were collected from the creeks and tailings dumps and recycled.

29. MacArthur, "The Cyanide Process"; Clark, *Australian Mining and Metallurgy*, pp. 27-29.



Throughout the nineteenth century Charters Towers ores were inefficiently stamped, and the gold lost in the batteries was recovered by secondary and tertiary treatment as new processes became available. By 1895 William Paull was admitting that it was normal to win more gold from the residues of the pans sold to the cyaniders than from the stamps;³⁰ in the field's peak year of 1899 only fifty-six percent of the gold was produced by the mills.³¹ However, multiple treatment was expensive. In 1901, milling and grinding still cost fourteen shillings a ton, and cyanidation a further 7/6 for each ton of tailings³² despite the sophistication of the recovery methods as illustrated by the flow sheets.³³ In the early years of the field when ore treatment was the province of small itinerant businessmen, failure to adjust the mill to the ore was understandable. During the 1880s and 1890s, when Charters Towers was a major goldfield financed by large-scale interstate and overseas investment, this failure is less easily explained. It was not merely a problem of piecemeal construction of the mills.

During 1888 the Burdekin Mill was erected by a highly capitalised English company on a perfect site at Sellheim on the Burdekin River.³⁴ Yet its stamps still weighed only eight hundred pounds each; the broken surface, 225 holes

30. Paull, "Auriferous Veins at Charters Towers", p. 246.

31. During 1889 gold to the value of £1,357,517 was produced in Charters Towers; only £769,849 came from the mills. *AR.*, 1889, p. 35.

32. MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, pp. 21-29.

33. See figure 15.

34. The mill was erected by the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham Company on the steep bank of the river, thereby assuring it a plentiful water supply and ease of transport within the mill.

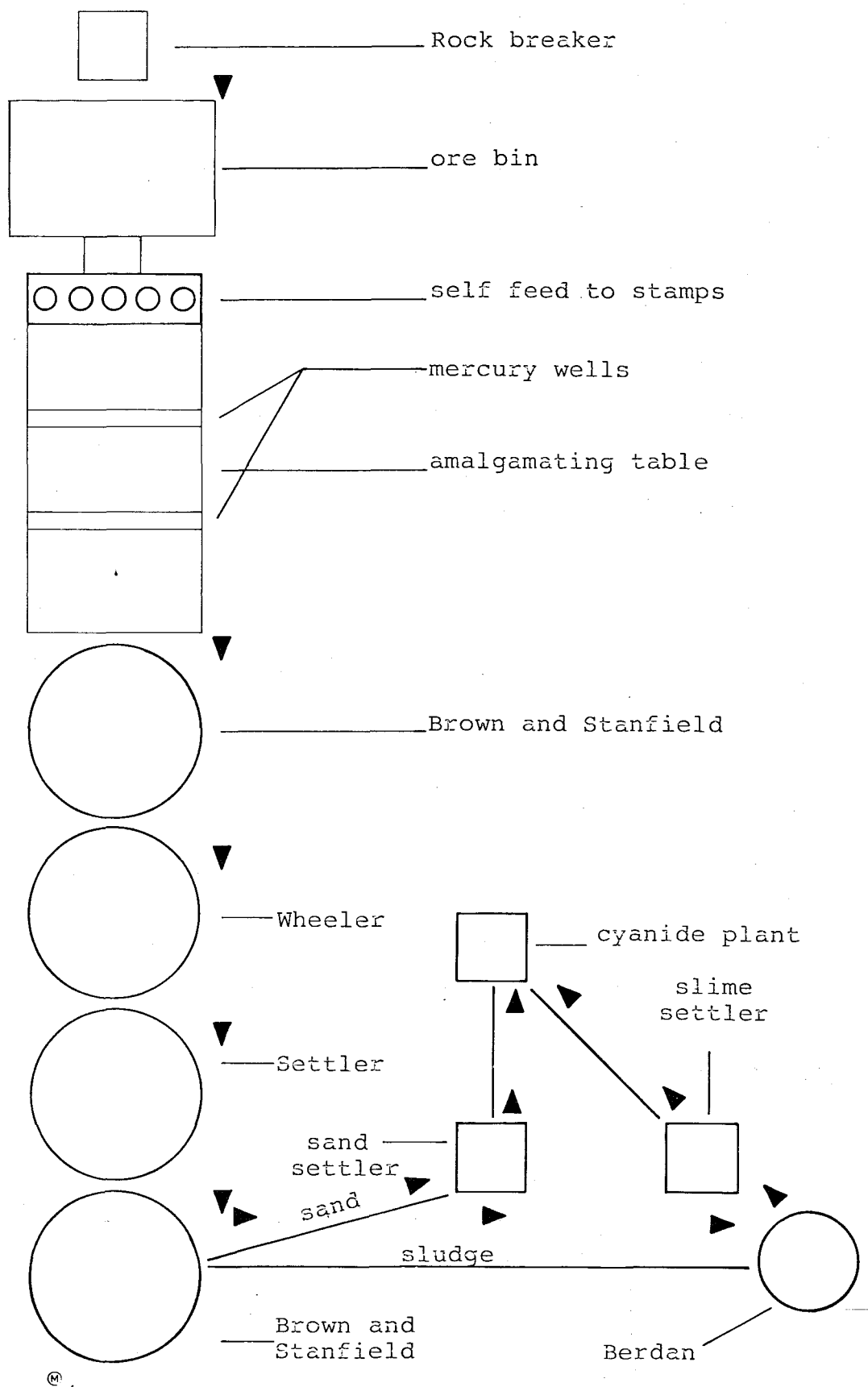


Figure 15: Flowsheet 1901

per inch discharge screen was set to give a discharge depth of six to ten inches³⁵ and its slime production equalled that of the older mills on the field. By 1901 the company had installed a filter press in an attempt to improve its extraction rate from the slimes produced in its batteries. A contemporary critic, the South African mining engineer William Blane, complained of a lack of technical expertise on the field and noted that mine owners insisted that their ore should not be "rushed" through the batteries.³⁶ Certainly the industry suffered from an innate conservatism, contemptuous of the contributions of "book learning" and opposed to changes in established procedures. Nevertheless, it is likely that the field's greatest problem was still the richness of its ores which, despite inadequate treatment, yielded enough gold to discourage a serious review of milling practice. In the most productive year of 1899, however, the warden's returns show that the mills crushed 176 tons less stone than in 1898 for 8,388 fewer ounces.³⁷ The increased yield was in fact due entirely to the production of 278,256 ounces of cyanide bullion from the accumulated tailings heaps.

Technological problems were exacerbated by the withdrawal, in 1892, of the government mineralogical lecturer, A.W. Clarke, who held this position for two and a half years, had received an enthusiastic reception on his appointment in 1887. His courses were popular, but he was inadequately

35. AR., 1888, p. 28; MacLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, pp. 18-19.

36. Blane, "Report on the Conditions and Modes of Working on the Goldfields of Queensland", p. 40.

37. AR., 1898, p. 35. Wardens' returns become increasingly difficult to interpret after 1892 as they give annual production in terms of retorted gold plus the much less valuable cyanide bullion.

equipped and accommodated, lecturing first at the Town Hall and later moving to the Fire Brigade Room, neither of which he found satisfactory. During 1888 he obtained the use of a "good sized shed" but was still improvising his equipment. Nevertheless he attracted the support of the press, which published his lecture notes, and of the population of both Charters Towers and Millchester, where a Chemical and Mineralogical Society was formed to establish and equip a small laboratory. But despite the existence of a School of Mines Committee³⁸ by 1888, and a North Queensland Mining Institute by the end of 1889,³⁹ little attempt was made to raise money to meet the government's offer of a pound for pound subsidy for the establishment of a permanent School of Mines.⁴⁰ Although the Miners' Union appealed to the Mines Department for his retention, the lecturer was withdrawn at the end of the 1892 and the movement lapsed for some years. It was not until 1898 that the School and its library were constructed, and the first year of its operation as a teaching institution did not occur in this decade.

One area which was clarified at this time was that of mining law, codified as *The Mining Act 1889* (62 VIC 24) as a result of the Mining Commission of the previous year. The new Act reflected an acceptance of the take-over of Queensland mining by large companies. It increased the areas of leases from twenty-five to fifty acres and permitted the amalgamation of leases up to one hundred acres. In addition it reduced labour requirements from one man per acre to one

38. *Charters Towers Times*, 4 July 1888.

39. *AR.*, 1889, p. 125.

40. Stoodley, *The Queensland Gold Miner in the Late Nineteenth Century*, pp. 39-40. For the union appeal see *Northern Mining Register*, 3 February 1892.

for every five acres. Lastly it allowed for fines instead of forfeiture as a penalty for breaking the conditions of a lease.⁴¹ While organised labour protested strongly about the provisions of the new Act it was undeniable that, at least on Charters Towers, it merely recognised conditions which already existed.

By the end of the decade the town of Charters Towers rested on a labyrinth of shafts, drives and crosscuts, operated by the great mining companies. Mosman Gold Mines was still working the old Eastward Ho, North Australia and Peabody reefs on the Day Dawn ridge where the prospectors had first found gold. Also outcropping on the ridge was the Day Dawn reef whose first workings, the Day Dawn PC, was surrounded by the group of mines which lay under the heart of the town. To its north, and running under the Boy's School, were the disappointing five acres of the Day Dawn School Reserve mine. On the western boundary of the PC was the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham which owned a sixty acre lease as well as the right to mine under the western end of Mosman Street; it adjoined the three acres occupied by the Church of England and mined by the Day Dawn Church Lands Company. The sixty-four acre lease of the Day Dawn Gold Mines shared the western boundary of the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, and joined onto the twenty-two acres of freeholds mined by Day Dawn Freeholds. Under the business area of Charters Towers, including the chief part of both Mosman and Gill Streets, lay Mills Day Dawn United, of which Lees wrote:

[F]requenting the ever crowded bar of
Collins Hotel, the meeting place of
mining men, or transacting share business
in the offices of Bright and Co, Ineson

41. Drew, "Queensland Mining Statutes", pp. 133-134.



THE SINK IN MILLS' UNITED.—(The deepest point reached in Queensland—1429 feet vertical.)



MILLS' UNITED.—STARTING TO THE SURFACE.

and Co, A.W. Wilson or any of the offices comprised in the business centre, one is continually over the immense caverns which have been opened up in the Mills United mines 2,000 feet below. 42

The Brilliant mines occupied the ground from around Church Street out towards Queenton. The twenty-five acre PC ran from Boundary Street to the railway line. The Brilliant and St. George was to its east and the Brilliant Block, whose thirty-six acres included freeholds and the hospital reserve, was on its north. The Brilliant Freeholds stretched from its western boundary to Church Street on the southern side of Gill Street and on its south-east boundary lay the Victory, a fifty acre lease. The northern portion of the Brilliant group comprised the Brilliant Extended (seventy-five acres north of the Brilliant and St. George) and the Brilliant Deep Levels (eighty acres north of the Brilliant Block). This ground had been taken up in 1891 as the Brilliant Extended Block. A three compartment vertical shaft was sunk about 2,000 feet but failed to cut the reef. In 1896 the company was reconstructed and the shaft carried to 2550 feet. The lode was intersected at 2250 feet but was not payable. A similar vein was passed through some thirty-seven feet lower and by the end of the year this mine was 535 feet deeper than any other mine in Queensland and still unproductive. In December of that year the directors announced that they had again cut the reef, this time on payable gold. The Warden described the events which followed in his 1896 report:

Everything was in a most promising condition on 24th December, the reef having been cut and all appearances

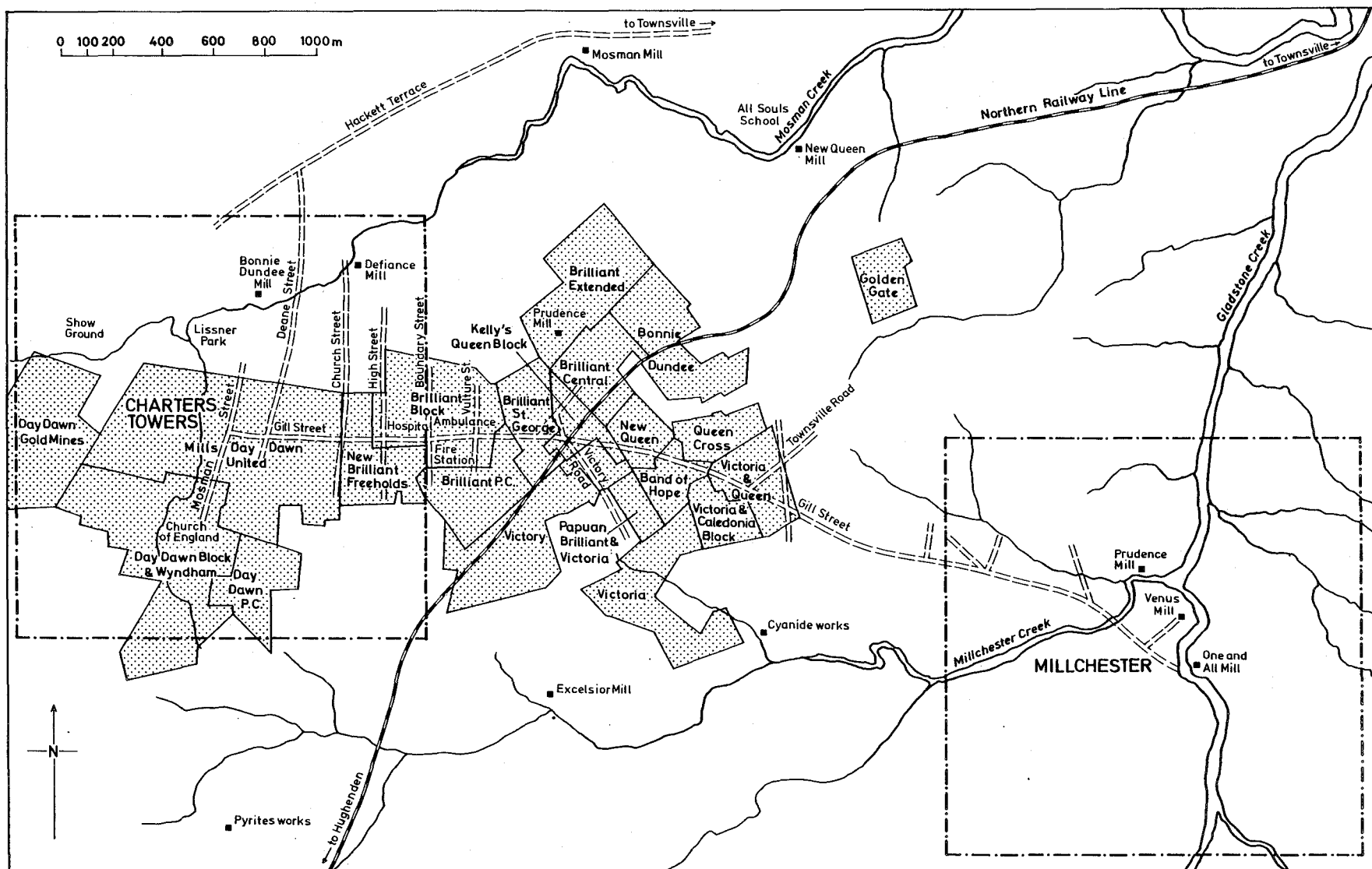
being most promising. At 1 o'clock on the following (Christmas) morning, a most disgraceful outrage was perpetrated, about 25lb weight of dynamite having been exploded in a steel bucket on the edge of the shaft, completely wrecking the top fillings, cutting the winding cable, damaging the machinery, and closing the mouth of the shaft. The direct pecuniary loss was not as great as might have been anticipated - probably under £1,000 - but thirty men were thrown out of work at a most inappropriate time, and the development of the mine delayed until necessary timber could be procured to make the shaft available for further operations. 43

In fact from 1897 to 1899 three hundred and forty-four tons of stone from this mine were crushed for a return of only sixty-nine ounces. Although some gold was produced between 1908 and 1916 none of the five companies which worked this ground ever declared a dividend.⁴⁴ The six acre Phoebe west of the Brilliant and St. George, had Kelly's Queen Block (eight and a half acres) to its north, and further north again was the twenty-five acre Brilliant Central which incorporated the ground of the old Bryan O'Lynn and provided access to the East Mexican.

To the east of the Brilliant mines another group of companies operated under the Queenton district. Clark's Brilliant Worcester and Victory was east of Victory and adjoined the Papuan Brilliant and Victoria. To the east again came the No 1 West Victoria (four and a half acres) and the Victoria Gold Mining Association (twenty-five acres). This was connected to the Victoria and Caledonia Block (eleven acres). All of these mines worked the Victoria and Queen

43. AR., 1896, p. 35.

44. See Reid, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 225.



reefs. On the northern boundary of the Papuan the eleven and a half acre Band of Hope worked at different times the Just-in-Time, Queen Cross, Victory and Victoria reefs. East of Kelly's Queen Block lay the eleven and a half acre New Queen with Marshall's Queen on its northern boundary. The thirty-three acre Bonnie Dundee, under tribute by the end of the decade, lay under the railway line to the north-east of the Brilliant Central, with the Bonnie Dundee Block on its northern boundary and the North Queen on its east. Further south, around Gill Street, lay the rest of the Queen group: No 7 North-East Queen, Queen Central, Queen Cross Reef and Victoria and Queen.

Moving south towards Millchester Creek were Millican's Caledonia, Craven's Caledonia and the Lady Carrington. To the north-east of the Queen group were Vesuvius and Golden Gate, a successful fifty acre English-owned lease. Sunburst was on twenty-five acres further east again. In the Millchester area the Lady Florence, on the east bank of Gladstone Creek, and adjoining No 1 Lady Florence was still working, while Identity, Identity Extended and Good Hope were also east of Gladstone Creek. Further out were Ruby, near to Millchester Creek at the other end of the field on Excelsior Ridge; the Moonstone line of claims, the most important of which was Moonstone Consols, lay to the south-west. Among the outside mines were the newly formed Mount Leyshon and Imperial companies.⁴⁵

These companies operated some of the most sophisticated mines in North Queensland. The Brilliant PC had opened up thirteen levels; it had a workforce of 180 men. There was

45. Lees, "The Charters Towers Gold Field", pp. 13-32.



Aerial photograph showing cyanide tailings dumps. In the foreground is the Brilliant Block mill and behind it the Brilliant Extended.

a sixteen horsepower double cylinder winding engine with three Cornish boilers in the vertical shaft and a twelve horsepower double cylinder engine in the underlie. Like all the bigger mines it used rock drills powered by compressors for stoping and was lit by electricity. The Brilliant and St. George was equipped with safety cages and drained by three pumps: a Cameron, a Knowles and a Worthington. Its mill consisted of fifty head of stamps and six Huntingdon mills, and it operated its own cyanide works. Mills Day Dawn United mine worked from a four-chambered vertical shaft of about 2,170 feet. It used a pair of coupled high-pressure engines, twenty-two inch cylinders by forty-two inch stroke, driving eight feet diameter double winding drums. Its two twenty-horsepower engines were used for hauling in the vertical shaft; steam was provided by six thirty-horsepower boilers. In addition there were two air compressors for the rock drills. Mills also operated its own battery to which the mine was connected by a branch railway.⁴⁶ Such properties ensured that in 1899, with its population of 26,215⁴⁷ and its gold return of 319,572 fine ounces,⁴⁸ Charters Towers reached the peak of its productive life. Although it would not become apparent for some years, the twentieth century was to be a period of decline.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Reid, "The Charters Towers Goldfield", p. 58.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

CHAPTER 11. THE NINETIES DEPRESSION

Throughout the Australian colonies the early 1890s witnessed a change from general prosperity to severe depression. Despite some disagreement about the relative importance of internal and external factors,¹ it is generally accepted that the crisis resulted from excessive investment during the 1880s which accentuated Australian dependence on overseas capital while limiting its ability to improve its balance of payments.² The collapse began in Victoria where speculation in land and building reached unprecedented levels during 1887 and 1888, and financial control had been undermined by the creation of large numbers of building societies and land banks, many of which had inadequate reserve capital. As speculative building outstripped the demand for accommodation one of the largest of these societies, the Premier Permanent Building Association, failed in December 1889. The alarm this caused British investors was exacerbated by the collapse, the following year, of Baring's a leading London finance house. Since Baring's problems derived from upheavals in Argentina, faith in overseas capital

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1. Butlin, for example emphasizes an imbalance in the Australian domestic economy due to the channelling of imported capital into speculative ventures at the expense of production. Thus, "the rate of growth of leading export industries and import-replacing output did not match the increased demand for imported capital and consumption goods and the rising overseas obligations for interest and dividends" Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1900*, p. 407. Boehm lays greater stress on the importance of external factors which led to the "drying up of the capital inflow and the associated decline in imports which were heavily supporting real income and economic development in Australia." E.A. Boehm, *Prosperity and Depression in Australia 1887-1897* (Oxford 1971), p. 321.
 2. See also Leon L'Huillier, "Depression and a National Economy", in James Griffin (ed.), *Essays in Economic History of Australia* (Brisbane Second Edition 1970); also B.K. de Garis, "1890-1900" in F.K. Crowley (ed.), *A New History of Australia* (Melbourne 1974).

investment was undermined and British funds had dried up by the end of 1891.

Since each of the colonial governments was reliant on loans floated on the London money market, public finance was immediately disrupted. The massive expenditure on communications, particularly railways, which had marked the long boom, was severely cut back, and the unemployment caused by the recession of the building industry was augmented by the cessation of public works programmes. This already serious situation was aggravated by a drop in the price of wool which ruined many over-extended pastoralists. Caught in the downward economic spiral, twenty-one Melbourne and twenty Sydney building, land and mortgage companies and societies³ and three small banks had suspended by the middle of 1892.⁴ More ominous for the financial system, however, was the closure, late in January 1893, of the weakest of the Associated Banks, the Federal,⁵ followed in March by the inter-colonial Commercial Bank of Australia.⁶ The Patterson Government in Victoria panicked and declared a five-day bank holiday which, far from stopping the run on the banks, heightened the fear of the depositors. By mid-May only three of the larger houses, the New South Wales, the Union and the Australasia, remained in business.⁷

In Queensland the government and the three colonial banks indulged in most of the economic sins of the 1880s. The Royal Bank of Queensland which opened in 1886 pursued a

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3. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development*, p. 429.
 4. Geoffrey Blainey, *Gold and Paper: A History of the National Bank of Australasia Limited* (Georgian House 1958), pp. 142-146.
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
 7. de Garis, "1890-1900", p. 222.

cautious and conservative course under its first general manager J.T. Walker. On his resignation at the end of 1888 it held a million pounds in deposits, and two years later occupied fifth place among the banks trading in Queensland. Walker's successors, however, threw caution to the wind, lending increasingly to businessmen and pastoralists, the nature of whose assets made it unlikely that they would be able to repay on demand.⁸ The Bank of North Queensland opened in 1888. Despite its base in Townsville, a port with a mere 10,000 population, it issued its own bank notes from branches throughout the North. Both the Royal and the Bank of North Queensland eventually merged with the National Bank of Australasia, as did their more important rival the Queensland National Bank.⁹

The Queensland National was set up during 1872 with a paid up capital of £106,000.¹⁰ One of its early directors was Sir Thomas McIlwraith, who occupied this position for the five years prior to his first term as Premier in 1879. In office McIlwraith maintained his links with the bank which soon took over the Queensland Government's financial transactions. These proved to be big business; by 1880 Queenslanders were supporting, per capita, the largest public debt of all the colonies, and the National had thirty branches in Queensland, a palatial Brisbane head office and another in Sydney. It also held a higher proportion (forty percent) of the total deposits and advances of its home colony than any other bank in Australia.¹¹ The Griffith ministry, which came to power late in 1883, assumed

8. Blainey, *Gold and Paper*, p. 203.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

the previous government's financial style. In July the following year it introduced a colossal railway extension scheme financed by an unprecedented £9,980,000 loan. This provoked inflation and land speculation which in turn led to further loan raising. By June 1888 the Liberal ministers had spent over one and three quarter million pounds in loan money for each year they had been in government, and still "achieved" four successive annual deficits. Returning to power in 1888 McIlwraith increased government expenditure by a further £128,922, but balanced his books by introducing a protectionist customs tariff. Protection led to a reduction in imports and a consequent drop in customs revenue, but the government continued to spend, and the Morehead ministry of 1889-90 was forced to retire after an unsuccessful attempt to recoup by imposing a general tax of five percent on all real and personal property.¹²

That Queensland's finances were shaky was clear. What was less clear was the fact that the financial edifice which supported them was itself built on sand. By 1889 the Queensland National Bank's deposits had risen to £9.8 million. Three million of these were in fixed deposits lent by British investors, to which were added the loans the Queensland government raised in London.¹³ This was the money which poured into the hands of speculators in the late 1880s; much of it never returned to the bank.¹⁴ The National made huge losses which were concealed by its general-manager, Edward Robert Drury, who was himself using a large overdraft

12. Government of Queensland, *Our First Half-Century: A Review of Queensland's Progress* (Brisbane 1909), p. 40.

13. Blainey, *Gold and Paper*, p. 204.

14. See Tony Gough, "Tom McIlwraith, Ted Drury, Hugh Nelson and the Queensland National Bank 1896-97", in *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 3, No. 9, 1978.

to speculate in mining shares.¹⁵ In many of his ventures Drury's partner was Thomas McIlwraith, "a tireless promoter of mines, usually bad mines, and a wild-fire speculator whose judgement was weak."¹⁶ Eventually McIlwraith's overdraft with his government's bank exceeded £328,000.¹⁷ So long as deposits continued to flood into its coffers the National remained viable; when British capital began to dry up the paucity of its reserves became evident.

In August 1890 the Morehead ministry was replaced by a coalition of McIlwraith and Griffith (the Griffilwraith). During that year a £3.75 million loan was authorised to repay money borrowed in previous years. The Act did not receive Royal Assent until December, by which time the money market was dead and the loan was undersubscribed to the point of complete failure.¹⁸ In a crisis of confidence British investors began to remove their deposits from the Queensland National Bank as soon as they became due, the money withdrawn in England being paid out of its scarce Australian gold reserves. The Griffilwraith managed to raise new loans during 1892 and its deposits propped up the bank until May 1893 when it was forced to close by a run by its Scottish depositors.¹⁹ Despite reconstruction the true position of this institution was not revealed until

15. Queensland Legislative Assembly, Further Report of the Committee appointed to Inquire into the Business and Affairs of the Queensland National Bank, Limited, and its Past Management. *V&P.*, 1897, Vol. 2, p. 705.

16. Blainey, *Gold and Paper*, pp. 207-8.

17. Gough, "Tom McIlwraith, Ted Drury, Hugh Nelson and the Queensland National Bank 1896-7", p. 5.

18. Government of Queensland, *Our First Half-Century*, p. 41.

19. Blainey, *Gold and Paper*, p. 212.

after Drury's death in 1896. Its liabilities exceeded its assets by £2,435,000.²⁰

During the later 1880s the local economy of Charters Towers showed clear signs of developing the malaise which was overtaking the wider economy of Queensland and the other Australian colonies. On the one hand, the field's growing reliance on British capital left it open to the vagaries of international finance. On the other, the increasingly speculative as opposed to productive nature of that capital gave rise to distortions within the mining industry, adding to its vulnerability. These factors were, however, counter-balanced to some extent by the fixed price of gold, the purchasing power of which rose as prices and costs deflated, and by recent discoveries on the Brilliant reef which ensured the field's productivity throughout the depression. Indeed, during 1891 it appeared that Charters Towers would benefit from the crisis which was already causing a precipitous decline in share prices elsewhere, not excluding those in Victorian gold mines.²¹

In the excitement which followed the discovery of the Brilliant reef, the Charters Towers Stock Exchange was reconstructed; it opened for business in the Royal Arcade in Mosman Street in May 1890.²² At first the members had to pay calls to meet the expenses of the Exchange and

20. Queensland Legislative Assembly, First Report of the Auditor-General under "The Queensland National Bank, Limited (Agreement), Act of 1896". V&P., 1897, Vol. 2, p. 687. See also, Affairs of the Queensland National Bank, Limited (Correspondence with the Committee of Investigation), pp. 691-683; Affairs of the Queensland National Bank, Limited (Further Correspondence with the Committee of Investigation), pp. 695-697; Committee of Inquiry - Queensland National Bank, Limited (Letter from Hon. Sir S.W. Griffith), pp. 711-712.

21. See Hall, *The Stock Exchange of Melbourne*, pp. 170-171.

22. Don Roderick, *Charters Towers and its Stock Exchange* (Townsville 1977), p. 14.



A SCENE OF THE BOOM.
The Charters Towers Stock Exchange

even at the beginning of 1891 seats could be purchased for eight pounds. By June, however, the price was fifty guineas; in August it was one hundred guineas and by September it had shot up to two hundred and fifty guineas.²³ Between June and November more than two million shares changed hands in the Royal Arcade, their average price rising from about 3/6 in June to 7/4 in November. The capital value of the Charters Towers mines according to share buying

Month	Shares	Value	Average
June	65,985	£11,997	3s 63/7d
July	252,110	£69,018	5s 53/4d
August	299,426	£82,438	5s 66/7d
September	301,174	£85,421	5s 8d
October	621,303	£217,204	7s
November	579,180	£212,326	7s 4d

Source: *Northern Mining Register*, 3 February 1892.

prices rose from one and a half to nearly three and a half million pounds during the same period. As the speculative fever spread, the heavy membership fees and the five percent

Date	Capital Value of Charters Towers mines according to share buying prices
1891	
1 July	£1,585,950
1 August	£2,001,275
1 September	£2,115,625
1 October	£2,201,782
1 November	£3,395,348

Source: *Northern Miner Register*, 3 February 1892.

commission charged by the Exchange encouraged small investors to open their own Charters Towers Miners Exchange in the roofed-in courtyard of the Queens Hotel in Gill Street. It held its first call on 6 November 1891.²⁴

23. *Northern Mining Register*, Christmas Edition, 1891.

24. *Ibid.*

It is likely that investment in gold was encouraged by lower confidence in public sector loans, and that capital flowed in to the Northern field rather than to Victoria due to the opening of the Brilliant mines. In all ninety-two North Queensland mining properties were floated during 1891,²⁵ the best of which were still able to attract British capital. For example, apart from a small parcel distributed to agents, accountants and managers, Victoria and Queen's 48,000 shares were divided between E.H.T. Plant (the largest holder), E.D. Miles and Joe Millican in Charters Towers and A. Durant, John McDonald and P.C. Novelli in London.²⁶ From this period, however, the trend was increasingly towards buying shares in Queensland registered mines rather than floating new companies in London. Inevitably, though, the boom gave birth to wild-cats, some of which appear to have been subscribed largely from outside the field, particularly Brisbane, where E.R. Drury bought at least one large parcel of worthless shares.²⁷ Indeed it may be that the market was primed by Brisbane speculators who, hard hit by the collapse of land values, were attempting to regain liquidity through a quick turn-over of shares on the northern exchanges. The activity of such dealers was responsible for the collapse of the Charters Towers Miners Exchange when the boom stopped suddenly during November. It appears that a group of speculators buying on commission for Brisbane clients had created a run on Hidden Treasure shares. When the boom collapsed one large Brisbane client

25. Register of North Queensland Mining Companies. Queensland Mines Department, A/8939, QSA.

26. Summaries of Capital and Shares, 1887-1906. MWO 11A/01-27, QSA.

27. 7,000 St. Patrick Block Extended. Summaries of Capital and Shares, 1887-1906. MWO 11A/01-27, QSA.

defaulted and another paid his account with a cheque which was dishonoured by the bank. The exchange was left with a large parcel of inflated Hidden Treasure stock and a quantity of forfeited Alabamas.²⁸ After the situation was made public in February the exchange was closed.

During November 1891 the capital value of the Charters Towers company mines, calculated on buyers' prices, dropped £700,000; a further drop of £100,000 was recorded in December. "Falling off does not describe the stock market for December", wrote the editor of the *Northern Mining Register*. "Collapse is the only word, for the total sales for the month on the two exchanges was not as great as the sales of the Charters Towers Exchange for the one last Saturday in October. On that ever-to-be remembered Saturday £30,000 worth of stock was sold, as against £27,169 for the three weeks in December, in which the two exchanges were open. The after-effects of a boom on business were surely never better demonstrated."²⁹ The market continued to drop through January when 58,265 shares at an average value of 4/7½ were sold.³⁰

While the share market fluctuated wildly, the field's productive mines were operating smoothly. The list of dividend paying companies grew steadily, though not spectacularly, during 1891 and dividends exceeded calls from May to December.³¹ Although the aftermath of the boom was the termination of twenty companies, fifteen of which had been floated during the preceding twelve months, and the recon-

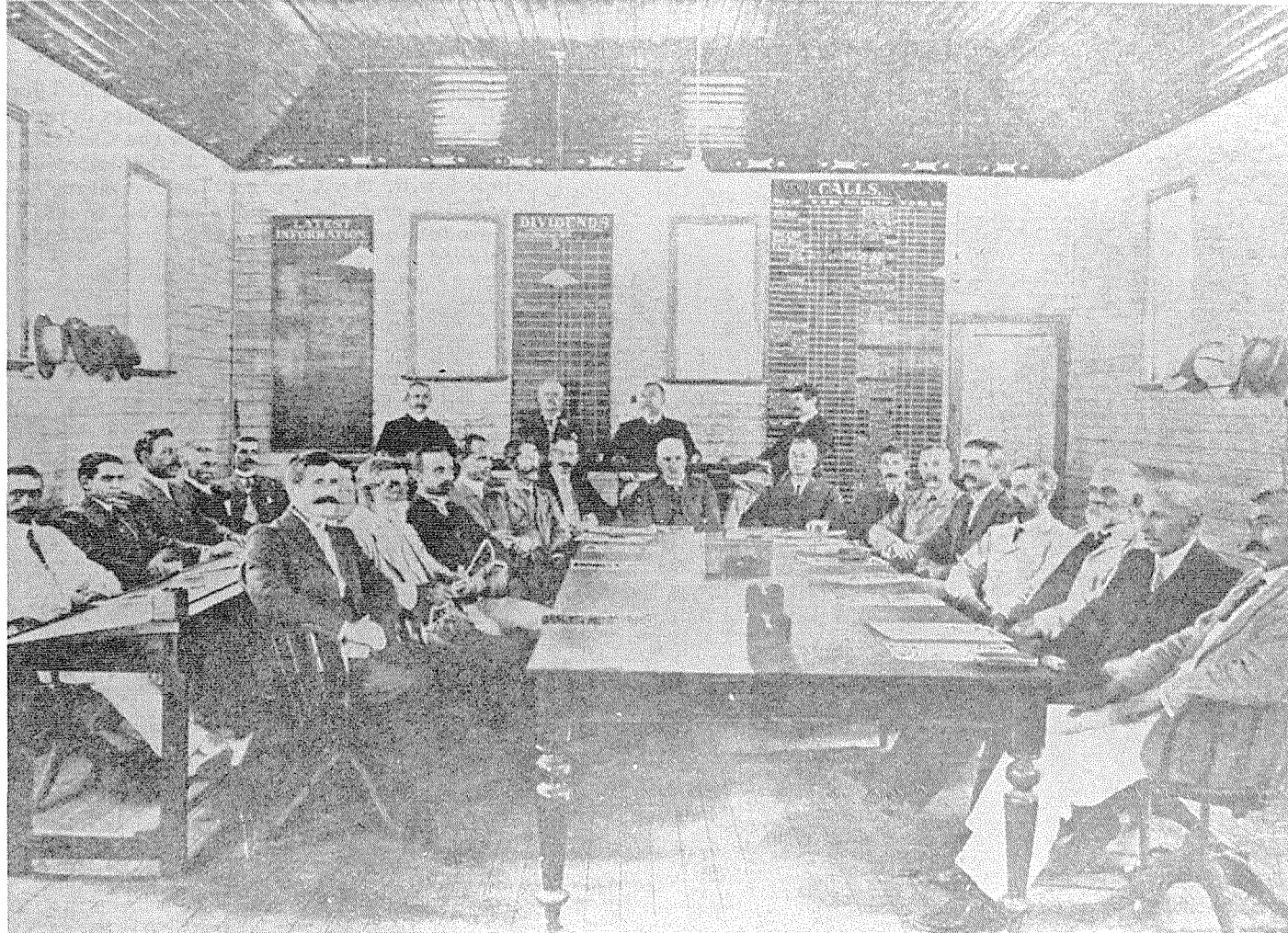
28. *Northern Mining Register*, 3 February 1892.

29. *Ibid.*, 6 January 1892.

30. *Ibid.*, 3 February 1892.

31. Register of calls made and of dividends paid by mining companies, 1890-1913. MWO 11A/15-16, QSA.

THE TOWERS STOCK EXCHANGE



struction of another five,³² deep sinking continued and, in most cases, was rewarded by success. The yield for 1892 was a record 270,000 ounces.³³ At the beginning of 1893 the only cloud on the horizon was the steadily increasing number of "immigrants" arriving in Charters Towers in search of work.³⁴ The Ladies' Benevolent Society was assisting nineteen families during January 1893 and the Friendly Societies were noting an increasing number of transfers to Charters Towers from other "less busy" centres. The warden noted that an extra 491 Homestead Leases had been taken up during the previous year,³⁵ and the situation was aggravated by the closure of many of the Gympie mines after the devastating floods of January.³⁶

Even the closure, in March 1893, of the Commercial Bank of Australia aroused only a mild attack of xenophobia aimed at the bank's Scottish depositors.³⁷ The sole Queensland branch, situated in Brisbane, was not affected and the southern offices reopened for business by mid-April. Indeed, when the English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank suspended on 12 April, David Green of the *North Queensland Register*, in an approving editorial, wrote that the stoppage would prevent a run on the bank's reserves and place rural, poor and financially unskilled depositors on an even footing with their city counterparts when the time came to retrieve their capital. Shock and dismay, however, greeted the first Charters Towers shut-down, that of the Australian Joint Stock Bank, late in April.

32. *North Queensland Register*, 11 January 1893.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*, 1 March 1893.

36. *Ibid.*, 8 March 1893.

37. *Ibid.*, 19 April 1893.

The AJS was a popular institution, attracting the accounts of many clubs and societies and some of the most important mining companies, notably Victory, Victoria and Mosman. It had the biggest gold buying business on the field while at the same time, particularly through its Queenton branch, attracted a large number of small depositors. Since each bank issued its own bank notes, early concern was directed towards these, particularly after it was ascertained that the other banks would not accept AJS notes. Holders rushed to purchase non-perishable goods from the Chinese storekeepers who seem to have remained ignorant of the situation during that first morning. Around 1pm the manager of the Bank of New South Wales received instructions from Sydney to accept any notes tendered by his own customers, and the attention of frantic note-holders turned to the lucky NSW clients. Small local "runs" were made on the other banks as housewives transferred the family savings to private boxes in the Savings Bank.³⁸

Despite calls for "brave hearts and cool heads"³⁹ there was a decidedly uneasy feeling throughout the town during the following weeks. Blame for the crisis was variously apportioned to foreign speculators feeding on the wealth of the colony in good times and abandoning it in depression, on southern depositors acting "like a flock of ringing sheep" or the capitalist system which was held, by some, to be in a state of collapse. However, Green reassured his readers:

In the times of financial crisis a dividend paying mine well opened out is really the safest repository for money. Such a mine is then to a great extent independent of banks and financial institutions, because gold appreciates in

38. *Ibid.*, 26 April 1893.

39. *Ibid.*

value in times such as we are going through, and if all the branches in the colonies went smash, all that the owners of gold producing mines would have to do would be to ship the gold to the Sydney mint. 40

Nevertheless by May his financial column was being published under the banner "Financial Cyclone", and the edition of 5 May contained no fewer than five pages of telegraphed reports on the economic situation.

The fall of the Standard and National banks and the five day bank holiday they precipitated in Victoria were of only academic interest in Charters Towers, but the closure of the local branches of the London Chartered Bank of Australia and the Bank of North Queensland triggered another wave of activity. All banks were rushed by customers exchanging notes for gold sovereigns - "the people do not care to hold notes on any bank just now."⁴¹ The most damaging event of the crisis, however, occurred on 15 May - the QN collapse:

At last the bolt has fallen; that crowning financial misfortune which has been dreaded for months, which has been unexpectedly delayed, but which falls none the less with crushing force on the community, for the Queensland National Bank was a national bank in every sense of the word. 42

The field mourned the loss of the goose which laid the golden egg. Branches had been set up in Charters Towers and Millchester during the first half of 1874, and "it is certain the directors can never be accused of illiberality or want of enterprise..... Years ago the Queensland National Bank made large advances to, and indeed became partners in mining concerns, many of which occasioned it heavy loss.

40. *Ibid* ., 3 May 1893.

41. *Ibid*.

42. *Ibid*., 17 May 1893.

It has been essentially the miners' and mining speculators' bank, and with disastrous results to itself." While it was appreciated that "this is not banking" and that the bank had been "liberal to a fault" the mood of the town seems to have been largely one of sympathy and consternation rather than condemnation.⁴³

Attention turned to the three remaining banks, the Australasia, the New South Wales and the Union. Wages were paid on Saturday, and "when the news extended to the suburbs thoughtful heads of families despatched their children to the banks to convert the notes into gold."⁴⁴ Even treasury cheques were regarded with suspicion since they were normally payable on the Queensland National Bank. For working people left holding notes on suspended banks the situation could be desperate. By Monday speculators were able to purchase QN banknotes for as little as ten shillings in the pound. The suspensions had an immediate effect on local businessmen, whose ability to buy stock and pay staff was seriously curtailed. The shortage of money in circulation resulted in only the barest necessities being purchased; the business life of the town was stifled and retrenchments became common.

More jobs were lost in the mining industry. The first casualties were the Rainbow mine and mill which were owned by the Queensland National Bank. They closed immediately, while the bank's One-and-All mill at Millchester remained open only until it ran out of stone to crush. Call-paying mines soon came under threat for calls were running at about £8,000 a month at this time. Correspondence clerks at the

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, 24 May 1893.



BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES, CHARTERS TOWERS, 1892.



THE LONDON CHARTERED BANK, GILL STREET.

various mine secretaries' offices were kept busy returning cheques drawn on suspended banks for the payment of calls, one office alone returning thirty-three such cheques in a single day. Without income, such mines faced early closure; within a week of the suspensions fourteen of them had applied for exemptions from labour conditions. One hundred and fifty jobs were involved. Company directors sought new banks to take up their accounts and meet their wages bills, but only the most promising of the unproductive mines met with any success. Among the survivors were the Brilliant Central, Brilliant Freeholds and the Brilliant Extended. Even dividend-paying mines were affected, for they were often unable to draw on their accounts to meet dividend cheques. Their position was exacerbated by a decision by the surviving banks only to buy gold on the condition that payment be made twenty-one days after the gold had been lodged in the bank.⁴⁵ Many companies limited their work to mining payable ground and such restriction on development affected employment and production on the field for a considerable period.⁴⁶

As the year progressed the public sector began to contribute to the level of unemployment. The Northern Local Authorities Conference, which was held in Charters Towers in mid-June, was informed that the colonial government had dropped its endowment to 8/3 in the pound and was contemplating further cut-backs. Municipal councils and divisional boards had based the level of their borrowing on the high endowment rates of the 1880s, and when these fell off they were forced to find their repayments from rate monies. This inevitably resulted in the withdrawal of money from current works and the consequent retrenchment of day labourers.⁴⁷ In

45. *Ibid.*

46. *AR.*, 1893, p. 43.

47. *North Queensland Register*, 28 June 1893.

addition, cuts in colonial government spending amounting to £200,000 per annum were announced during July. Much of the saving was effected by the dismissal of public servants.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, "immigrants" continued to flow into Charters Towers. It is undeniable that many other centres were harder hit. The Townsville Municipal Council, for instance, had all its funds deposited in the Bank of North Queensland and, when that bank closed in May, solved its immediate problem by sacking the Town Clerk, the Accountant and the entire day labour force.⁴⁹ At the silver towns of Muldiva and Montalbion the problems induced by the depression and the financial crisis were dramatically terminated when silver prices plummeted to 2/6 an ounce in late June. The mines were closed and their total workforce joined the ranks of the unemployed.⁵⁰ Destitute families from these and other centres took to the road, many of them heading hopefully to the gold mining districts which might be expected to provide, if not wage paying employment, at least the possibility of earning a living by fossicking. As David Green philosophised: "People who were once deemed wealthy have found it necessary to take off their coats, and 'men of leisure' as a class have almost entirely disappeared.... Depression has lessened speculation in mining, and production this year may be checked, but it is probable that prospecting by men who have found wages not obtainable in their usual occupations will be a good set off."⁵¹

Clearly the Friendly and Benevolent Societies of the 1880s were not capable of coping with such levels of unemployment. By March the number of destitute families on the books of the Ladies' Benevolent Society had risen to

48. *Ibid.*, 26 July 1893.

49. *Ibid.*, 24 May 1893.

50. *Ibid.*, 5 July and 19 July 1893.

51. *Ibid.*, 14 June 1893.

twenty-six, though only ten pounds a week were being disbursed. At a meeting that same month the members decided to write to the Police Magistrate at Townsville asking him not to grant any more free railway passes to Charters Towers unless the recipients could demonstrate that they were guaranteed employment.⁵² The field's concern was demonstrated early in May when a public meeting was convened to discuss the problem. The Town Hall was packed and the townspeople overflowed on to the verandahs and the street outside. With the mayor, David Missingham, in the chair, they debated possible avenues of employment on railway works and in the mines, deciding to petition mining secretaries and directors to let all available ground on tribute and to make cash advances on the stone thus raised. The success of the plan was underwritten by the election of a committee which included most of the field's prominent mining men.⁵³ It was not, however, until late June that the Queensland government officially recognised the problem and instructed the Police Magistrates to issue rations to the destitute. These rations were to be given only to married people and *bona fide* travellers; single men living in towns were under no circumstances to be assisted. The weekly ration scale was to comprise four pounds of meat, four pounds of bread or flour, one pound of sugar and two ounces of tea for each adult; children were to receive half of this. Travelling rations were to be allowed at a scale considered adequate to carry work-seekers, married or single, to the next relief distribution centre.⁵⁴

52. *Ibid.*, 8 March 1893.

53. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1893. The committee comprised W. Hill, R.M. Cochrane, D. Missingham, J. Dunsford, W.D. Casey, R.J. Sayers, all Ministers of Religion, J.A. Haggard, J. Banham, F. Pfeiffer, E.H.T. Plant, A. Dawson, T. Davey, W.M. Mowbray, C.A.M. Morris, J. Marsland, R. Tregaskis, T. Buckland, J.B. Whitehead, J. Malone, J. Power and J. Gard.

54. *Ibid.*, 5 July 1893.

Although the depression of the 1890s conformed to the classical pattern of unemployment and deflation, a pattern which favours the purchasing power of those remaining in employment, wage cuts were quick to follow the financial collapse. Most government-employed labourers had their wages cut by about sixpence a day during June, and all classes of civil servants suffered reductions in wages.⁵⁵ Private employers attempted to follow suit.⁵⁶ The first hint that the Charters Towers mine owners might attempt to reduce the hallowed miners' wage of three pounds a week came on the first pay day in June when the managers of the Mosman Company's mine and mill notified their men of an across the board reduction of ten shillings a week. "It is thought", remarked David Green, "that the example will be generally followed."⁵⁷ The miners thought otherwise. After a meeting at the Mosman mine at which the new wage scale was rejected, a public meeting at the Town Hall was called for Friday 9 June.

More than half an hour before the appointed time it was clear that the hall would not be large enough and a table was hastily carried out onto the post office verandah to accommodate the mayor who had been prevailed upon to occupy the chair. The meeting was held in Gill Street. Such was the mood of the crowd that no-one cared to speak against the motion - "That in the opinion of this meeting the standard rate of wages is little enough." A couple of speakers were cautioned by the Chair for taking the opportunity to denounce the capitalist system and prophesy its immediate demise, but there was general agreement that, as one speaker

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*., 14 June 1893. Before their closure Muldiva and Montalbion miners had taken a twenty-five percent cut.

57. *Ibid.*

said, "rather than take 50/- a week he would eat pig weed on the banks of the Burdekin." When Missingham declared his agreement with the motion, the case for a wage reduction was clearly lost. William Holliman, Chairman of Directors for the Mosman Company, announced that the company would make no attempt to drop its rates.⁵⁸

Some of the pressure on employment was relieved by the departure of miners for the expanding gold fields of Africa and Western Australia, but at base the salvation of the town lay with the great Brilliant mines which, one by one, met the reef and came into production. Tributing and cyaniding also absorbed a considerable proportion of the surplus workforce. As job-seeking families arrived on Charters Towers the building industry began to revive. Dozens of one, two, three and four bedroomed miners' cottages were constructed in the areas between the Millchester Road and the Excelsior Mill, between Millchester and Sadd's Ridge and around Craven's Caledonia and the Victoria and Queen, where rents were low and new companies were opening up.⁵⁹ Certainly Charters Towers never experienced the problems of Ravenswood where the closure of both banks resulted in a shut down of the hospital and, for some, the adoption of a barter system. It was reported that a bottle of porter was worth four pounds of steak while four quarts of milk had been exchanged for half a pound of tea and a postage stamp.⁶⁰ The *North Queensland Register* even suggested that the problems caused by the bank failures were, in some instances, exaggerated: "Financial disasters have produced a crop of blighted capitalists, whose expectations have been blasted

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*, 19 July 1893.

60. *Ibid.*, 24 May 1893.

by the suspension of banks, now in possession of their capital.... Every male of mature years and almost every female (no ages available) have, to the astonishment of their friends and relatives, credit balances in institutions under suspension."⁶¹

The first of the suspended institutions, the Australian Joint Stock Bank, reopened on 16 June; the others soon followed suit. The reconstruction schemes generally allowed for a gradual release of money held in small current accounts while large creditors were restricted by a system of compulsory fixed deposits.⁶² Although investment increased only slowly, and unemployment remained a problem for the rest of the decade, it never became necessary to adopt the plan to recycle local gold, advanced by David Green: "Might a humble scribe offer a suggestion that a Charters Towers bank should be established entitled the Victory, Mills United, Brilliant (and pups), Victoria, Queen and Kelly's Block Bank, with branches at Richmond Hill, Sellheim, Stockholm and Queenton and a mint at Millchester where what Mr Mantini described as 'dem'd mint sauce' could be turned out. We have the raw material, why not manufacture the sovereigns, and so save 2 shillings an ounce to Sydney and £3 per £100 for exchange? Now the Grace Darling is off gold and the drought has ruined the Chinese gardens, the Joss House at Millchester could be rented cheaply for a Royal Mint."⁶³

61. *Ibid.*, 7 June 1893.

62. *Ibid.*, 25 June 1893.

63. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1893.

CHAPTER 12. LABOR AND POLITICS

It was against a precarious economic background that the Charters Towers' labour movement achieved political power. The ALF, a federation of District Councils linked by a General Council, came to Charters Towers in June 1890. This was a busy period for the Queensland labour movement. Districts had also been set up in Brisbane, Barcaldine (Barcoo District), Maryborough (Wide Bay and Burnett District) and Townsville. Shortly afterwards a Rockhampton Council was established. The General Council, which comprised one delegate from each District, met once a year. Between these annual conferences the co-ordination of the Districts lay in the hands of an elected executive, the most powerful member of which was the General Secretary. In fact the District Councils were virtually autonomous. They retained two-thirds of the capitation fees of six-pence per member a month, sending one penny to the ALF newspaper fund and only the same amount to the General Council for its organisational expenses. They retained the right to strike levies on members in their district and to negotiate, in conjunction with the union concerned, in the event of a dispute.¹

The District Councils were composed of delegates from affiliated unions. Each union was entitled to one delegate for every fifty members, or fraction thereof; unions with fewer than ten financial members did not have representation. On this basis the Mining and Accident Association should have had at least eighteen members on the Charters Towers District Council but, in order not to swamp the other unions, it satisfied itself with six: Vernal, McDonald, Richards, Cassidy, Collins and Melvin. The other unions represented were the Ravens-

1. Sullivan, *The ALF in Queensland*, pp. 139-164.

wood miners (Upton), the Hughenden carriers (Pilbeam), the Women Workers' Union (Shoyer), the tailors (Gibson), the cordial makers (Ward), the cooks (Daniels), the bakers (Clarke), the shop assistants (Crees) and the cabmen (Murray).² The Council's first meeting elected a representative executive which included Crees (president), Clarke (vice-president) and Murray (treasurer). The miners, however, reserved for themselves the crucial positions of secretary (Richards) and organiser and General Council delegate (McDonald).³

At its inception the Charters Towers District Council claimed to represent 1,700 unionists; the number rose to 2,000 by the end of the year after the affiliation of the railwaymen, carters, butchers, carpenters, joiners and the Croydon miners.⁴ In addition it had the distinction of being the first ALF District with a woman member by virtue of Shoyer's representation of the domestic servants. McDonald was an enthusiastic organiser. In July he could claim to have obtained 3,500 signatures on the Factories and Workshops petition, a feat which led Gilbert Casey to describe Charters Towers as the "most important labor centre outside Brisbane."⁵ It was McDonald who represented the District at the First Annual Session of the General Council held in Brisbane at the beginning of August 1890. This

2. *Charters Towers Times*, 24 June 1890.

3. *Northern Miner*, 25 June 1890.

4. J. Stoodley, "Labor and Gold-Mining", in D.J. Murphy and Colin A. Hughes (eds.), *Prelude to Power: The Rise of the Labor Party in Queensland 1885-1915* (Milton 1970), p. 17.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

conference adopted a socialist objective⁶ and drew up a political platform and a programme which placed the selection of parliamentary candidates in the hands of the District Councils.⁷ Two weeks later the Maritime Strike began.

The Maritime Strike was the result of an attempt to extend the victory at Jondaryan⁸ to the southern colonies. It involved some 50,000 transport workers, shearers and miners for periods varying from two weeks to two months.⁹ Although the dispute did not, at this stage, extend to Queensland, the issue, "freedom of contract", struck at the very heart of trade unionism. The District was sharply divided; some, like McDonald, advocated a sympathy strike in the north, others felt that it did not concern them in any way. In September a worried Bill Richards left for Townsville to confer with its labor leaders. Although he "admitted that the struggle had now resolved itself into a fight for the very life of unionism, and he said it was his duty to tell his hearers that unless they were prepared to protect themselves, and to fight vigorously and with

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6. W.J.H. Harris, *First Steps: Queensland Workers' Moves Towards Political Expression 1857-1893* (Canberra 1966), p. 26. Perhaps, though, 'State capitalism' might better describe the aims of the Queensland labour movement. Reporting to the 1891 Intercolonial Trades Union Congress, the Queensland delegates said "Our political aims are, roughly, ownership and control by the Colony of the means of production and exchange and distribution ... fair division by the State of the products of State industry."
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
 8. See Chapter 8, footnote 61.
 9. See Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics*, p. 129; N.B. Nairn, "The 1890 Maritime Strike in New South Wales", in *Historical Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 37 (November 1961); R. Walker, "The Maritime Strikes in South Australia 1887 and 1890", in *Labour History*, No. 14. (May 1968).

determination, Unionism was doomed", he was adamant that there would be no sympathy strike on Charters Towers.¹⁰ To some extent Richards' native caution and moderation were re-emerging, and it appears that the collapse of the working relationship between him and McDonald dates from this time. Nevertheless, the reality of the matter was that many affiliated unions would not even pay the shilling per member per week levy which the ALF had struck on behalf of the southern strikers.¹¹ All but two of the Charters Towers affiliates had disbanded to avoid payment, reconstituting themselves at the end of the dispute.¹² The Maritime Strike collapsed in unconditional defeat during October.

In January of the following year the Queensland shearers started to fight the second extension of Jondaryan, the Queensland Shearers' Strike. With the defeat of the unions in southern colonies, Queensland pastoralists took heart and began to fight the "freedom of contract" issue again. The shearers faced police and armed "specials"; there was violence in the sheds and the weight of the law was placed firmly behind the employers. Two hundred shearers were prosecuted, eighty-two of them imprisoned.¹³ In Charters Towers the financial burden of the strikes was becoming unbearable. The Mining and Accident Association, which had borne the brunt of the Maritime Strike, began to fall apart. There was a bitter argument about the future of the union at the Half-Yearly Meeting of January 1891, which decided

10. *Charters Towers Times*, 26 September 1890.

11. *Charters Towers Daily Herald*, 12 January 1891.

12. *Charters Towers Times*, 12 January 1891.

13. Harris, *First Steps*, p. 20; see also R.J. and R.A. Sullivan, "The Pastoral Strikes, 1891 and 1894", in D.J. Murphy (ed.), *The Big Strikes. Queensland 1889-1965* (Brisbane 1983).

to sever connections with the Queensland AMA.¹⁴ This was a significant victory for the political faction of the union, but in terms of membership its cost was high. Already during the previous year the membership had dropped to its lowest level since 1887.¹⁵ Another twenty-two of the remaining 636 members, including three committee-men, resigned after this January meeting.¹⁶

Soon afterwards the Charters Towers Parliamentary Association was formed: its first meeting was held in March.¹⁷ In the meantime the union was moving closer to its political goal. Between January and July the committee drew up a plan to dissolve the Miners' Union and to reconstitute as a general workers' industrial and political organisation designed to absorb the rapidly collapsing minor unions on the field. The proposal was taken to a half-yearly general meeting in July and put to ballot on 1 August 1891. It is indicative of the collapse of unionism on the field that only forty-eight members registered their votes.¹⁸ They accepted the proposal and the Associated Workers Union (AssWU) was formed: the first combined union to be set up anywhere in Australia. The new organisation was open to all workers and took in not only the trade unions but also the District Council of the ALF whose functions it assumed.¹⁹ The Council, by this time under the presidency of Andrew Dawson, was dissolved during November and AssWU was formally

14. *Charters Towers Times*, 12 January 1891. See also Sullivan, *The ALF in Queensland*, pp. 177-180; Stoodley, "Labor and Gold-Mining", p. 20.

15. *Northern Miner*, 5 December 1891.

16. Stoodley, "Labor and Gold-Mining", p. 21.

17. *Charters Towers Times*, 28 March 1891.

18. *Northern Miner*, 3 August 1891.

19. Sullivan, *The ALF in Queensland*, p. 184. For the setting up of the AssWU see the Christmas edition, 1891 of the *Northern Mining Register*.

accepted as its replacement at the General Council of January 1892. The first AssWU executive consisted of William Hill, Charlie McDonald and Patrick Fitzgerald as president, vice-president and treasurer respectively. The secretaryship was retained by Bill Richards until October when his differences with McDonald reached boiling point. He resigned from the union and his place was taken by Hill with John Johnson moving into the presidency.²⁰ These moves marked Charters Towers' acceptance of political methods of redressing grievances. As McDonald told a public meeting during September, "something more than the old unionism was now necessary, and the whole salvation of the worker might now be considered to rest upon parliamentary representation."²¹

The Charters Towers Parliamentary Association had, by this time, already registered its first success. During 1891 John Dunsford was elected a member of the Municipal Council and Andrew Dawson was a successful candidate for the Dalrymple Divisional Board. Later in the year Dunsford and Charles Vosper were elected to the Hospital Board. Dawson later claimed that his election cost him his job.²² The first North Queensland moves towards labor representation in the colonial legislature came from Townsville during the by-election there in 1892. The District ALF Council nominated

20. *Northern Mining Register*, Christmas Edition, 1891. On the initiative of the Queensland executive of the AMA a new branch of that union was set up in Charters Towers in March 1892, but it never seriously competed with the AssWU which remained the dominant union. See Sullivan, *The ALF in Queensland*, pp. 182-191.

21. *Northern Miner*, 14 September 1891.

22. *QPD*, Vol. 84, 10 September 1900, p. 887. Though Bolton throws doubt on this story (G.C. Bolton, "Labour comes to Charters Towers", in *Labour History*, No. 1, January 1962) during the federal campaign of 1906 references are made to Dawson earning his living by picking through the Peabody mullock heap immediately before his election to the colonial legislature. On the other hand in May 1893 the *North Queensland Register* described his most recent occupation as being "store-keeping and working in batteries", *North Queensland Register*, 17 May 1893.

Anthony Ogden who unsuccessfully contested the seat on the platform "White Australia, universal suffrage, no Italian immigrants, no Sunday work".²³ Shortly after, labor contested Burnett but victory eluded the movement until June when Thomas J. Ryan won the Barcoo by-election and George Joseph Hall took Bundaberg.²⁴ Throughout this period the Charters Towers AssWU was co-operating closely with the Brisbane ALF; Hinchcliffe and David Bowman were guest speakers during February while Thomas Glassey arrived during August to discuss the Broken Hill strike.²⁵ In that month, however, the ALF lost control of the Queensland labour movement. At the labour convention held to consolidate political organisation for the 1893 elections the delegates, representing the ALF General Council, the Peoples' Parliamentary Associations, the Workers' Political Organisations and the Amalgamated Workers' Union of Queensland,²⁶ elected an executive which was dominated by the political rather than the industrial members. It consisted of the four member parliamentary party,²⁷ seven officers elected by the delegates and two representatives of the ALF.

Alarmed by developments within the labour movement the government, during 1892, tightened the Electoral Act. The Members' Expenses Act of 1886 had first opened the way for working class representatives to take up seats in the Assembly by providing that members could draw two guineas for each sitting attended. Three years later Parliament

23. Harris, *First Steps*, p. 19.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

25. *Northern Miner*, 3 February 1892; *North Queensland Register*, 24 August 1892.

26. An amalgamation of the shearers and the Queensland Labourers' Union.

27. In addition to Ryan and Hall, Thomas Glassey (Bundamba) and John Hoolan (Burke) classed themselves as labor members.

ruled that members should be paid a stipend of £300 a year and allowed travelling expenses on a mileage basis. During 1892 this stipend was reduced to £150; ostensibly a measure of financial constraint. Further, plural voting remained in force and stricter residential requirements were introduced. These resulted in the removal of more than 15,000 voters from the rolls, most of them working class.²⁸ Despite these measures Thomas Glassey, leader of the Parliamentary Party, appeared confident when he was interviewed for the *North Queensland Register* in January 1893. Announcing that he expected labor to win an additional twenty seats in the forthcoming elections, he said that the "miners and the bush workers...are the warmest supporters we have."²⁹

By mid-February the Parliamentary Associations and trade unions were selecting candidates. One of the earliest decisions came from the Hughenden Peoples' Parliamentary Association on 3 February 1893. It chose Charlie McDonald, who had moved to Hughenden the previous year. His campaign was to be funded by the Association in conjunction with the Hughenden Amalgamated Workers' Union, and these groups also pledged that, if he were elected, they would supplement his salary by an additional £150 a year.³⁰ Typically, nominations were more complicated in Charters Towers. As in earlier elections the problem arose in Brisbane where the supporters of Charles Lilley were plotting, despite his demonstrations

28. See Murphy, "Queensland", pp. 131 & 138; also Harris, *First Steps*, p. 24. Triennial parliaments had been introduced by the Constitution Act Amendment Act of September 1890.

29. *North Queensland Register*, 11 January 1893.

30. *Ibid.*, 15 February 1893.

of reluctance to resume office, to find him a safe seat in the Assembly.³¹

Lilley, who had recently resigned as Chief Justice, was a radical, middle class liberal of the old school, and widely regarded as a champion of the working man. In February 1893 Charles B. Fitzgerald, who had unsuccessfully attempted to take the seat of Bulimba for the liberals during the previous year's by-election, contacted the AssWU asking that it requisition Lilley to stand for one of the Charters Towers seats.³² The union rejected the request and nominated Dawson, Dunsford and Tom Givens for the pre-selection ballot. Lilley's candidature was taken up by Charles Vosper, the editor of the Republican Association's newspaper which had been accepted as the semi-official mouthpiece of the union a year earlier.³³ Possibly because of Vosper's canvassing, though nominally because the loose organisation of the Parliamentary Association laid a ballot of its members open to participation by voters hostile to the labour cause, preselection was carried out by union members only. They chose Dawson (211 votes) and Dunsford (182). The candidates were then presented to the labour movement in general at a public meeting which endorsed the union's choice.³⁴

31. Charles Lilley, MLA Fortitude Valley, 1860-74; Attorney-General, 1865-67; Premier and Attorney-General, 1868-70; Colonial Secretary, 1869-70.

32. *North Queensland Register*, 1 March 1893.

33. *Northern Miner*, 3 February 1892. The press was moved to the union hall.

34. *North Queensland Register*, 1 March 1893.

In the meantime some 1200 signatures had been collected for Lilley's requisition,³⁵ but still he hesitated, claiming that his health might not be sufficiently robust for a trip north.³⁶ He also expressed himself unwilling to contest the election in opposition to the labor candidates.³⁷

Dunsford, after some consideration, offered to stand down in Lilley's favour provided the latter would pledge himself to the labor party. Then Lilley's electoral secretary made a fatal error. He telegraphed E.D. Miles, a prominent Griffithite liberal and a leading member of the Protestant Alliance, asking him to pledge the "Orange vote".³⁸ The town was scandalised at what it saw as an attempt to revive the intense sectarianism of the previous decades. Dunsford withdrew his offer. Miles distanced himself from Lilley who then accepted preselection for the seat of North Brisbane, standing against McIlwraith and Glassey. Vosper left Charters Towers for Brisbane where he busied himself editing a small "propaganda organ" called the *Tribune* for Glassey's campaign.³⁹ He later became an Independent Member for Coolgardie in Western Australia.⁴⁰ Lilley lost the election. Charters Towers turned its back on nineteenth century politics and politicians and plunged into the party politics which were to supercede them.

The election was contested by Dawson and Dunsford for labor, R.J. Sayers, the sitting member, represented the

35. *Ibid.*, 22 March 1892.

36. H.J. Gibbney, "Charles Lilley: An Uncertain Democrat", in Murphy and Joyce (eds.), *Queensland Political Portraits, 1859-1952*, p. 88.

37. *North Queensland Register*, 5 April 1893.

38. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1893.

39. Gibbney, "Charles Lilley", p. 88.

40. See Bolton, "Labour comes to Charters Towers".

liberals and William McLarty stood as an Independent. Kennedy attracted three candidates: George Jackson for labor; Isidor Lissner, the sitting member, who called himself an Independent; and William McCulla for the liberal party. The Charters Towers labour movement did not, however, limit its activities to these two electorates. Indeed the AssWU, like the ALF in Brisbane, had what it called a "candidate bureau" to supply labor candidates to other electorates. It maintained links with McDonald in Flinders and John "Plumper" Hoolan in Burke. Hoolan, whose previous seat of the same name had been redistributed by the Government during its electoral adjustments of 1892, was another Dunsford protégé. An ex-Charter Towers miner, he had left during 1887 to set up the Croydon *Mundic Miner* with Dunsford's capital. W.H. Rawlings, another ex-Charter Towers miner, was supported in Wookathakata; a barrister, Alexander Costello, was despatched to contest the difficult seat of Herbert, and Givens was sponsored in Cairns, an impossibly conservative electorate where the sitting member was the Ministerialist Attorney-General T.J. Byrnes.⁴¹

All the labor candidates were required to pledge themselves to support the party platform which gave first importance to constitutional reform, particularly "one man, one vote" and simultaneous elections. Stress was also laid on the setting up of a state bank, state-aided village settlements for the unemployed and a state-run Department of Labor. The land tax of Henry George remained on the agenda, as did the abolition of coloured labour and the cessation of aided immigration. From the strikes had come planks concerning the repeal of the conspiracy laws and the advocacy of electing magistrates. Of particular interest

41. *North Queensland Register*, 12 May 1893.

on the mining fields was the plank calling for the election of mining inspectors.⁴² The most stressful areas of Queensland politics, the fiscal debate and northern separation, were left to the discretion of the local organisations. This caused a few problems in the Kennedy and, in particular, in Townsville where Anthony Ogden refused to sign the pledge on account of the local organisation's decision to oppose separation.⁴³ This issue had low priority on Charters Towers where its advocate, McLarty, polled very poorly.

At this time Queensland elections were held in batches. Traditionally the blue ribbon Government-held seats were contested first to inspire the supporters of the ruling party with confidence. On 29 April 1893, however, three labor candidates were returned in the first round of polls: John Hoolan for Burke; a young gold miner, Andrew Fisher⁴⁴ for Gympie; and Matt Reid⁴⁵ in Toowong. Further, strengthened by the votes of the navvies on the railway line at Bibboohra and Mareeba, Givens, though unsuccessful, had polled remarkably well in Cairns.⁴⁶ The second round of elections was held on 16 May. Excited by the early results the citizens of Charters Towers crowded until midnight around Leyshon's hotel where the press wires were publicly posted. That night three more seats, Clermont, South Brisbane

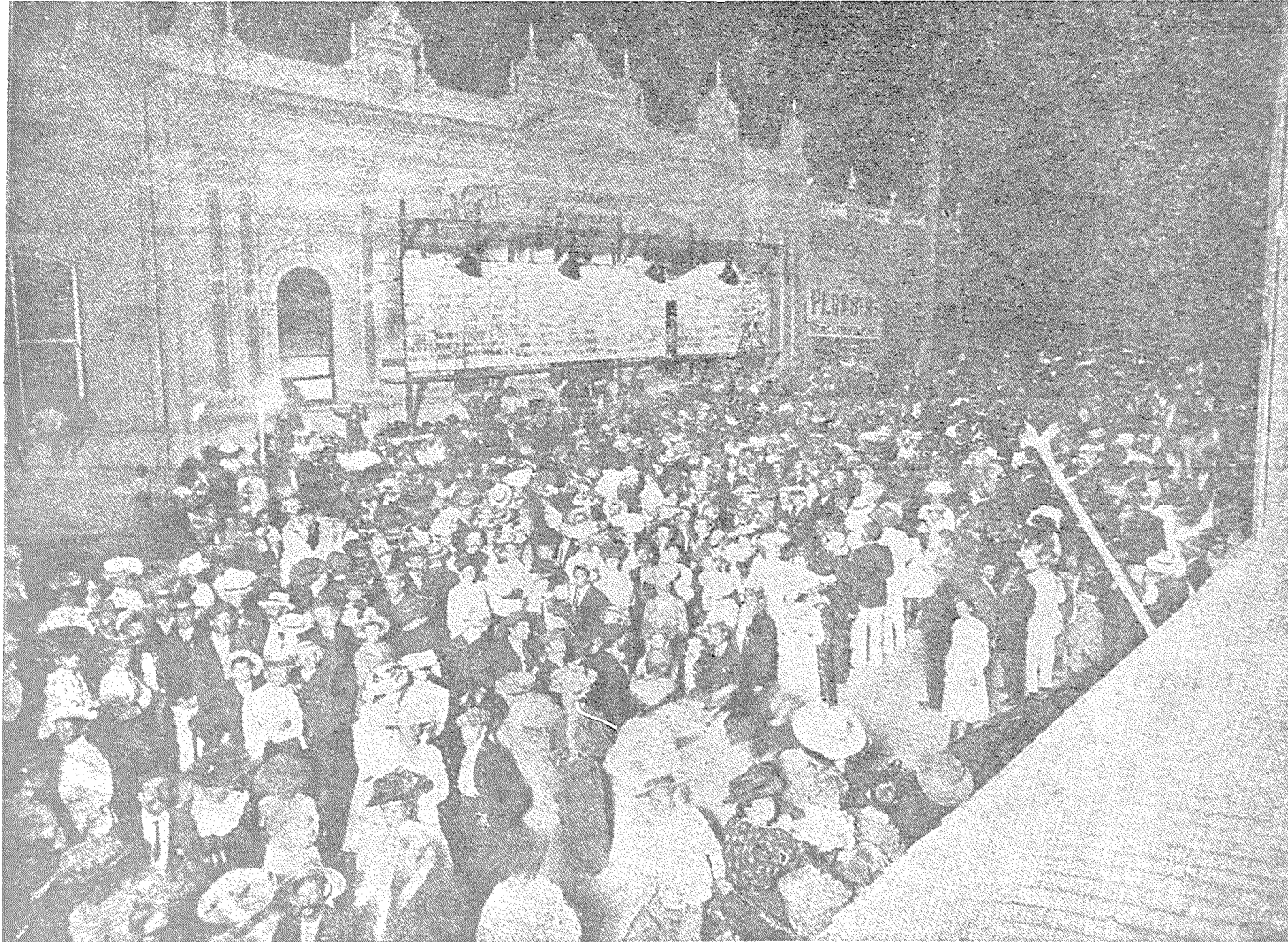
42. *Ibid.*, 22 March 1893.

43. *Ibid.*, 12 May 1893.

44. Andrew Fisher, miner and union official. MLA Gympie 1893-96; 1899-1901; MHR Wide Bay 1901-15; Secretary for Railways and Public Works 1-7 December 1899; Minister for Trades and Customs 1904; Prime Minister and Treasurer 1908-09, 1910-13, 1914-15.

45. Matthew Reid, tailor. MLA Toowong 1893-96, Enoggera 1899-1902, Toowong 1904; senator 1917-35.

46. *North Queensland Register*, 3 May 1893.



In pre-radio days results of elections were posted as they were received by telegraph on a big board in front of the "Northern Miner" office in Gill Street. Big crowds turned out on election night to learn the results.

and Toowoomba, fell to the new party. In Townsville Ogden had been defeated only on a recount.⁴⁷

The following week the final round was fought; it included Charters Towers and Kennedy. At Charters Towers which had at that time the greatest number of voters of any electorate in the colony, there were four booths at the Court House and one each at Millchester, Black Jack and Sellheim. Though all candidates had hired cabs to transport their supporters to the poll most voters walked and many stayed around the Court House after casting their vote. Excitement ran high and some fights broke out. By late afternoon Green estimated the crowd at 4,000. The first bulletins were issued at five-thirty; Dawson and Dunsford were leading. By six o'clock their victory was certain. When the poll was declared at eight o'clock the conservative Green described a scene of the "wildest excitement"; "The result was received with deafening cheers". Dawson and Dunsford between them had gained more than sixty-six percent of the formal vote.⁴⁸

In Kennedy Lissner, like Lilley, appears to have misread the times. The *Northern Miner* reported his attitude towards the labour movement immediately after his arrival in the electorate:

47. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1893.

48. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1893.

Results of the 1893 election

	Dawson	Dunsford	Sayers	McLarty	Informal
Charters Towers	1886	1685	1160	936	28
Millchester	194	183	112	90	8
Black Jack	32	30	13	12	1
Sellheim	27	20	22	11	1
Total	2139	1918	1307	1049	38

Mr Lissner considers that the majority of people who do not imagine human society is to be entirely reconstructed by a few Acts of Parliament, will agree with him, that in the present condition of the colony it is absurd to indulge in vague theories and fads, either in the direction of a State Bank or a National Wash-house. 49

This error of judgement was compounded by his under-estimation of the impact that his appointment as Minister for Mines and Public Works in a conservative government had had on an electorate which still considered itself represented by an independent candidate. His policy statement suggests he believed that his constituents would trade independence for the benefits the appointment might confer on the local mining industry. Four days before the closure of the Australian Joint Stock Bank he told his supporters: "The question of improving the condition of Labor has my hearty support, but not on the lines laid down by windy agitators and demagogues, but by fair and cordial co-operation with capital and enterprise."⁵⁰ Two days before the collapse of the Queensland National Bank Lissner lost his seat to George Jackson, an old Ravenswood and Charters Towers miller, then in business at Upper Cape.⁵¹ McCulla, the liberal candidate, lost his deposit.⁵²

49. *Northern Miner*, 17 April 1893.

50. *Ibid.*, 18 April 1893.

51. George Jackson was born in Manchester during 1856 and arrived in the colonies (Rockhampton) in 1871. He was a partner with his brother Thomas and E.H.T. Plant in mills in Ravenswood and Charters Towers (see Chapters 2 and 3). He set up a battery at Cape River in 1882, moving on to a small grazing property which he ran in conjunction with a store on the Upper Cape in 1888. He had been active in local affairs as president of the Ravenswood Miners' Association and Chairman of the Divisional Board. Jackson held Kennedy until 1909. He was Chairman of Committees 1903-07; Secretary for Mines and Public Works 1904-09.

52. *North Queensland Register*, 17 May 1893.

The poll was declared on the day the Queensland National Bank fell, 15 May 1893. The senior member for Charters Towers, Andrew Dawson,⁵³ was just thirty years old; Dunsford, his mentor, was nearly fifty. In Dawson's acceptance speech he told the great crowd massed outside the Court House that he "thanked the electors of Charters Towers for the splendid vote which was recorded on Saturday. He valued that vote, not that it was cast for Dawson and Dunsford, but for the principles which they advocated. The result of Saturday's election would cheer the Union prisoners in St. Helena, and give satisfaction to many outside bush camps throughout the North.... Referring to financial matters he said that two banks had suspended, and their suspension was put down to the return of himself and Dunsford. This was one each, and as it was rumoured that a third had gone, it would be one for Mr. Jackson, who had been returned for the Kennedy. If they were blamed for the failure of these banks then they should at least be credited with the rain which lately fell."⁵⁴

In the 1893 election labor won sixteen seats, seven of them in the north. There was the physically tiny William Henry (Billy) Browne, the one-eyed miner and AMA Secretary from Croydon who culminated a long and popular parliamentary career by being Leader of the Opposition. Andrew Fisher arrived from Gympie, a self-confident young Scottish miner who later became Prime Minister of Australia. From Clermont came J.M. Cross, the editor of the *People's Paper*, while George Kerr, the Barcoo blacksmith, began a career which later made him leader of the PLP, Chairperson of the Central

53. Though Dawson adopted his father's name, Anderson, when he entered parliament, both colleagues and journalists appear to have continued to call him Andrew or Andy.

54. *North Queensland Register*, 17 May 1893.

Political Executive of the Labor Party and Secretary for Public Works. The American butcher Herbert Hardacre won Leichhardt and Charlie McDonald began a parliamentary career which was to span a quarter of a century. An inept though persistent speaker, McDonald had two great talents. His first was for economy; it was said that "McDonald was the most economical electioneerer in the broad State of Queensland, and that he worked one of the vastest constituencies in the State at less cost than he would a suburban pocket borough. It is at all events true that his means of locomotion over the Western spaces was the homely "jigger", although to that economy his critics alleged that he added carrying his sandwiches with him."⁵⁵ His second talent, learned after a stormy early parliamentary career, was his knowledge of and understanding for Standing Orders and the usages of Parliament. This talent was recognised in Federal Parliament where he was successively Chairman of Committees and Speaker. Returned for a second term was John "Plumper" Hoolan, "the irresponsible wild man and latitudinarian from the North who...was distinguished for his appalling flow of adjectives which used to paralyse the House."⁵⁶ W.H. Rawlings, the Charters Towers barrister who was later appointed to the Legislative Council, was the new member for Wookathakata. Henry Daniels began his single term as member for Cambooya which left him involved in the Port Norman, Normanton and Cloncurry Railways Bill scandal of 1900.⁵⁷ John Fogarty was returned from Drayton and Toowoomba and the publican William Rawlings began his brief political career as Member for Aubigny. The following year

55. See Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p. 145. A "jigger" is a bicycle.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

his seat was declared vacant due to his bankruptcy. The prominent ALF leader and later Nationalist Senator Matt Reid won the seat of Toowong while another Senator-to-be and President of the Senate, the ex-wharf labourer Harry Turley, was returned for South Brisbane. Six of the seven northern members, Dawson, Dunsford, Rawlings, Jackson,⁵⁸ McDonald and Hoolan had been active in and received support from the Charters Towers labour movement. Charters Towers was the only electorate in the colony which returned two labor members.

As a group they were sadly lacking in experience but were motivated by a strong streak of enthusiastic idealism which sometimes solidified into wowserism.⁵⁹ During the first session Hoolan led the Parliamentary Party, resigning in 1894 in favour of Glassey who was already showing signs of a flair for losing elections. Secretary of the PLP and deputy-leader was Matt Reid. Under Glassey's influence, the Party rejected the position of official opposition despite being the second largest group in the House. The decision to sit on the cross-benches marked the beginning of a major and often divisive Party debate which lasted for two decades: whether to attempt to take government alone or to operate through a system of alliances. The anti-alliance group, led by Reid and the ALF, believed that any coalition, even informal, was a compromise and that if labor held out it

58. Jackson's career was distinguished by his concern for welfare issues. He pioneered Old Age Pensions and later became Chairman of Committees and a Minister.

59. The ALF executive in particular saw the advancement of the working man as depending upon moral rectitude and, in particular, on abstention from alcohol. Like Richards and McDonald, Reid, Hinchcliffe, Seymour and Bowman were teetotal.

would eventually gain control and sweep the state with socialist reforms. The coalitionists, among whom were Dawson and Dunsford, believed that total victory was unlikely and that, to achieve anything at all, it was necessary to gain a share in government. They were prepared to compromise to this end. During his first parliament Reid and the ALF effectively blocked two attempts to form a broad alliance of the opposition groups to defeat the Government.

The idealism of the new labor members manifested itself as a tendency to talk too often and too long in the House.⁶⁰ John Dunsford was typical of the group. From his maiden speech on 26 May 1893⁶¹ to his death in office in 1904, Dunsford conscientiously delivered the Party line on every conceivable subject. Rarely did he miss a sitting; rarely did he attract attention. Indeed, Dawson's maiden speech began with an attack on those members who had ignored that of his partner.⁶² Typical of Dunsford's style is a passage from a speech on compulsory arbitration, in which the junior Member for Charters Towers, rather than attack the topic directly, patiently explained his economic doctrine:

It has been asserted that the industries cannot afford to pay a high rate of wages and some seem to think it desirable that wages should go down until the industries paid. Reduction in wages is not an incentive to industry, but rather pulls it back. The present industrial crisis is chiefly owing

60. With only twenty percent of the members they occupied thirty-five percent of Hansard during this term. For details see S. Raynor, *The Evolution of the Queensland Labour Party to 1907*. MA Thesis, Queensland University 1947.

61. *QPD.*, Vol. LXX, 26 May 1893, pp. 19-21.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.



"I AM GETTING WHITER."



"IF YOU WERE FULL OF LONG BEERS."



"WOULDN'T YOU CALL US TRAITORS."



"WE, THE HARD GRAFTERS OF THE COLONY."



"I AM THE CZAR."

John Dunsford

to the overstocked markets of the world. We hear of over-production; but there can be no absolute over-production. There is over-production, however, in as much as those who need the goods have not the wherewithall to purchase them. There is over-production because people are in want, and the bulk of the consumers, who are people receiving wages, have not all their needs supplied. If wages rise consumption would increase, and an impetus be given to production. The depletion of overstocked markets which might be brought about by raising the rate of wages would give such an impetus to production as would set the machinery of the world going at full speed. 63

Dawson, on the other hand, brought into parliament a gift for self-expression. His speeches were not long and never rambled and he injected colour into them by a skilful use of analogy. His greatest talent, however, lay in the cut and thrust of debate where his quick tongue and even quicker wits responded joyfully to a challenge. He was a tall, slight young man with a full beard and already receding hairline. Curiously, given his background in manual labour, Bernays remembered that he had "soft, delicately constructed, and shapely hands which a professional beauty might well envy."⁶⁴ Shortly after his arrival in Brisbane Dawson struck up a close friendship with the equally brilliant Thomas Joseph Byrnes who, after a stint in the Legislative Council, entered the Assembly as Member for Cairns and Attorney-General in 1893. Byrnes was also from a poor family but had won one of the early State

63. *Ibid.*, 12 July 1893, p. 216.

64. Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, pp. 140-1.



"HOW PLEASED I AM."



"YOU DID ME THE HONOR."



"UNSCRUPULOUS, LYING,
WRETCHED RAG."



"IS THAT FAIR."



"WOULD CONTAMINATE ANY
DECENT MAN."

Andrew Dawson

School scholarships to Brisbane Grammar School and thence to university and the Queensland Bar. Despite being on opposite sides of the House these two young men had much in common. Apart from their impoverished backgrounds and outstanding intellectual capacities, they were both extremely sociable and were able raconteurs. There were also differences, as Byrnes discovered when he attempted to help Dawson to study for the bar. Dawson lacked stability and perseverance; his genius was flawed. When Byrnes died in 1898 in his early thirties, Dawson wept openly in the Legislative Assembly.⁶⁵

Despite labor's financial and organisational problems throughout the state,⁶⁶ Dawson and Dunsford won an easy victory in the election of 1896. By this time Charters Towers had polarised and debate was on the lines of socialism versus anti-socialism. Since 1893 the labor movement had been publishing its own newspaper, the *Eagle*, and the other local journals, since the death of O'Kane, had settled into a firmly conservative pattern. Only Sayers opposed the labor team and his meetings were heckled vigorously. If, however, the town had come to accept an image of itself as a labor stronghold, it should not be seen as a radical community. Indeed it is likely that the undoubted success of labor on Charters Towers may be attributed to the conservatism of its labor leaders. Even Dunsford discarded political theory during the 1896 campaign in favour of the more practical issues of mining law reform and,

65. *Ibid.*

66. No administrative body existed to organise the overall election campaign; candidates were endorsed by the newly formed Central Political Executive (CPE). Only £31.17s 6d was raised for the campaign through donations compared with £206 in 1893. See Murphy, "Queensland", p. 156.

in particular, the election of mining inspectors and prevention of accidents.⁶⁷ As the *Northern Miner* reported, "The clarion call of the mullock heap has entirely disappeared."⁶⁸

The Central Political Executive (CPE), which consisted of the executives of the ALF and the PLP together with two representatives of the Brisbane District Council of the Workers' Political Organisation (WPO), was less conservative, probably due to the influence of Matt Reid and Albert Hinchcliffe who maintained his hold on the secretaryship throughout this period.⁶⁹ However the defeat of Fisher and Reid in the 1896 elections left the Parliamentary Party in the hands of men such as Glassey, Browne (the president and treasurer of the CPE) and Dawson; men who favoured alliance. The Party had twenty representatives in this parliament; in the 1899 elections it increased its numbers by one. Perhaps more importantly, it was during the 1899 poll that the labor machine demonstrated its emerging power to make or unmake its candidates.

In June 1898 Hinchcliffe organised a Labor-in-Politics Convention to prepare for the coming election. This convention drew up a new platform and introduced a pledge by which candidates for preselection would agree to support the labor platform and not to oppose a selected candidate. When "Plumper" Hoolan (Burke), R.M. King (Maranoa) and J.M. Cross (Clermont) refused to sign Matt Reid toured the Burke and Clermont electorates successfully lobbying for the nomination and elections of alternative candidates.⁷⁰

67. See *Northern Miner*, January to April 1896.

68. *Ibid.*, 14 March 1896.

69. Minutes of the Queensland Central Political Executive of the Australian Labor Party, 1895-1899.

70. W.S. Maxwell in Burke and Joe Lesina in Clermont. See Murphy, "Queensland", pp. 162-3.

On losing the Burke nomination Hoolan moved to the less ideologically committed seat of Cairns which he contested as an Independent Laborite against another ex-Charters Towers man, Thomas Givens. He was defeated.⁷¹

Dawson, Dunsford and Jackson had little difficulty in holding their seats. In Charters Towers the labor candidates were opposed by an Independent Ministerialist, The English mine manager W.J. Paull. In the Kennedy the challenger was another Ministerialist, William Francis Rodney Boyce. However, the two new issues of the election, federation and votes for women, were not contested.⁷² As so often happened on Charters Towers, the town had made up its collective mind in favour of both and no candidate dared to oppose the issues. Despite this consensus, the rhetoric of the election introduced a new theme to Charters Towers politics. It was expressed in a *Northern Miner* editorial early in March which read "Kill the political machine that would usurp the sacred prerogative of the electors, say we."⁷³ In fact, events were shortly to demonstrate that the extra-parliamentary machine was not yet able to control the Parliamentary Party.

By the late 1890s opinion within the PLP was led by Dawson and William Kidston, a Rockhampton bookseller elected

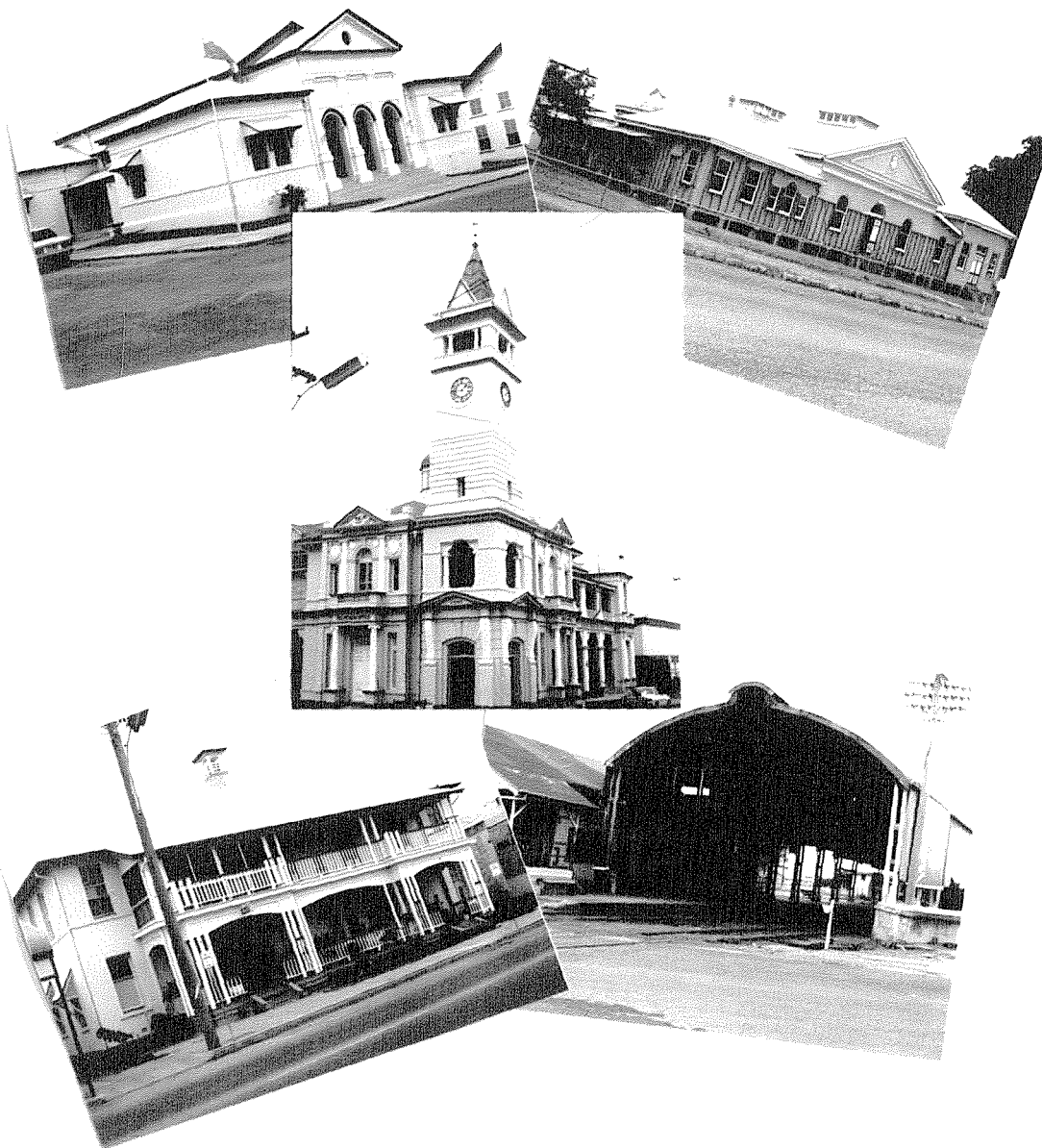
71. *Northern Miner*, 25 February 1899. Cross and King stood as Independent Labor candidates; Cross was also defeated, King surprised the Labor machine by being selected.

72. Adult franchise had been the first plank of the Queensland Peoples' Parliamentary Platform of 1890, but this was the first election in which it was an issue. See Brian McKinlay, *A Documentary History of the Australian Labor Movement 1850-1975* (Richmond 1979), p. 9.

73. *Northern Miner*, 3 March 1899. For information about the election see *Northern Miner* and *Eagle* for January, February and March 1899.

in 1896. Although both of these men strongly supported the formation of an alliance or coalition with J.G. Drake and his team of independents, this was prevented by Glassey's insistence that any coalition must be led by himself. The problem was solved, however, when, at a caucus meeting before the opening of the 1899 parliament, Glassey refused to submit to a ballot to decide the leadership of the PLP. Dawson was elected leader and so too leader of the opposition. Billy Browne became the deputy leader. In the meantime the Government was engineering its own collapse through its leadership battles. Opposition to the premiership of James Dickson from within his own Party forced his resignation on 25 November. He recommended that the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Samuel Griffith, send for Andrew Dawson. Realising that labor could not survive a day on the floor of parliament, Dawson approached E.B. Forrest, the member for Brisbane North offering him the premiership in exchange for a loose coalition which would enable them to stay in power long enough to see an electoral reform bill through the House. Drake's Independents were offered two portfolios for their part in the alliance. Both Forrest and Drake, after a few days' consideration, rejected the offer. On 28 November Dawson informed Griffith that the new government would be wholly Labor. The ministry, consisting of Dawson (premier and chief secretary), Charles Fitzgerald (attorney-general), Harry Turley (home secretary), William Kidston (treasurer and postmaster-general), Billy Browne (mines and public instruction), Herbert Hardacre (lands and agriculture), and Andrew Fisher, who had been re-elected in 1899 (railways and public works), was sworn in on 1 December 1899. It was defeated on the floor of the House on the same day and announced its resignation to the House on 5 December. The new Philp Government was formed on the seventh. It was probably the first Labor government the world had known, and the young man who led it was then thirty-six years of age.⁷⁴

74. For information about the Dawson Labor Ministry see D.J. Murphy, "The Dawson Government in Queensland, The First Labor Government in the World", in *Labour History*, No. 20, May 1971.



Public buildings: the Courthouse (top left), the School of Mines (top right), the Post Office (centre), the Police Station (bottom left) and the Railway Station.

CHAPTER 13. "THE WORLD"

Despite the depression, Charters Towers during the 1890s was at its most vigorous. This was the city known to its inhabitants as "The World"; this was the city of which David Green wrote in 1897:

All in 25 years. The well-wooded and comparatively flat basin surrounding the small ridges below the Gap, through which the pioneers came, has long since been denuded of its trees. Streets of fine shops and residences have sprung up, cold air stores, telephones, electric light, gaslight, electric fans and other adjuncts of up-to-date civilisation are employed, and 20,000 souls now sleep nightly within a radius of four miles of the spot where the prospectors pitched their first camp a little over 25 years ago. The three workers of that time have increased to 4,000 with nearly three quarters of a million pounds worth of machinery to aid in the hunt for gold. 1

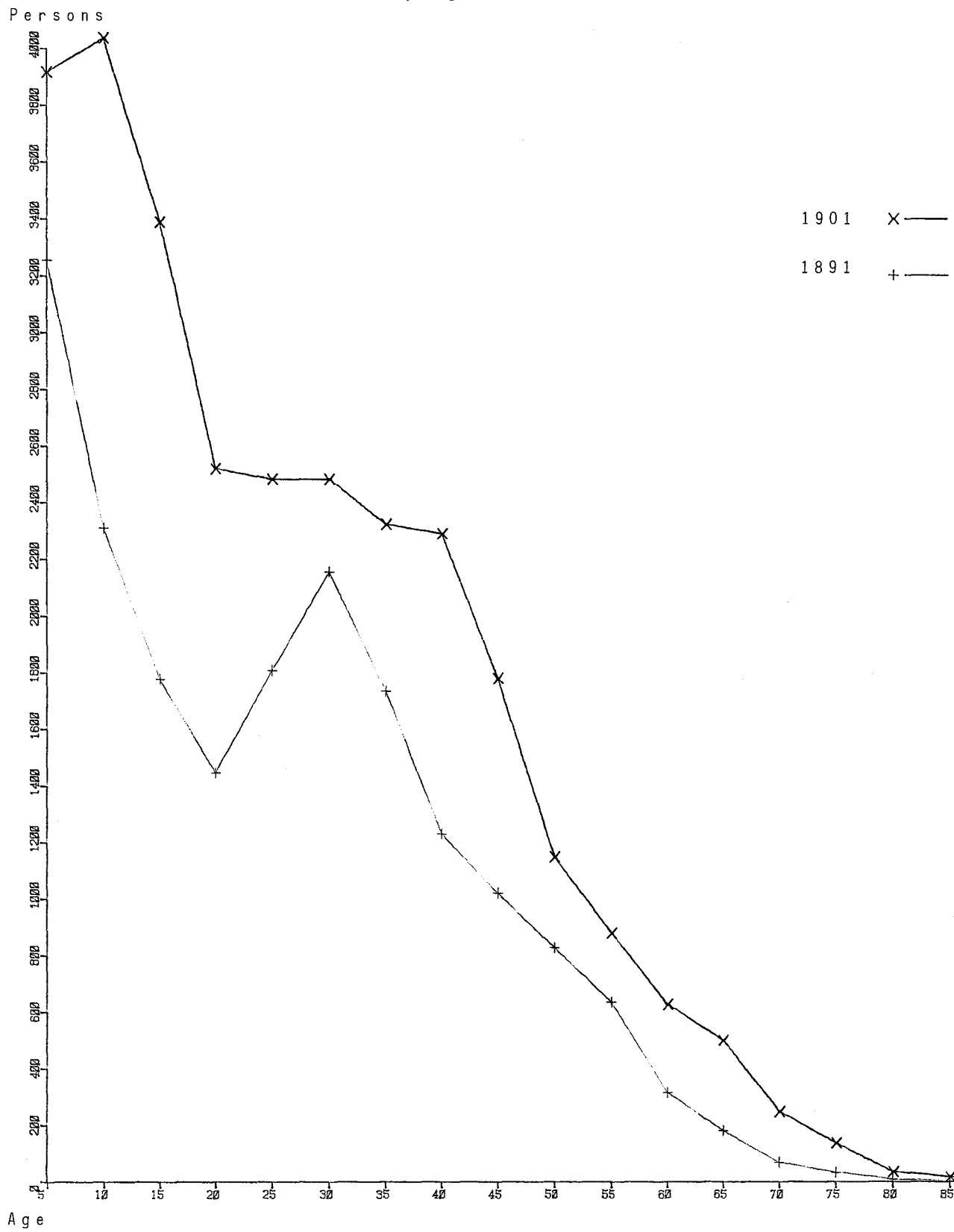
Fast approaching its peak production, it was by then the second city of Queensland; known for its sporting heroes, its superb choirs, its brass bands and bustling social and commercial life. Who, then, were the people of Charters Towers?

At the end of the decade the municipality contained 5,523 of the 21,612 inhabitants of the goldfield. Within the census district of Kennedy lived a total of 28,872 people.² About half of these were minors. The average age was a little lower than that for Queensland as a whole, but during the decade it had risen perceptibly. The baby boom of the late 1880s had ended and so the proportion of the population under five years of age fell steadily through the 1890s while the proportion of older children rose. Among

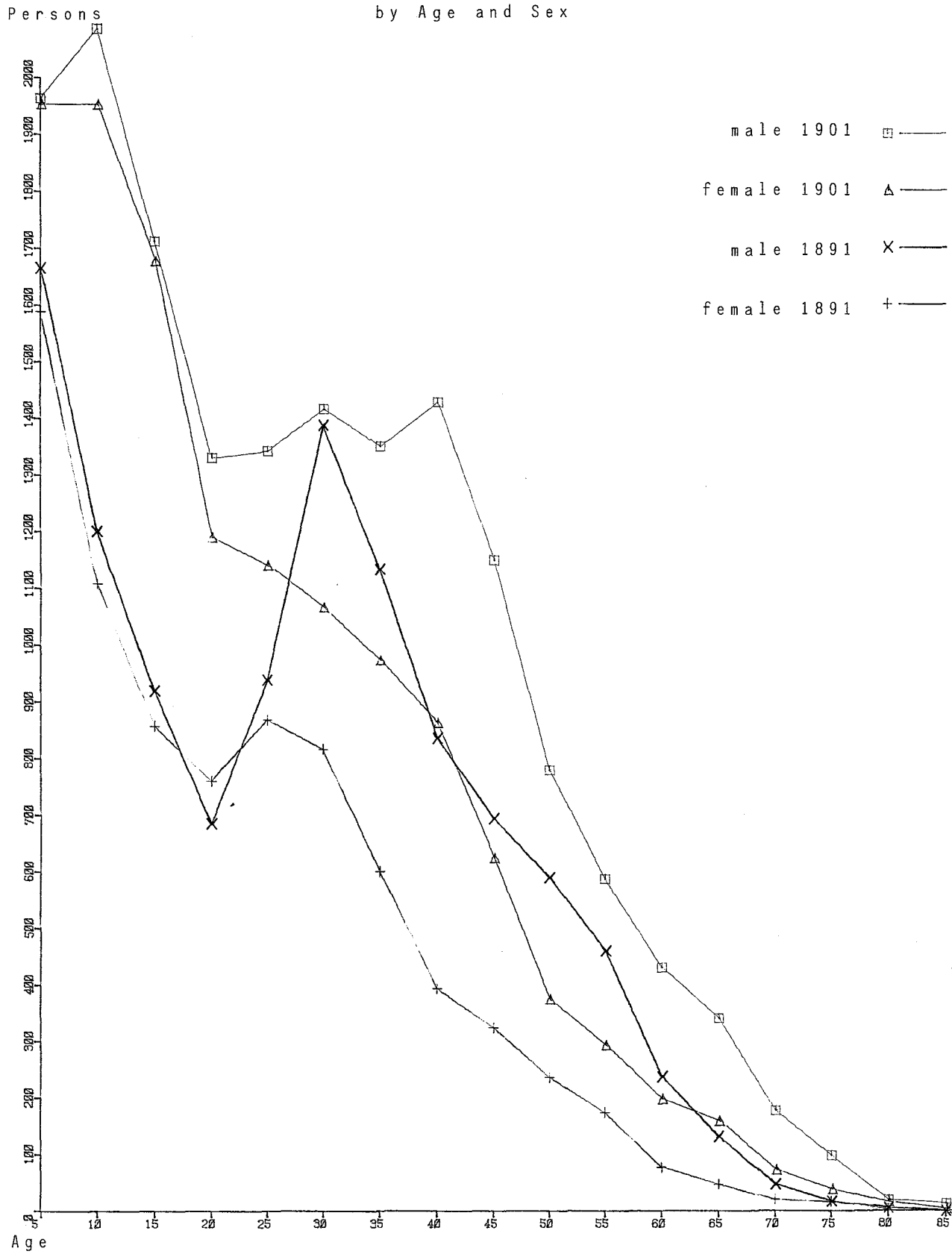
1. Green, *Mining History of Charters Towers*, u.p.

2. Census of 1901. The following information is culled largely from this census and that of 1891.

Persons in the Kennedy by Age



Persons in the Kennedy
by Age and Sex



The Census of 1891

%	Kennedy	Queensland
Under 5 years old	17.29	15.32
Under 15 years old	39	37.24
Under 21 years old	48.41	48.34
Over 50 years old	6.59	8.51
Female	41.92	43.16
Adult Female*	18.18	19.46
of males unmarried	70.90	71.99
of females unmarried	60.42	62.14
of adult males unmarried	49.51	54.33
of adult females unmarried	12.51	24.84
of males who were widowed	2.20	2.01
of females who were widowed	3.09	3.94
illiterate	27.12	25.94
of adults illiterate	10.98	11.4
colonial born#	50.08	52.15
of males colonial born	45.74	47.71
of females colonial born	56.09	57.98
born in Great Britain	41.09	36.22
of males born in Great Britain	41.57	36.46
of females born in Great Britain	40.42	35.91
born in continental Europe	3.78	5.61
of males born in continental Europe	4.42	6.19
of females born in continental Europe	4.65	4.84
Church of England	39.03	36.21
Roman Catholic	22.54	23.56

* Adult is here used to mean 21 years of age and over

Colonial includes New Zealand

The census district is that of Kennedy. Latitude 18°58' to 22°21'S and longitude 144°24' and 147°22'E. Area 26,480 square miles. Of this the goldfield constitutes the major populated area.

The Census of 1901

%	Kennedy	Queensland
Under 5 years old	13.57	12.44
Under 15 years old	39.3	36.65
Under 21 years old	49.73	47.94
Over 50 years old	8.51	10.54
Female	43.71	44.35
Adult female*	19.41	20.74
of males unmarried	69.74	71.35
of females unmarried	61.15	62.92
of adult males unmarried	44.88	49.17
of adult females unmarried	15.19	22.41
of males who were widowed	2.49	2.46
of females who were widowed	3.81	4.62
illiterate	22.06	22.83
of adults illiterate	7.80	11.45
colonial born#	63.49	64.52
of males colonial born	59.68	59.45
of females colonial born	68.4	69.63
born in Great Britain	29.4	25.07
of males born in Great Britain	30.34	25.48
of females born in Great Britain	28.19	24.55
born in continental Europe	3.04	8.21
of males born in continental Europe	3.81	4.82
of females born in continental Europe	2.04	3.41
Church of England	40.53	36.76
Roman Catholic	25.24	23.98

*Adult is here used to mean 21 years of age and over.

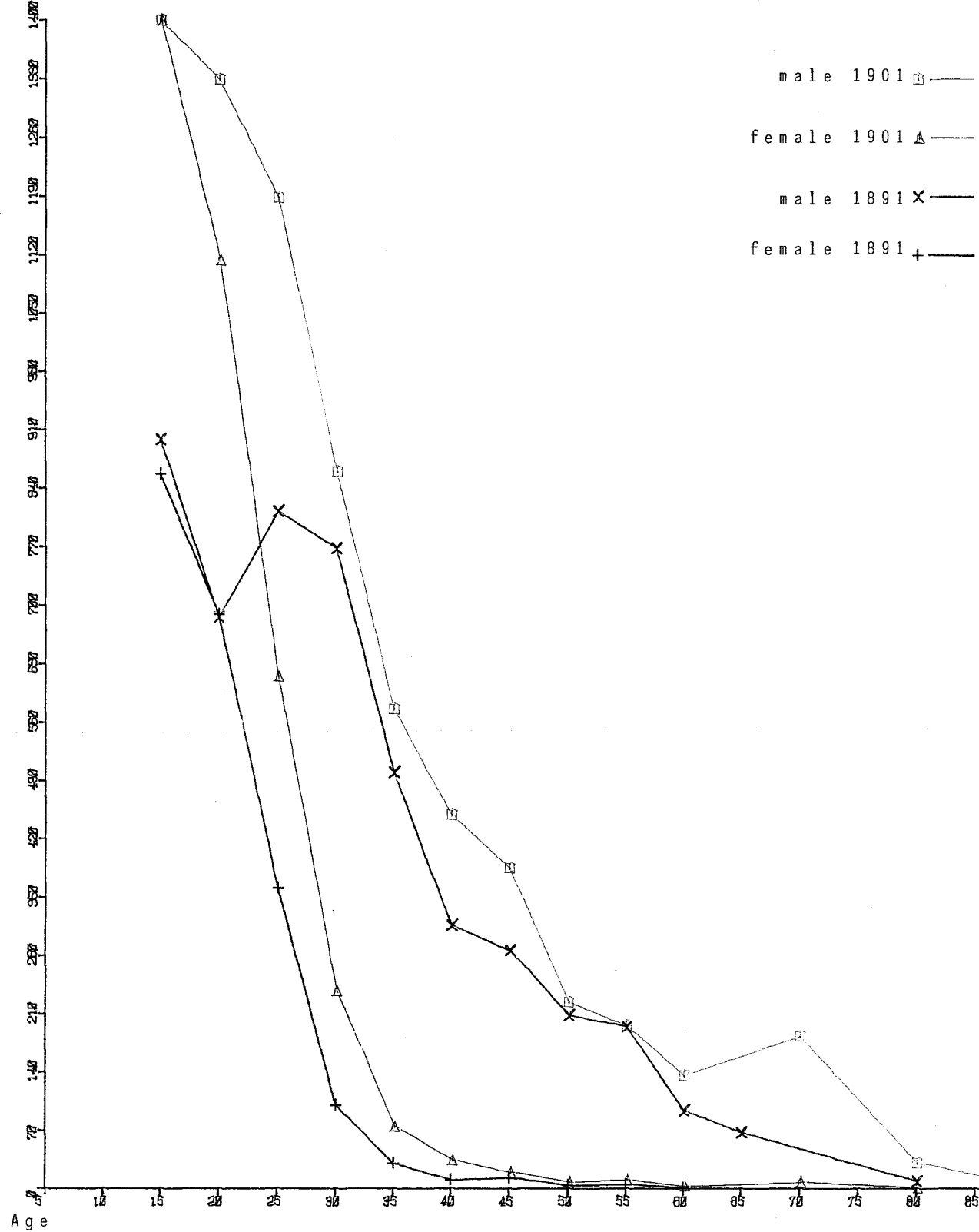
#Colonial does not include New Zealand in this census. The number of New Zealand-born persons in the Kennedy was 128. This would not have made a significant difference in the statistics. Aborigines are included in the colonial born for the first time in 1901. For the sake of maintaining comparability they have been left out of these figures.

adults young men between the ages of twenty and thirty, who dominated the population graph in 1891, became less noticeable towards the turn of the century. It would appear that fewer young men were arriving in search of work, and that the workforce was increasingly drawn from those who had grown up in Charters Towers. This factor, combined with the gradually rising proportion of older people in the district, suggests a more permanent workforce and a correspondingly stable society.

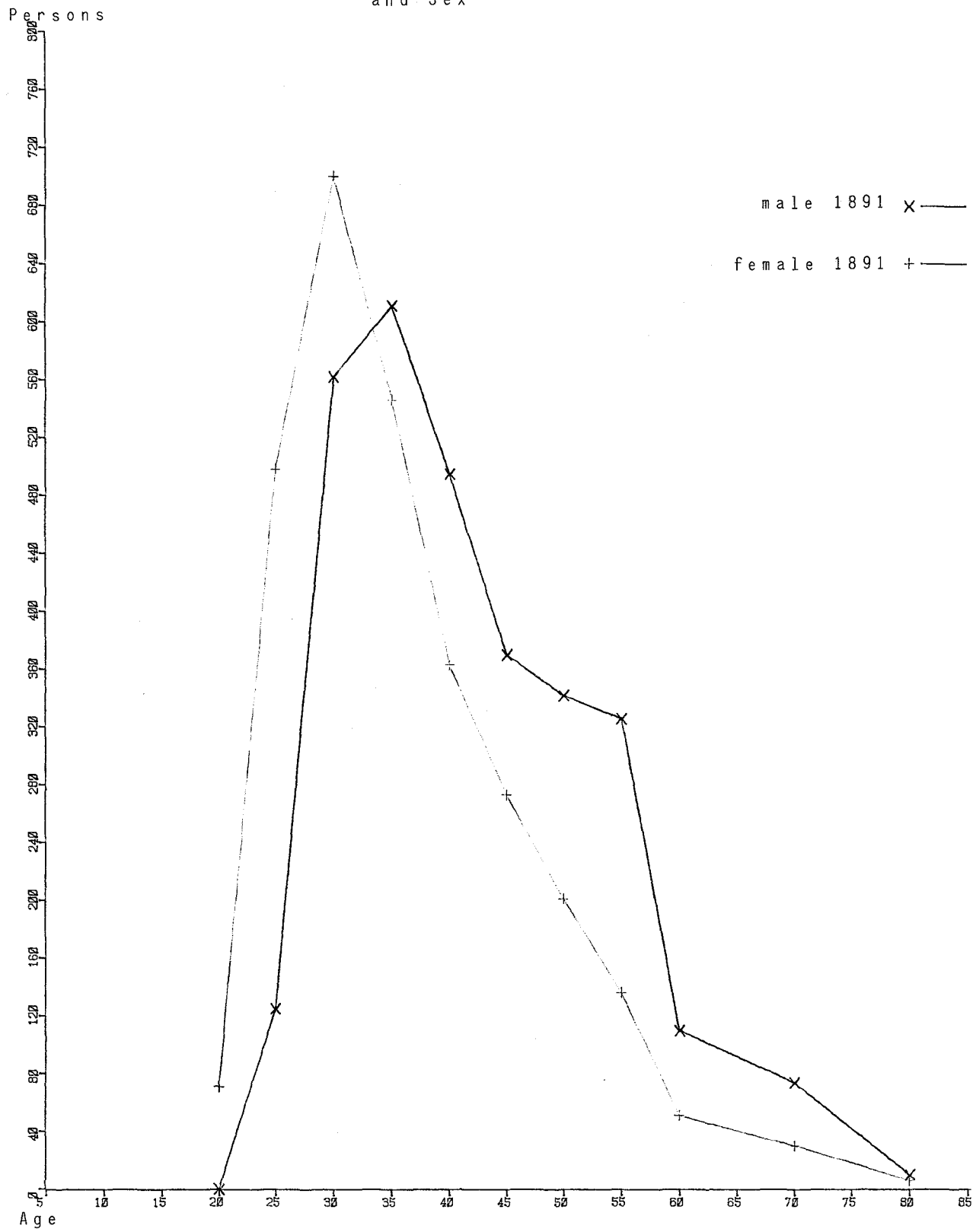
The percentage of women in the population was also rising; by 1901 it was only slightly (0.67%) below the Queensland average. Nevertheless colonial society itself was still by no means well balanced and the proportion of women in the Kennedy never reached forty-four percent during the nineteenth century. Amongst adults, of course, the imbalance was far more noticeable. Although the female sector was growing steadily adult females comprised only nineteen and a half percent of the population by 1901 while adult males comprised thirty-one percent. As a consequence the field always contained many more unmarried men than women. Indeed the proportion of adult males who had never married in the society rose during this period. This was due to the influx of single men which occurred during the boom period of the late 1880s, when their figure rose from thirty-eight and a half percent (in 1886) to forty-nine percent (in 1891) of all adult men. The corresponding figure for single women dropped from fifteen and a half percent in 1886 to twelve and a half percent in 1891 but returned to fifteen percent at the end of the period. Throughout the nineteenth century women tended to marry somewhat younger than men. They commonly wed between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, and in 1891 there were only one hundred unmarried women over the age of thirty in the Kennedy. As the decade progressed the gap between male and female marriage

Never Married by Age and Sex

Persons

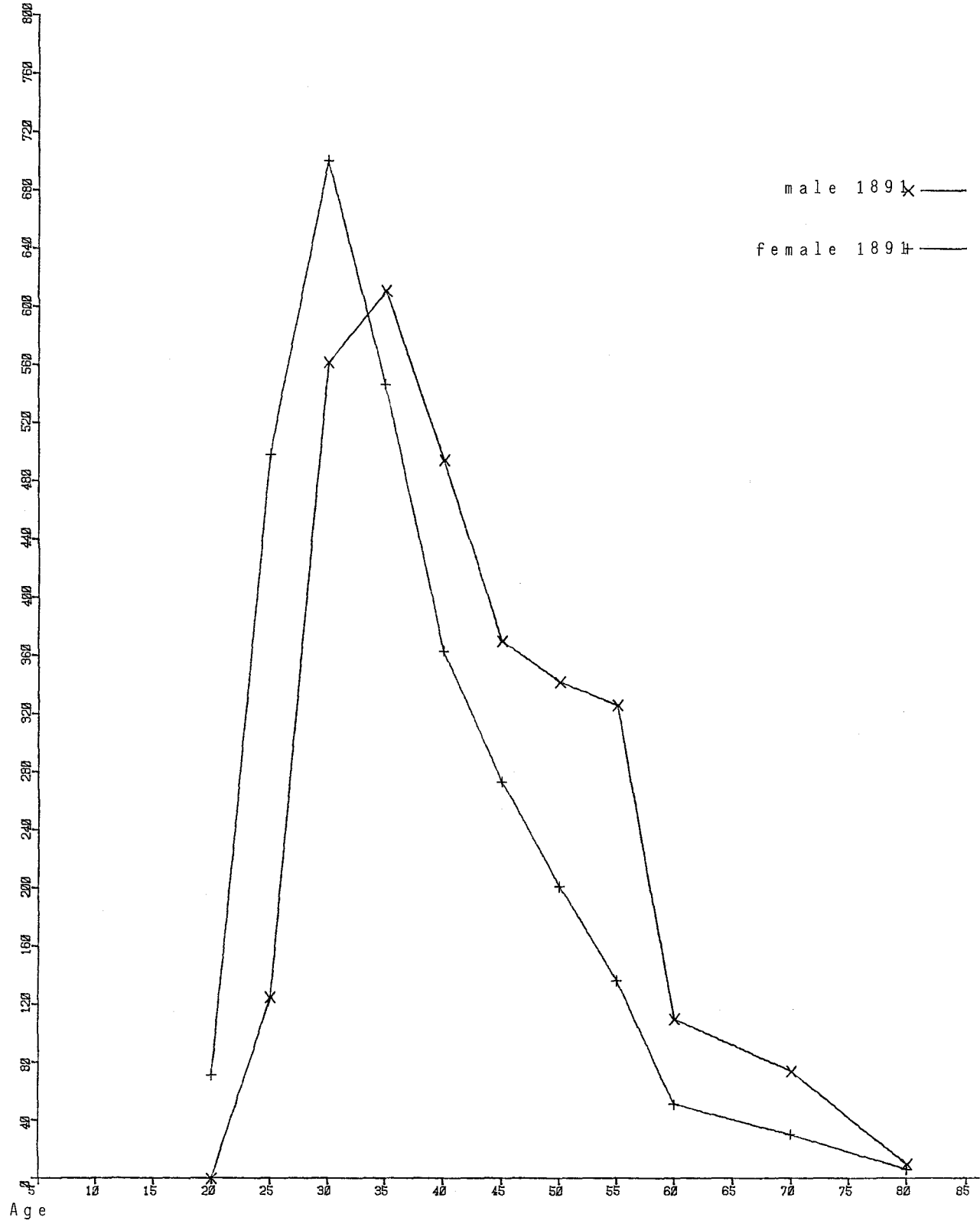


Married 1891 by Age and Sex



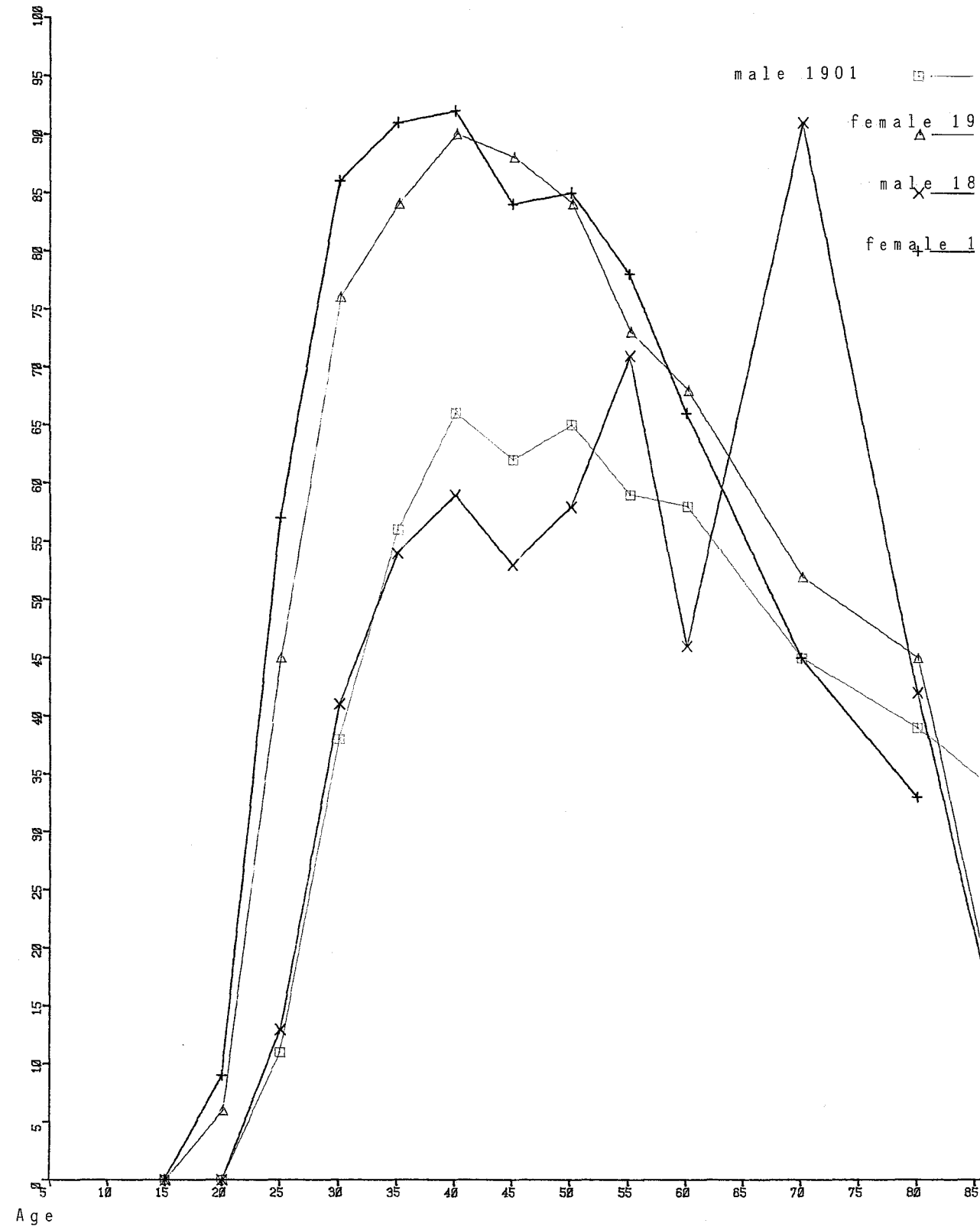
Married 1891 by Age and Sex

Persons



Percentage Married by
Age and Sex

Persons



ages remained constant while the average age overall dropped slightly. The number of single men on the field raises questions about the incidence of prostitution. As might be expected, the evidence is elusive.

Despite the societal imbalance, Charters Towers overtly deplored the practice of prostitution, at least when it involved the Japanese women of Gard's Lane (now Lee Street). Clearly a strong element of racism underlay the town's prurience, since little was heard about European brothels near to the Showgrounds. The objectionable red-light area lay behind Gard's Clubhouse Hotel, which was built on the corner of Mosman Street and Gard's Lane. The half-acre block belonged to William Naughton, a cab owner, and later to his heirs. By 1900 it was divided into six blocks, two of them subdivided, and leased to Chinese businessmen Nam Chong, Gee Kee, Ah Lin (the grocer), Loo Chiu Kee, Fook On Chong, Tai Loy Jong, Kee Ing and King Chong, and one European, William Carr. Here it was possible to squander a pay packet gambling on Fan Tan or Pak-a-pu, or to visit the Japanese women who could be seen from the street, sitting by their front windows applying cosmetics.³ Vigorous complaints laid in 1898 by civic and religious groups led to a Council by-law - "For the Suppression of Houses of Ill-Fame", a draconian measure aimed specifically at the "Japanese Evil" - which provoked a dispute with the Attorney-General's Department.⁴

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3. See Lease documents of 1898 and 1900 in the Phillips Collection. Also oral evidence derived from the North Queensland Oral History Collection. Correspondence on legal aspects of the problem is held at COL/019, QSA.
 4. For details of the dispute see L.J. Colwell, Some Aspects of Social Life in Charters Towers from 1872 to 1900 with some emphasis on the Nineties, BA(Hons.) Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1969, pp. 4.32-4.37. Oral tradition has it that money was sent weekly by a Japanese prostitute to a Mr. Watanabe through the Yokahama Specie Bank.

Although a great deal of attention was directed at them, there were only ten Japanese women and fifteen men on the Kennedy - a very small proportion of the population indeed. While the census district was second only to that of Cairns for the size of its Chinese population, these too formed only a small group in real terms. By 1901 there were about 650 Chinese in the Kennedy, only 450 of them on the goldfield. They were a shrinking and increasingly aging community; that their most common age rose from between thirty and thirty-five years in 1891 to forty to forty-five years in 1901 indicated no new arrivals. Although there were still Chinese diggers working the alluvial at Cape River, on Charters Towers almost all were in commerce or horticulture. The non-British European population was also declining; by 1901 the percentage was less than half of that for Queensland as a whole. The major groups were German (239 men and 136 women), Scandinavian (160 men and seventy-nine women), and Italian (150 men and eighteen women). Indeed the proportion of the population which was of colonial origin was growing strongly; it rose from thirty-eight percent in 1886, through fifty percent in 1891 to sixty-three percent in 1901. Even so the British influence which arrived with the early miners remained above the Queensland average.

The British origins of so many of the miners or, by the turn of the century, of their parents, were betrayed by the domestic architecture of the goldfield. The most common form of dwelling in this period was a five-roomed⁵ sawn-timber house with the light stud frame imported from southeastern England.⁶ Eighty-six percent of the houses

5. There were 1083 five-roomed wooden houses listed in the census of 1901.

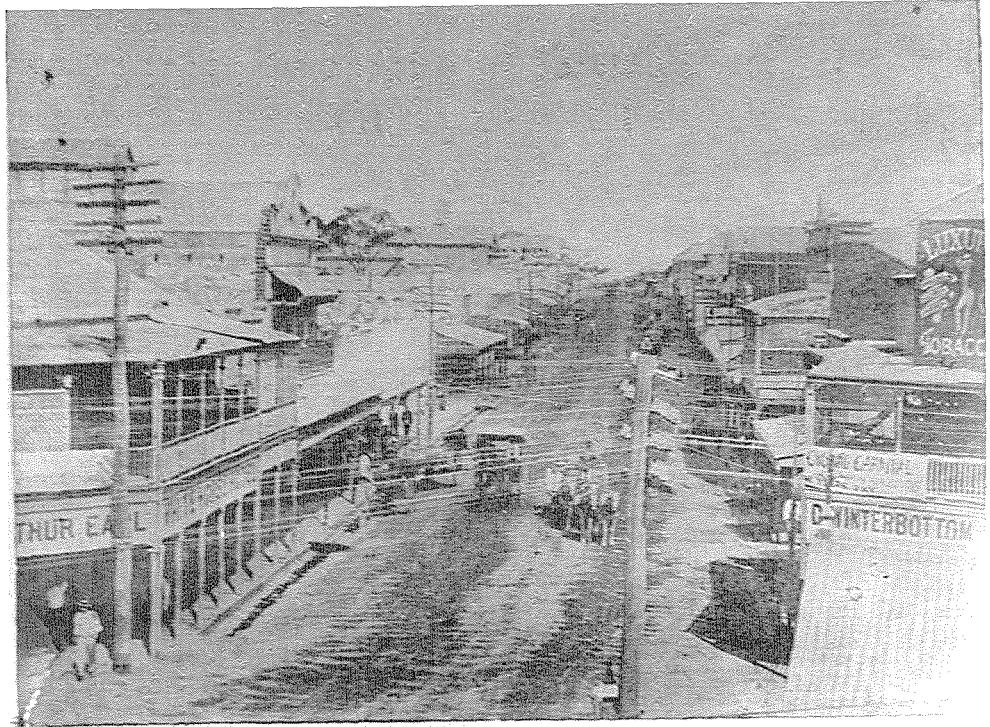
6. Peter Graham Bell, *Houses and Mining Settlement in North Queensland 1861-1920*, PhD. Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1982, p. 260.

in the municipality were built of wood and, although primitive dwellings were much more common outside the square mile of the city area, wooden homes still comprised fifty-seven percent of the buildings in the Kennedy. Roofs were normally of corrugated iron, imported from England, while the same material was often used for attached kitchens, or at least for stove recesses. The houses were painted white and had verandahs to at least one, and often three sides. These measures, when combined with gardens planted with trees and shrubs, provided some comfort in the dry heat of the Charters Towers summers.

Corrugated iron was also being used for the walls of houses by the 1890s, such structures comprising twenty-three percent of all houses in the Kennedy, though they were considerably less common in the municipality (ten percent). The iron was nailed on to a timber frame and, in the case of larger homes, often lined with tongue-and-groove boards. Smaller houses might have paper or calico inside, or be left unlined.⁷ Brick or stone was rare in purely domestic buildings, though it was commonly used for large commercial buildings. Charters Towers' two brick works were mainly devoted to supplying bricks to the mining industry. Indeed, primitive building materials were still far from unusual, particularly outside the city boundary where there were 373 bark dwellings and no fewer than 779 tents still in use at the turn of the century. Clearly newcomers to the goldfields still lived much as those of 1872 until they were able to establish themselves.

Even in the city area almost all houses were still lit by kerosene lamps despite the establishment of both gas and

7. *Ibid.*, p. 273.



GILL STREET LOOKING TOWARDS RAILWAY STATION FROM DEANE STREET.

Photo by "Barrett" Photo



One of the latest, the Boy's School, Charters Towers, A.D. 1892.

Contents of a house in Dalrymple RoadFront verandah

Aviary of birds, flower stands and pot plants, verandah chair and perambulator.

Front Bedroom

Washstand and dressing table, set of toiletware, bedstead, wire mattress, kapok mattress, cot and mattress, cedar chest of drawers, clothes press, chair, towel horse, one pair of cornice poles, two water colour drawings, one opal.

Drawing room

Brussels carpet, hanging lamp, two cane chairs, Dexter rocker, two plush chairs, card table, Japanese japanned table, gypsy table, five pictures including two English oil paintings, two flower stands, vases, Emu skin mat, four Japanese stools, Websters dictionary, Picturesque Atlas, Views of the World and other books, one pair of cornice poles, two pairs of curtains, sundry ornaments, cushions.

Dining Room

Sewing machine, five Austrian chairs, child's high chair, table and cloth, four oil paintings, clock, rocking chair, Austrian lounge and cushions, lamp, vases and ornaments, two oleographs, silver tea and coffee service, pickle jars, two cruets, two silver preserve dishes, biscuit barrel, toast rack, butter dish.

Back bedroom

One single bedstead and mattress, one stretcher and mattress, chest of drawers and mirror, washstand and ware, chair and lamp.

Hall

Cedar hat and coat rail, hanging lamp.

Kitchen

Table and lamp, crockery and glassware, cooking utensils, knives, forks and spoons, mincing machine, hanging meat safe, safe, stove.

Wash house

Tubs, buckets, boiler.

Source: *Phillips Collection. Bill of sale dated 1897:*

Furniture owned by a Charters Towers clerk

Suite (two arm chairs, sofa and six small chairs), whatnot, occasional table, gypsy table, two carpets, one oilcloth, eight pictures, four lamps, one chest of drawers, two bedsteads, two spring mattresses, one duchess, one dressing table and mirror, two washstands, two tables, ten Austrian chairs, one safe, one kitchen dresser, two fibre beds, two bolsters, four pillows, six door mats, ten verandah blinds, one verandah lounge, sewing machine, two clocks, one dinner set (36 piece), one tea and breakfast set (40 piece), three pudding basins, three jugs, six table glasses, one water jug.

12 sheets, 12 pillow cases, 6 bolster cases, 3 counterpanes, 3 pair blankets, 4 tablecloths, 12 serviettes, 3 toilet covers, 18 towels, 8 pair lace curtains, 14 window curtains, 12 window blinds, 2 mosquito curtains, 3 vallances, 6 anti-macassars.

6 table knives, 6 small knives, 1 bread knife, 6 dinner forks, 6 desert forks, 6 desert spoons, 3 table spoons, 6 teaspoons, 2 salt spoons, 1 pickle jar, 1 cruet stand, 3 saucepans, 1 frying pan, 1 gridiron, 1 colander, 1 tin dish, 1 rolling pin and board, 1 patent flat iron, 2 pie dishes, 2 cake tins, 1 boiler, kettle, coffee pot, tea pot, knife board, blacking brushes, black lead brushes, knife tray, tea tray and sundries.

Source: Phillips Collection. Schedule for a marriage settlement. 1890.

electricity companies in Charters Towers during 1897. The reason for this almost certainly lay in the high cost of the more modern energy sources; best coal landed at the gas works cost around thirty shillings a ton and ordinary steaming coal was only five shillings cheaper.⁸ Both the Charters Towers Electricity Supply Company and the Charters Towers Gas, Coke, Coal, and Light Company were joint stock companies employing methods and machinery of considerable sophistication for the period. Their market, however, was limited to commercial and street lighting since their product was eschewed both by domestic consumers and by the mining industry; the larger mines had been generating their own electricity since the 1880s. Eventually the electricity was taken over by the gas company during World War One and electricity was phased out. The system was shut down in 1919 and not replaced until 1931.⁹

The origins of the inhabitants were also reflected in the religious denominations which established themselves on Charters Towers. The Church of England continued to attract a significantly higher proportion of the population than in other parts of the colony, but other sects, particularly non-conformist protestants, proliferated during this decade. These included a variety of ex-patriot institutions such as the Welsh Church, set up by J.F. Williams in 1887 to conduct services in the Welsh language.¹⁰ It claimed a membership

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8. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before The Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into The Charters Towers Gas, Coke, Coal, and Light Company, Limited Bill, p. 8. Even in 1912-13 electricity charges were 15 pence per KWh, compared with 2.66 cents in 1972.
 9. Ernst Spuler, The Development of the Electricity Supply Industry in North Queensland: A Study of the Development of Regional Organisation, M.Ec. (Regional Planning) Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1976, p. 7.
 10. Hayston, Interaction of Religion and Society, p. 44.

of about sixty people in 1901. The German Lutherans were better established; they had been able to construct a church building under the sponsorship of the German-born members of the original Day Dawn PC syndicate. The Chinese, too, had been able to build: the Joss House at Millchester was completed in October 1889. It was described by Thadeus O'Kane:

The altar is a wonder of workmanship, its face being of pure brass worked into symbolic figures indicative of phases of Chinese history dating back for centuries. Most of the furniture for the new "Joss House" has been imported from China, and from an artistic point of view is well worth seeing... 11

A second Joss House was constructed in Charters Towers around the turn of the century.¹²

It was at this time, too, that the churches began to take an interest in social welfare issues, particularly in safeguarding female morals. By 1900 the Salvation Army had set up what the *Charters Towers Mining Standard* described as a "Rescue Home for fallen women"¹³ and the 1901 census called the Salvation Army Maternity Home. It had twenty-three clients on census day, sixteen of them under twenty-one years old. Similarly, the Womens Christian Temperance Union operated a "Rescue Department" which appears to have directed most of its efforts towards closing down the local brothels. The WCTU also ran a hospital visitation programme, a second-hand clothing depot and a "Sunshine Committee".¹⁴ The well-established Charters Towers Benevolent Society (previously the Ladies' Benevolent Society) had become

11. *Northern Miner*, 14 October 1889.

12. Hayston, *Interaction of Religion and Society*, p. 51.

13. *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 29 March 1900.

14. Hayston, *Interaction of Religion and Society*, pp. 69-70.

a quasi-public body in receipt of a government subsidy. This, added to its energetic fund-raising activities, led to its becoming a major property owner by 1901 when it held eleven small cottages occupied by twelve elderly citizens under the care of a matron.¹⁵

The churches also continued to play a part in the provision of education on the field. A Catholic girls' secondary school was built in 1892 to cater for boarders as well as day students, and St. Paul's Grammar School, a Church of England establishment, was set up the following year in the parish room attached to St. Paul's Church. There was not, however, any overwhelming call for the services of secondary educators: St. Mary's survived with difficulty and St. Paul's did not last out the century. As Hayston has pointed out, in 1896 "six Grammar School Scholarships were awarded to students from Charters Towers and district, but three of these children declined to accept them and two gave up their studies after six months; in fact, during the 1890s, only four children in the area accepted and successfully used these Scholarships."¹⁷ There was no state high school in the district until 1912.

Primary schools, however, were growing although their pupil-teacher ratios suggest an explanation of the low rate of entry into secondary education. The Charters Towers

15. Ester E. Plant to Undersecretary, 4 February 1901. COL/290, 48/329, QSA. Cited in Hayston, *Interaction of Religion and Society*, p. 67.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

17. W. Gripp, in *Twentieth Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1895* (Brisbane 1896).

State School enrolments, attendance and staffing during 1895¹⁸

School	Average enrolment			Average attendance			Staffing		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	Teachers	Asst. Pup	
Black Jack	49	42	91	34	30	64	1	1	0
CT Boys	782	0	782	572	0	572	1	9	3
CT Girls	0	636	636	0	441	441	1	5	4
CT Infants	145	123	268	97	77	174	1	1	3
Queenton	392	318	710	290	225	515	1	7	4
Richmond Hill	357	263	620	276	195	471	1	7	3
Millchester	101	86	187	77	66	143	1	2	1
Macrossan									
Bridge	11	7	18	9	4	13	1	0	0
Sellheim	30	25	55	19	16	35	1	0	0
Totals	1867	1500	3367	1374	1054	2428	9	32	18

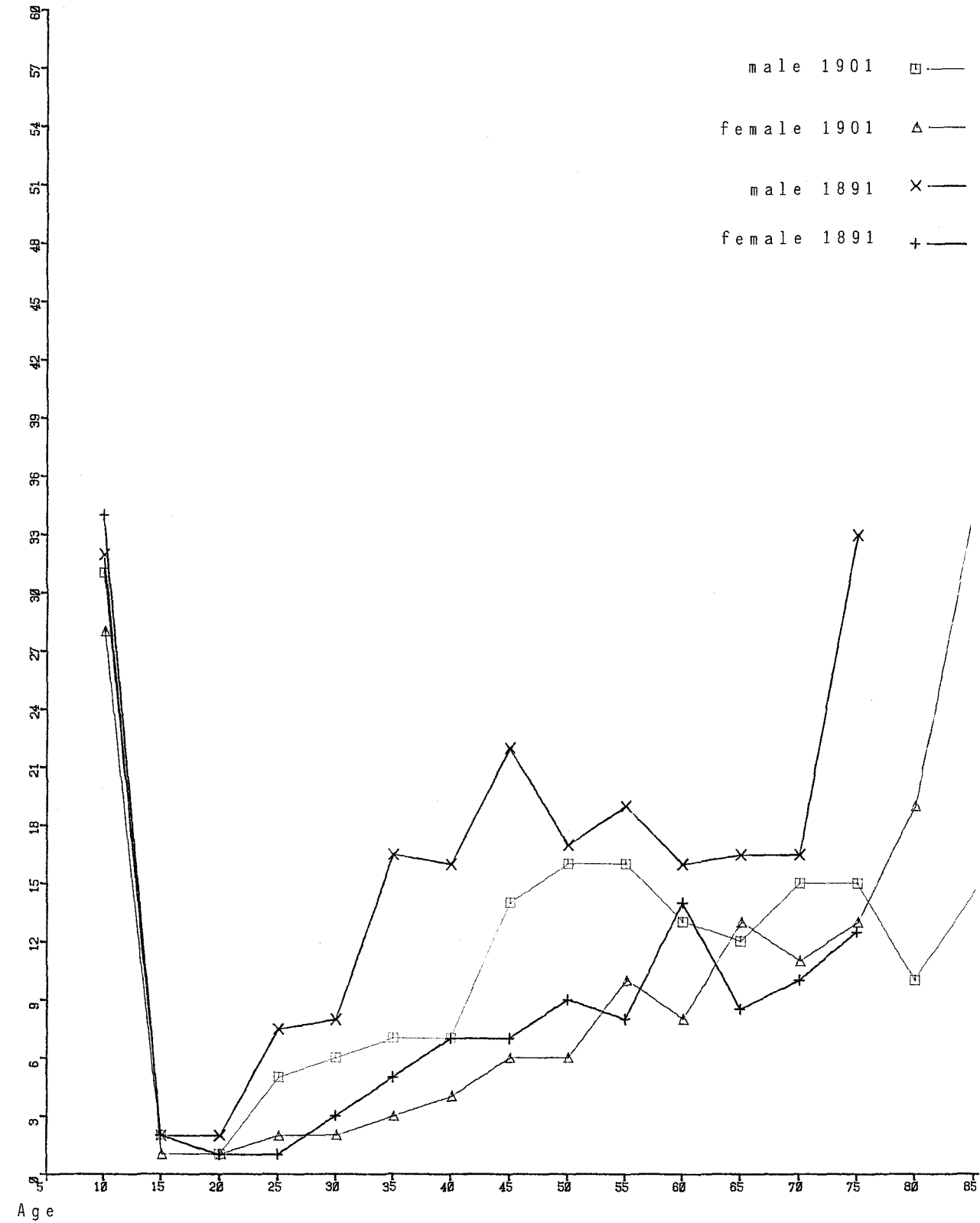
Girl's state school had one staff member to every sixty-four students, counting the four pupil-teachers as staff. Even the Infants' school had a ratio of one to fifty-four. Further the Northern District Inspection for 1895 reported that the Charters Towers schools were badly overcrowded and described the situation as "uncomfortable and even dangerous". The report added that at "Millchester the schoolhouse, teachers' residence, and fences are still in the old dilapidated condition, nothing having yet been done towards making the extensive repairs and alterations so much needed.... The school grounds at the Charters Towers Boys', and even more so at the Girls' school, are rough, full of ruts and untidy. I strongly recommend them to the attention of the committee."¹⁹

18. Department of Public Instruction, "Return of all Schools in Operation on the 1st January, 1896 with the attendance of Pupils and the Status and Emoluments of the Teachers Employed", V&P., 1896.

19. W. Gripp, in *Twentieth Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1895*.

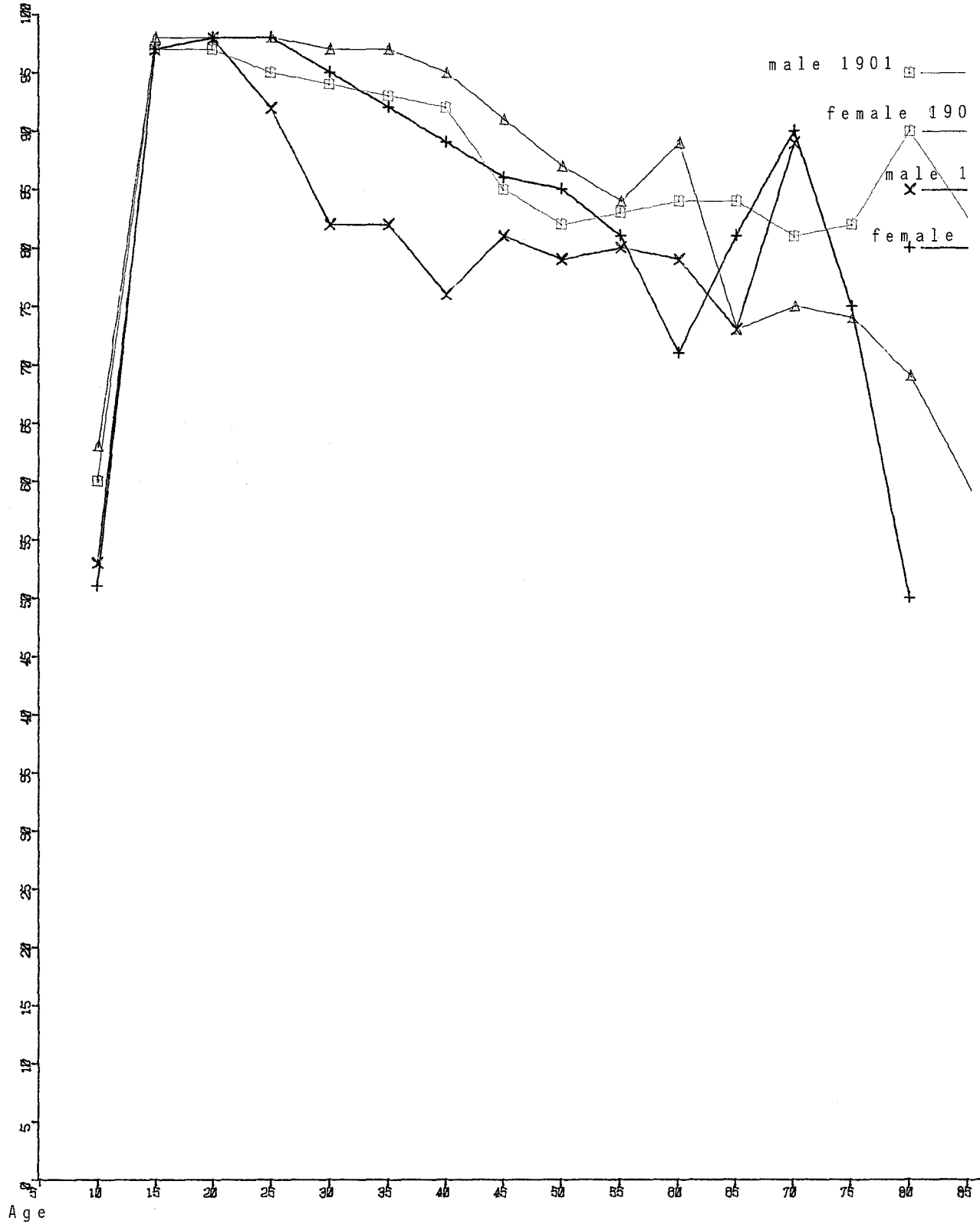
Percentage Illiterate by Age and Sex

Persons



Percentage able to Read and Write by Age and Sex

Persons



Even so the Boys' and Girls' schools produced the fourth and fifth (respectively) highest average marks in the district, and school attendance on the goldfields at seventy-two percent was well above the Northern District average of fifty-four percent.²⁰ Further, the literacy rate of the Kennedy was always higher than the colonial average; although it had dropped dramatically in the 1880s, it improved steadily from then on, and at the turn of the century was almost as high as in 1876. The noticeable difference between men and women in this respect remained; the latter were undoubtedly more literate. This, of course, was not reflected in the distribution of work in the district.

Women were clustered in the "caring professions", domestic or otherwise. A total of 5,368, or nearly seventy-six percent of all women over the age of fifteen, are listed in the 1901 census as being engaged in unpaid domestic work - rather oddly described by the census as "dependent upon natural guardians". Of the remainder the only other areas in which an appreciable number of women were engaged were domestic, either as boarding-house keepers or servants (915), dressmaking (264) and millinery (21), education (210), commerce, mainly shop-keeping (167), health and welfare (82) and dairying which employed forty-seven women.

On the other hand, men occupied a wide range of positions which suggest an economically sophisticated society. Clearly the mining industry was the major employer of male labour in the district; about forty-one percent of all males over fifteen years worked in mining. Nevertheless the remainder of the workforce was engaged in many different fields. The second largest employment area was that of transport and communications. About eight percent of those of working

20. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

age were so involved, some 340 of them as draymen, teamsters, carters or other types of drivers, while another 145 were working on the railways. 477 men, or five percent of the male workforce, were engaged in dealing in food, many as grocers or butchers, while nearly as many again defined themselves simply as "labourers". Other major employers were the hotels and boarding houses, building, and secondary industries such as sawmilling and engineering. Overall, men were employed in 251 of the 605 job categories listed in the 1901 census, as opposed to eighty-two categories for women.

These were the people of Charters Towers. The town they lived in was assuming a settled appearance with its stone kerbing and guttering, footpaths and tarred roads alive with horse drawn vehicles and numerous bicycles. It had a semi-voluntary firebrigade which was funded jointly by the Municipality and the Dalrymple Divisional Board and operated horsedrawn firecarts from its stations in Charters Towers and in Queenton. There was a telephone exchange (established in 1891) which had 225 subscribers by the end of the decade. Communications had been further improved by the construction, in 1897, of a high-level railway bridge over the Burdekin River. The hospital had been expanded to include a fever ward and nurses' quarters and a new Children's Hospital had been erected under the patronage of Ester Plant. The School of Arts had acquired a theatre, library, museum and reading, chess, card and smoking rooms. There was a rifle club, jockey club, Racing Association and Show Society, and in 1900 a syndicate was formed to provide public baths in the city. While the Council was frequently preoccupied with complaints about refuse and drainage, a Brisbane visitor wrote in 1897 that "the streets are particularly clean owing to the outcrops of decomposed granite showing strongly throughout the town and its environs, so that after a heavy rainfall



A Middle Class Family in the Nineties

everything has a bright, clean, and well-washed appearance.²¹

Nevertheless life on Charters Towers was dominated by the gold mines beneath its streets. Survival hung on the prosperity of the companies and any development underground saw great throngs of citizens gathered inside and outside the ornate Stock Exchange building for the public evening call. Children learned the time of day from the shift whistles and were entertained with stories of "jewelled caverns" underground. They needed such stories; their landscape beyond the garden fence was a barren one. Stripped of trees by the timber-getters and of grass by the goats which devoured all traces of secondary growth, it was a desert broken only by outcrops of poppet-heads and mullock heaps. The very air they breathed was laced with the fumes of the pyrites works and the dust of the stamp batteries. Pervading all aspects of their lives were the shimmering heat and the perpetual noise of the three hundred-odd stamps of the batteries which ringed Charters Towers falling into their great mortars about seventy times a minute. For all its sophistication "The World" was still a mining town.

21. *Queenslander*, 26 June 1897.

SECTION 4. DECLINE

CHAPTER 14. MINERS AND SPECULATORS

The population of the Charters Towers field peaked at 26,780 during 1900.¹ However, even in that year mill returns were falling off: there was a decrease of 3,597 tons of quartz treated, and 10,655 ounces less gold was recovered than during the previous year.² Of the gold recovered a very considerable amount was produced in the cyanide works, which were, by then, systematically cleaning up the remaining tailings heaps. Fortunately the exhaustion of these³ coincided with the last of the great discoveries on the field, the Queen Cross reef, during 1902.

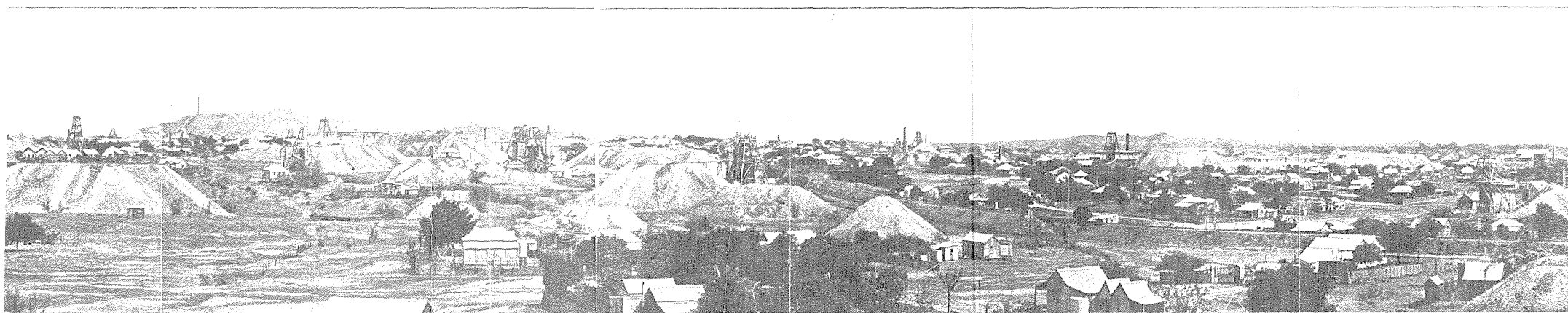
Like so many of the Charters Towers mines the Queen Cross Reef⁴ had worked a series of parallel reefs at different phases in its long and varied life. Part of the ground had been pegged in 1873 as the Just-in-Time Numbers 3 and 4 North Claims, the first of which mined the Just-in-Time reef with some success. The claims were apparently worked out when, in 1876, a syndicate consisting of R. Collins, E. Tubbs, R. Smith, Joe Hammond and T. Farrington took up adjacent ground as the Just-in-Time Block. Just before their shaft bottomed E.H.T. Plant bought into the syndicate. It was subsequently announced that they had bottomed on a "duffer" and Plant, E.D. Miles and another partner were able to buy most of the remaining shares for a few hundred pounds at auction. They then added the Numbers on the Just-in-Time to their holdings to gain control of the Victoria and Queen and, in the wake of the 1882 boom,

1. AR., 1900, p. 52.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

3. Small amounts of tailings continued to be recovered from the water courses and treated by small operators, but they have an insignificant effect on the annual production figures.

4. Queen Cross Reef refers to the mine, Queen Cross reef to the reef.



VIEW OF CHARTERS TOWNS. SHOWING THE PRINCIPAL MINING AREA.

floated the Queen Cross Reef Company, registered in 1884.⁵ The company won some 16,500 ounces from the "old" Queen Cross reef⁶ before reconstructing as the Queen Cross Reef GMCL, nominal capital £100,000, to undertake deep sinking in search of the Brilliant reef.⁷

Early in 1902⁸ a crosscut at a depth of 876 feet intersected the "new" Queen Cross reef 200 feet east of the shaft, and the mine immediately became the biggest producer on the field.⁹ In the boom which followed, share values soared; thirty new companies were formed, some of which were of value only to their vendors and were described as having "vied with one another in acquiring the varied contents of the scrapheap."¹⁰ Reaction was inevitable and the collapse came towards the end of the year. Nevertheless the confidence generated by the discovery enabled the larger companies to call in contributing capital to finance some rewarding prospecting. For example, during 1902 the Brilliant Deep Levels reconstructed to finance a new shaft, the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham took up more land and began diamond drill prospecting and the Brilliant Extended paid its first dividend. In no twenty-four month period in the thirty-year history of the field was so much money success-

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5. Register of Companies, Charters Towers, MWO 11A/T3, QSA:
 6. Reid, Charters Towers Goldfield, p. 281.
 7. Register of Companies, Charters Towers, MWO 11A/T3, QSA:
 8. Although Reid gives the date as 1901, the year stated by the warden, F.F. Parkinson, has been accepted. Sellheim left Charters Towers in 1888; succeeding wardens were: A.C. Haldane (Acting) February to October 1888; W.M. Mowbray October 1888 to April 1900; L.E.D. Towner April 1900 to September 1901; F.F. Parkinson September 1901 to March 1903.
 9. Reid, The Charters Towers Goldfield, p. 180.
 10. AR., 1902, p. 141.

fully called up as in the aftermath of the Queen Cross discovery. This flood of money was made possible by record dividends.

Year	Dividends £	Calls £	Year	Dividends £	Calls £
1890	152,812	*	1904	399,128	83,067
1891	255,020	*	1905	219,610	93,461
1892	341,692	112,521	1906	176,602	125,134
1893	300,898	61,889	1907	120,099	81,863
1894	289,074	50,999	1908	100,980	60,522
1895	244,800	91,761	1909	156,819	57,475
1896	254,616	130,747	1910	112,190	58,921
1897	343,318	93,557	1911	131,635	64,283
1898	308,588	81,093	1912	35,981	36,023
1899	301,535	67,222	1913	49,842	37,411
1900	299,205	56,241	1914	5,978	22,407
1901	271,113	43,001	1915	27,907	10,875
1902	415,157	103,746	1916	19,408	7,105
1903	460,042	129,681			

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 32.

Indeed the discovery of the "new" Queen Cross reef gave rise to a period of extreme optimism during the first half of the decade. Warden Parkinson wrote in 1903: "Now that the field is extending its operations more than it has ever done before, it may be deserving of thought if some of our enterprising speculators and business men were to consider the advisability of cheaper, less cumbersome, and more rapid means of locomotion". He elaborated:

The present cumbersome and expensive mode of carrying quartz 2 and 3 miles by horse drays ought to be done away with. By electric trucks all the quartz could be conveyed in the early morn, and would not interfere with the daily traffic. It would, I think, be a boon to the people, for the constant all-day traffic of the horse drays, breaking up the roads and causing the place to be continually enveloped in dust (to the detriment of health and comfort), would then be a thing of the past.

I have no hesitation in saying that there is plenty of money on the field to carry out this scheme.... The prospects of the field never looked brighter, and there is a feeling of confidence amongst the community that would lead one to think that the development in the mines is only in its 'infancy'. Substantial business houses have recently been erected, large sums of money have been invested in the mines, new ground has been taken up with the intention of sinking deep shafts, and the appearance of the mines gives almost an assurance that the year 1903 will show an increase of gold and dividends on the present record. 11

The Queen Cross Reef dominated the field from 1902 until 1905, but its career demonstrated how little had been learned about mine management. The shoot, which on an ounce per ton basis was probably the richest by assay, though certainly not the largest, in the history of Charters Towers, was gutted out to return £614,166 to its shareholders within three years; almost half the total dividend of the entire field. For the greater part of this time two shillings per share was distributed each month, and for 1903 the mine showed a profit equal to £686 for every working day of the year. Although the company purchased a twenty-five stamp mill and installed electricity into both mill and mine, there is no evidence that any serious prospecting was done on the lease until after the Queen Cross shoot pinched out during 1905. Certainly no attempt was made to equalise the ores to lengthen the life of the mine and preserve the jobs of its three hundred and fifty employees.¹²

11. AR., 1902, p. 37.

12. 250 miners and an estimated 100 surface workers.

Production and Dividends of the Principal Mines

Mine	period	ore raised tons	gold cr.oz.	Value of concen- trates & tailings	Dividends
				£	£
Day Dawn Block and Wyndham	1883-1912	589,531	546,871	23,905	892,962
Mills D.D. United	1890-1916	507,428	428,429	410,701	667,500
Brilliant & St. George	1892-1914	371,088	462,296	67,493	787,800*
Brilliant PC	1889-1916	340,582	403,198	5,242	680,416
Day Dawn PC	1881-1913	275,128	379,859	8,854	638,000
Brilliant Extended	1894-1916	567,500	202,188	475,505	150,000
Queen Cross	1890-1910	138,125	287,039	8,062	653,466
Brilliant Central	1892-1914	245,477	215,523	37,763	294,166
Victory	1881-1916	98,803	216,360	18,984	305,925
Victoria	1887-1902	70,913	146,968	...	259,000
Brilliant Block	1892-1916	158,606	133,988	1,141	81,250
New Brilliant Freeholds	1894-1916	124,360	92,537	131,978	135,000
New Queen	1889-1907	106,366	121,515	2,059	57,617
Kelly's Queen Block	1892-1913	91,586	113,937	17,575	200,200
Band of Hope	1887-1912	86,454	104,637	4,341	111,400
Stockholm	1875-1916	97,667	64,894	114,387	+
Bonnie Dundee	1881-1916	59,296	70,808	17,277	34,685
Papuan, Brilliant and Victoria	1887-1916	41,354	70,559	2,650	80,000
Victoria & Queen	1893-1910	35,730	63,613	1,075	66,225
Golden Gate	1888-1896	35,303	56,626	...	66,000
Day Dawn Gold Mines	1899-1904	51,937	54,120	...	70,488
Victoria & Caledonia Block	1899-1911	36,849	49,906	3,703	63,600

* Not including £75,000 previously paid by mines working at shallow depths
+ Not available.

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 215.

On the other hand it might be suggested that the activities of the Queen Cross Company demonstrated how much North Queenslanders had learned about the workings of the stock exchange. In 1901 large numbers of shares had been purchased by Charters Towers residents from the English investors who had bought into the property after the reconstruction of 1892. The price of shares during 1901 was fifteen pence; they rose to over two pounds¹³ in 1904 and were falling rapidly when, in 1905, an explosion of dynamite which could be heard seventeen miles away¹⁴ blew up the engine house at the mill allowing the abrupt closure of the mine. Despite large rewards offered by both the Queensland Government and the chairman of directors, E.H.T. Plant, the saboteur was never discovered. The explosion arrested the fall in share values - it is not known how many shares changed hands before the mine was reopened and it was revealed that the Queen Cross reef had pinched out.

After the failure of the Queen Cross Reef the gold yield fell rapidly; for the first time in the history of the field there was no single fabulously rich mine to boost production figures. The great mine of the 1870s, the Day Dawn PC, had been in decline since 1893. From 1902 returns diminished and after a few years under tribute the mine finally closed down in 1913.

13. Share values are quoted in C.T. Elmslie, *Mining in Queensland: A Descriptive Account of the Principal Gold Mines of Queensland with Survey Plans of the Principal Goldfields* (London 1904), p. 45.

14. AR., 1905, p. 32.

Day Dawn PC - Production

Year	Ore raised tons	Gold oz	Year	Ore raised tons	Gold oz
1881	5,678	13,933	1890	28,970	26,814
1882	11,226	22,778	1891	27,416	27,479
1883	8,021	18,077	1892	14,651	14,430
1884	11,331	30,130	1893	6,459	8,832
1885	18,510	34,775	1894	3,515	6,886
1886	18,558	29,365	1895	3,958	5,445
1887	19,746	25,475	1896	2,370	2,445
1888	22,349	24,919	1897	9,630	16,913
1889	27,035	31,816	1898	4,692	6,468

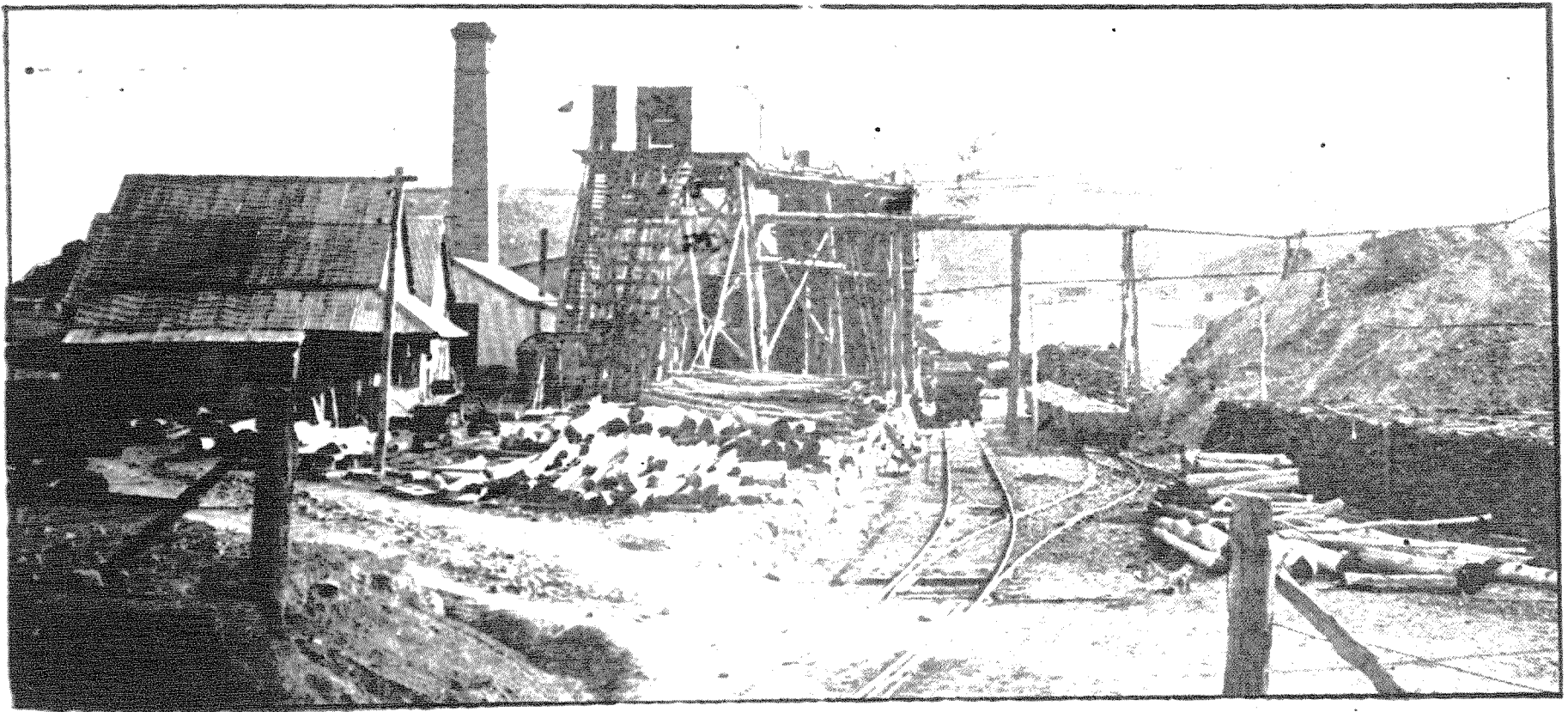
From 1899 to 1913 inclusive, 29,844 tons of ore were raised, yielding 31,904oz gold and residues valued at £88,541.

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 220.

The richest producer on the field, the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham, worked continuously from 1883 to 1912. The lease was a combination of the land in front of the Day Dawn PC which was taken up in 1880 by Thomas Mills, and Mills' Wyndham mine to the west of the Block. The company was formed in 1882 and the following year cut the lode to reveal a six-foot reef. In 1886 the property was bought by an English company, despite rumours that the richest ore was already worked out. By 1903 the ore reserves on the Day Dawn reef were becoming depleted and work was started on the Talisman reef which gave payable crushings until 1906. Three years later the company went into voluntary liquidation and the mine was worked by tributors until its closure in 1912.

Day Dawn Block and Wyndham - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	Year	Ore Raised	Gold
1883	1,347	3,120	1891	13,635	20,415
1884	7,255	15,957	1892	20,910	23,101
1885	15,864	29,880	1893	3,090	3,160
1886	20,243	37,950	1894	2,115	1,692
1887	24,511	39,191	1895	19,994	15,809
1888	20,267	22,761	1896	29,653	30,897
1889	28,282	22,702	1897	35,720	32,216
1890	13,103	7,758	1898	34,186	25,025



DAY DAWN BLOCK AND WYNDHAM MINE.

Gold Production, Charters Towers, in fine ounces

Year	Ore tons	Gold fine oz	Year	Ore tons	Gold fine oz	Year	Ore tons	Gold fine oz
1872	12,054	25,030	1905	224,519	226,696	1938	25,858	12,693
1873	37,937	59,797	1906	240,416	205,632	1939	37,021	14,431
1874	33,097	49,876	1907	211,090	175,552	1940	39,825	13,895
1875	36,876	55,422	1908	193,858	162,270	1941	30,969	10,506
1876	37,500	54,092	1909	187,454	171,654	1942	6,091	6,657
1877	36,030	69,760	1910	168,619	147,484	1943	1,713	1,774
1878	35,509	59,482	1911	175,803	133,833	1944	1,510	1,684
1879	41,584	63,715	1912	136,431	96,046	1945	1,290	1,614
1880	39,285	67,773	1913	76,139	69,895	1946	2,396	2,778
1881	45,378	65,410	1914	70,121	62,610	1947	4,768	5,129
1882	45,663	63,242	1915	55,066	56,888	1948	3,417	4,480
1883	44,602	55,264	1916	33,107	42,777	1949	3,607	2,993
1884	52,561	86,228	1917	19,319	30,784	1950	4,208	2,856
1885	70,164	106,981	1918	10,218	17,386	1951	1,942	1,782
1886	77,665	112,166	1919	4,685	8,095	1952	281	377
1887	82,853	117,603	1920	3,300	8,662	1953	323	474
1888	81,698	106,839	1921	3,115	6,660	1954	424	512
1889	108,828	126,566	1922	2,895	5,016	1955	249	859
1890	121,406	127,426	1923	1,742	2,787	1956	870	1,336
1891	173,789	183,830	1924	693	1,350	1957	749	1,088
1892	186,392	216,679	1925	131	539	1958	1,027	853
1893	180,208	216,660	1926	88	238	1959	482	581
1894	224,292	221,544	1927	159	297	1960	141	365
1895	230,672	200,916	1928	51	147	1961	64	401
1896	176,112	181,923	1929	105	219	1962	139	549
1897	198,873	242,641	1930	393	367	1963	30	301
1898	209,978	272,368	1931	1,911	1,335	1964	159	150
1899	209,802	319,572	1932	2,907	2,907	1965	78	108
1900	206,205	283,237	1933	5,824	3,880	1966	52	104
1901	235,302	235,302	1934	6,581	4,670	1967	113	89
1902	221,098	265,244	1935	7,598	5,441	1968	228	86
1903	247,481	285,771	1936	10,666	7,994	1969	128	62
1904	241,200	262,018	1937	20,565	12,933			

Totals: 6,007,108 tons of ore raised for 6,624,683 fine ounces of gold.

Source: *Levingston, Ore Deposits and Mines of the Charters Towers 1:250,000 Sheet Area*, p. 12.

Day Dawn Block and Wyndham cont.

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1899	35,880	23,245		1906	21,258	14,504
1900	37,740	31,607		1907	11,893	6,963
1901	39,810	26,538		1908	9,129	3,918
1902	40,730	26,452		1909	6,966	5,143
1903	37,780	17,018		1910	6,203	4,490
1904	26,289	26,193*		1911	2,420	2,513
1905	23,056	26,443*		1912	202	214

* includes cyanide returns from accumulated tailings

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 220.

Day Dawn Gold Mines lay to the west of Day Dawn Block and Wyndham and comprised an area of more than 69 acres. Part of this area was originally worked by the Day Dawn Consols company which sank a shaft to 500 feet on the vertical. When the lease was forfeited the ground was taken up by the Day Dawn Freehold Extended, which company worked the mine

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1895*	90	52		1901	10,404	11,919
1896*	...	..		1902	12,437	13,144
1897*	333	131		1903	13,647	11,712
1898*	682	838		1904	6,420	5,124
1899	4,076	5,197				
1900	4,953	7,024		1910	186	76

* Returns when held was Day Dawn Freehold Extended Mine.

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 221.

until 1898 when it was acquired, with additional ground, by the Day Dawn Gold Mines Company. Their vertical shaft cut the lode at 1,130 feet and shoots were worked from this and from an underlie which was later sunk near the eastern boundary. During its fairly brief life this mine provided some of the finest specimens of free gold found on the field. After 1904 a great deal of unsuccessful prospecting was carried out on the Talisman reef and in 1910 the company

acquired Wallis Day Dawn lease on the west to no avail. The mine shut down in 1911.

The shaft of Mills Day Dawn United was situated on ground secured by Thomas Mills in the early eighties, however, the first crushings were not obtained until 1889, and even then were very poor. During the following two years, however, exploration exposed shoots of both the Day Dawn and the Talisman reefs which made the mine the most productive on the field during the following five years. These were exhausted by 1896 and the next seven years were spent prospecting before a lower shoot was found on the eastern side of the lease. In 1909 the company purchased a controlling interest in the Burdekin Mill at Sellheim, and the mine prospered until about 1911 after which year an annual decline in production was recorded. The mine was let on tribute in 1914 and virtually abandoned two years later.

Mills Day Dawn United - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1889	1,274	382		1903	3,079	2,042
1890	6,405	4,835		1904	6,369	4,034
1891	24,002	21,611		1905	17,927	11,674
1892	21,631	21,924		1906	44,062	35,902
1893	45,504	51,471		1907	49,860	23,536
1894	48,240	56,101		1908	45,194	25,375
1895	35,389	37,732		1909	37,502	24,880
1896	9,520	7,480		1910	25,804	14,180
1897	1,944	1,666		1911	25,512	11,347
1898	2,253	937		1912	20,384	9,157
1899	...	...		1913	9,096	3,729
1900	...	...		1914	11,400	8,742
1901	286	118		1915	11,981	9,063
1902	2,183	1,726		1916	1,902	1,745

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 215.

The New Brilliant Freeholds' ground was taken up during the Brilliant boom of 1890, and a company was formed during the following year. The vertical shaft was sunk for three

years before it cut the reef at 1,160 feet. The Brilliant reef was worked until 1903 when the company reconstructed and began prospecting for another payable lode. A shoot of the Day Dawn was discovered in 1907 at 1,680 feet and during the following five years was worked to a depth of 2,300 feet. As the Day Dawn petered out attempts were made, in 1914 and 1915, to discover more payable ore on the Brilliant. These were unsuccessful and the mine closed in 1917.

New Brilliant Freeholds - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1894	200	26		1904-1907	NIL	
1895	860	804		1908	3,473	3,134
1896	1,800	1,172		1909	9,838	8,744
1897	3,551	2,571		1910	28,992	24,101
1898	1,031	548		1911	20,123	15,896
1899	2,204	1,766		1912	18,640	10,551
1900	...	...		1913	10,135	5,565
1901	1,647	1,631		1914	8,752	4,946
1902	1,426	1,042		1915	6,774	5,569
1903	1,665	1,068		1916	3,249	3,403

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 217.

The Brilliant Extended leases included the workings on the St. Patrick's reef which was so important to the early success of the field. However the original lease of the Extended mine was only applied for in 1891 after the discovery of the Brilliant reef in the Brilliant PC. Although only sixteen acres at first, the company gradually took up the surrounding ground until it comprised 125 acres. The Number One shaft cut the reef at a depth of 2,035 feet during 1894 and eventually the company opened up twenty-three levels to a depth of 2,818 feet vertical, and the Number 3 underlie was continued to 3,045 feet. By 1916 however the Extended was operating at a loss, and the mine was closed down in 1919.

Production and Dividends of the Principal Mines

Mine	period	ore raised tons	gold cr.oz.	Value of concen- trates & tailings	Dividends
				£	£
Day Dawn Block and Wyndham	1883-1912	589,531	546,871	23,905	892,962
Mills D.D. United	1890-1916	507,428	428,429	410,701	667,500
Brilliant & St. George	1892-1914	371,088	462,296	67,493	787,800*
Brilliant PC	1889-1916	340,582	403,198	5,242	680,416
Day Dawn PC	1881-1913	275,128	379,859	8,854	638,000
Brilliant Extended	1894-1916	567,500	202,188	475,505	150,000
Queen Cross	1890-1910	138,125	287,039	8,062	653,466
Brilliant Central	1892-1914	245,477	215,523	37,763	294,166
Victory	1881-1916	98,803	216,360	18,984	305,925
Victoria	1887-1902	70,913	146,968	...	259,000
Brilliant Block	1892-1916	158,606	133,988	1,141	81,250
New Brilliant Freeholds	1894-1916	124,360	92,537	131,978	135,000
New Queen	1889-1907	106,366	121,515	2,059	57,617
Kelly's Queen Block	1892-1913	91,586	113,937	17,575	200,200
Band of Hope	1887-1912	86,454	104,637	4,341	111,400
Stockholm	1875-1916	97,667	64,894	114,387	+
Bonnie Dundee	1881-1916	59,296	70,808	17,277	34,685
Papuan, Brilliant and Victoria	1887-1916	41,354	70,559	2,650	80,000
Victoria & Queen	1893-1910	35,730	63,613	1,075	66,225
Golden Gate	1888-1896	35,303	56,626	...	66,000
Day Dawn Gold Mines	1899-1904	51,937	54,120	...	70,488
Victoria & Caledonia Block	1899-1911	36,849	49,906	3,703	63,600

* Not including £75,000 previously paid by mines working at shallow depths
+ Not available.

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 215.

Brilliant Extended Mine - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1894	367	174		1906	47,429	19,627
1895	1,750	971		1907	46,322	12,346
1896	16,032	9,217		1908	51,225	13,616
1897	21,219	11,823		1909	61,327	12,565
1898	5,679	3,340		1910	49,050	13,224
1899	3,325	1,914		1911	53,562	13,161
1900	11,175	7,832		1912	34,240	7,871
1901	10,305	5,775		1913	26,739	9,053
1902	12,134	7,738		1914	19,075	6,995
1903	17,013	7,999		1915	14,233	5,486
1904	28,654	11,350		1916	6,359	4,166
1905	30,286	14,945				

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 223.

One of the longest-lived mines on the field was the Bonnie Dundee which began operations during 1882. The company was formed in 1883 and sold to an English company during 1886. For many years, however, the mine was a disappointment, but between 1891 and 1907 42,337 tons of ore were mined to yield 49,997 ounces of gold. From 1908 to

Bonnie Dundee - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1908	2,850	3,480		1913	56	31
1909	8,048	9,765		1914		
1910	1,441	1,112		1915	1,032	1,312
1911	2,126	3,127		1916	3,830	4,644
1912	603	559				

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 274.

1911 the mine showed good returns from a shoot on the Brilliant lode. After this pinched out the company continued to prospect on the Brilliant until in 1915 it was rewarded with a new reef, which lasted only four years.

The Victory also had an extended and productive life; indeed it was worked for longer than any other mine on the field. The area was pegged in 1875 by E. Williams, W. Gough

and party who worked the Victory reef until 1881 when the Victory company was formed. It was highly successful on the Victory shoot during its early years and worked many reefs within its boundaries over four decades. One of these, cut during 1892, proved to be the richest portion of the Brilliant which penetrated the lease on its north-western boundary. Between 1892 and 1894 this returned about 80,000

Victory - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1881-1889	18,842	47,616		1896	1,142	1,456
1890	3,954	7,894		1897	2,408	9,701
1891	3,117	5,054		1898	2,876	7,987
1892	8,738	37,225		1899	3,070	7,008
1893	13,826	37,766		1900-1916	29,358	41,242
1894	8,023	7,616		1917-1919	1,281	4,754
1895	2,394	1,618				

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 275.

ounces of gold, after which several lean years intervened before the discovery of the Victoria shoot in the Number Three shaft gave it a new lease of life. The final discovery was Morris's lode, found on a crosscut from the 423' level. This kept the mine alive until 1919.

The Queen reef was discovered during 1872 by Little and Marshall. During the first twelve years about 40,000 ounces were taken from the Queen PC and its Numbers. From that year the ground was worked by the Queen No 2 SW Gold Mining Company which sold out to an English company, New Queen GMC, in 1890. This company developed the mine at depth, most of its returns coming from the Victory reef.

New Queen Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1884	4,992	10,072		1896	3,826	3,430
1885	3,842	5,991		1897	1,009	686
1886	1,865	2,884		1898	6,765	4,464
1887	665	1,061		1899	9,221	7,507
1888	497	371		1900	3,997	3,041
1889	841	818		1901	5,540	10,779
1890	4,813	6,978		1902	2,074	1,647
1891	8,283	11,064		1903	2,941	2,787
1892	9,534	10,933		1904	10,554	9,716
1893	6,261	11,182		1905	7,233	7,056
1894	7,759	10,446		1906	7,438	5,555
1895	6,330	12,124		1907	1,947	1,793

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 276.

Production began to drop in 1896 and petered out completely by 1908. In 1913 the mine was sold to the Queen Tribute Company which took out 666 tons of ore during the following three years. The mine closed in 1916.

The Brilliant PC was handed over to tributors almost a decade earlier than the New Queen. However, during its life the mine produced 340,582 tons of ore which yielded 403,198 ounces of gold, residues to the value of £5,242 and dividends totalling £680,416. The discovery of the Brilliant reef here during 1889 not only gave the field its most productive shoot, but also led to the uncovering

Brilliant PC - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1889	3,620	9,175		1897	32,770	40,338
1890	10,908	26,559		1898	33,057	37,404
1891	21,328	36,605		1899	30,185	31,265
1892	22,905	24,221		1900	23,405	26,243
1893	22,350	23,000		1901	13,927	16,222
1894	32,725	33,347		1902	10,489	12,334
1895	33,772	35,058		1903	6,887	6,754
1896	32,263	34,182		1904	3,179	2,659
				1905-1916 (tribute)		
					5,812	6,240

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 277.

of other reefs during the deep sinking boom which followed. The mine prospered for thirteen years, but by 1903 the Brilliant shoot was practically worked out. From that year the company concentrated on prospecting for an eastern extension of the Day Dawn, but without success. Apart from the occasional tribute party, work ceased during 1914.

The Brilliant and St. George achieved a production level only exceeded by those of the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham and Mills United. This ground was worked from about 1880; in its first decade it comprised three separate claims - the

Brilliant and St. George - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1892	6,339	6,731		1904	28,350	46,641**
1893	9,849	11,048		1905	23,993	39,291*
1894	10,656	17,599		1906	19,662	31,627*
1895	17,501	29,870		1907	13,995	8,385
1896	19,987	30,030		1908	7,108	6,275
1897	20,223	31,886		1909	4,702	5,654
1898	28,658	43,652		1910	2,541	3,263
1899	34,224	41,383		1911	1,400	2,005
1900	34,949	36,857		1912	1,100	1,685
1901	31,193	27,633		1913	917	1,177
1902	25,669	17,781		1914	175	148
1903	28,897	21,690				

* includes produce of accumulated tailings.

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 278.

St. George PC, the Sovereign and the St. George, Queen and Victory Grand Junction. Between them these mines yielded some 40,000 ounces of gold before being amalgamated into a single company in the wake of the Brilliant discovery. The company flourished; nearly the whole lease was productive on the Brilliant lode which was mined until 1908. When it petered out the company began prospecting for the Day Dawn below the Brilliant but without success. Mining operation ceased in 1914.

The Brilliant Block ground was not taken up until 1889 when a company, under the directorship of E.H.T. Plant, was formed to sink for the Brilliant lode. They bottomed on the reef at 1,090 feet in 1891, and for seven years this shoot was successfully mined. When it petered out prospecting was undertaken in search of other reefs in the mine. One small shoot on the Brilliant Extended boundary was worked from 1904 to 1906 and when this was exhausted the company sank a vertical shaft in search of the Day Dawn lode. Although it was uncovered at 2,000 feet, it was unpayable. A variety of other strategies were tried before the mine was

handed over to tributors in 1916. Between 1908 and 1916 1,884 tons of ore were raised for a yield of 1,367 ounces, together with residues to the value of £1,141.

The Brilliant Block - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1892	6,786	4,825		1900	2,893	1,076
1893	7,919	7,882		1901	2,566	1,268
1894	22,640	23,072		1902	1,960	5,848*
1895	30,910	26,684		1903	579	249
1896	21,621	12,288		1904	5,819	8,897
1897	18,876	12,793		1905	7,433	13,092
1898	15,995	9,434		1906	8,451	4,326
1899	2,274	877				

* Includes 5,323 ounces of gold from accumulated tailings

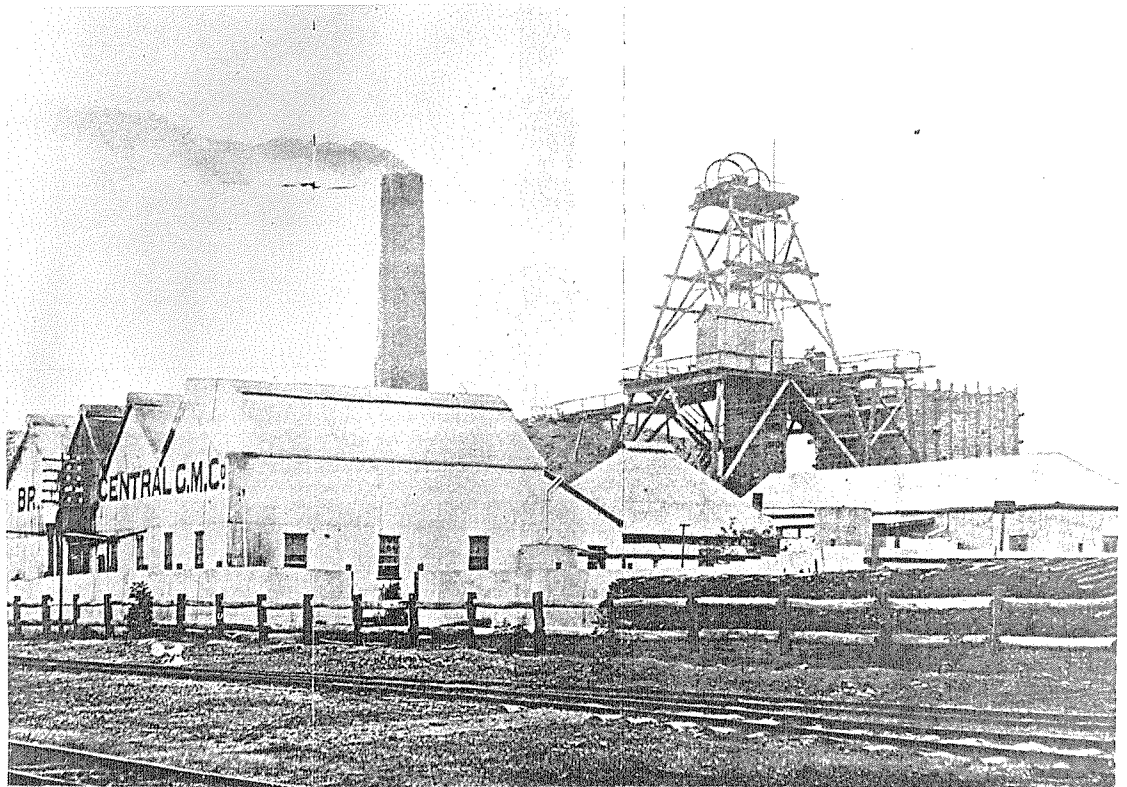
Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 278.

The Brilliant Central mine, situated a few hundred yards north-east of the railway station, included the ground known as the Bryan O'Lynn. Frank Stubley and his partners worked the Queen reef in this claim to a depth of four hundred feet, where it became unprofitable. The ground was then neglected until the Brilliant Central GMC was floated in 1891 and a new shaft was sunk. At 721 feet this shaft cut the Victory lode which was mined until 1895. Three years of

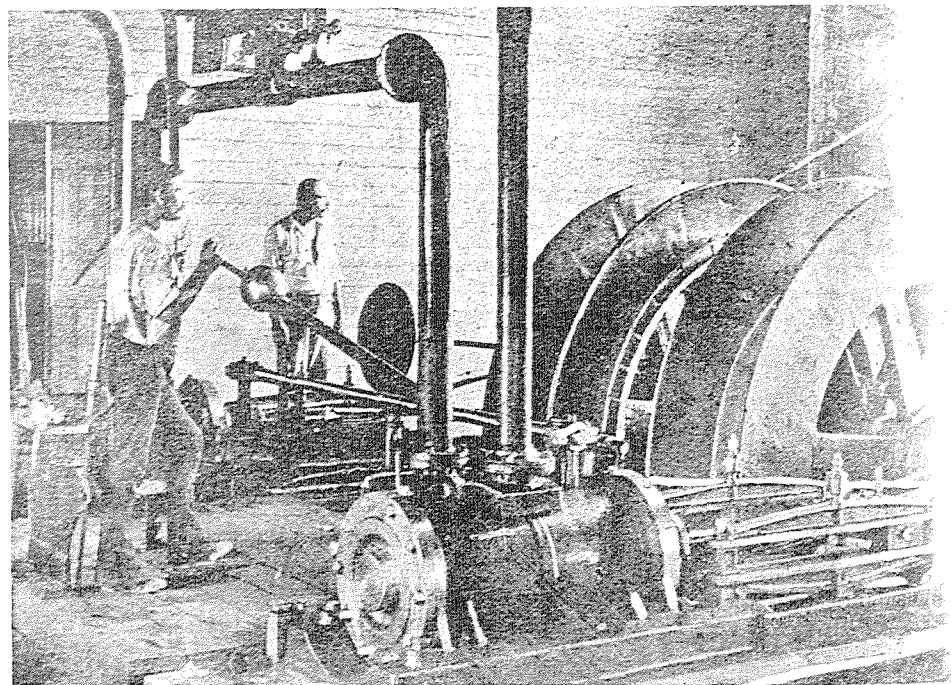
Brilliant Central - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1892	63	94		1904	36,606	32,867
1893	1,905	2,722		1905	30,389	19,031
1894	6,808	9,810		1906	19,656	10,392
1895	2,992	2,487		1907	14,079	8,353
1896	202	258		1908	14,250	8,475
1897	67	123		1909	7,536	4,861
1898	941	440		1910	2,967	2,840
1899	1,734	1,884		1911	4,379	5,086
1900	5,637	6,775		1912	3,016	2,832
1901	19,768	25,228		1913	1,268	1,492
1902	31,130	32,602		1914	1,382	1,483
1903	38,669	35,339				

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 279.



BRILLIANT CENTRAL GOLD MINE, CHARTERS TOWERS.
During 1908 treated 14,251 tons, for a return valued at £39,624; dividends, £5,000.



THE WINDING ENGINE.

dead work followed until the company met the footwall lode of the Brilliant at a depth of 1,566 feet in 1898. When this pinched out the shaft was continued to 2,000 feet without meeting payable quartz. Profits dropped rapidly from about 1905 and in 1912 the mine was handed over to tributors who worked it for another three years.

Also in Queenton was the Kelly's Queen Block which was most productive on the Victory and Brilliant reefs. The Number One vertical shaft was sunk in the south-east corner on to the Victory which was followed to about 650 feet. The Number Two shaft was sunk to cut the St. George reef, but was not very successful and the bulk of the mine's output

Kelly's Queen Block - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1892	574	2,605		1904	378	303
1893	3,024	6,094		1905	639	679
1894	3,862	8,090		1906	4,886	4,522
1895	1,612	3,003		1907	7,284	5,707
1896	532	892		1908	3,130	1,962
1897	1,641	2,263		1909	2,059	1,452
1898	5,043	19,259		1910	1,061	1,031
1900	21,087	23,666		1911	2,175	3,317
1901	10,683	11,487		1912	2,588	2,212
1902	2,909	2,846		1913	1,155	664
1903	979	643				

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 280.

came from the Brilliant reef which was worked from about 1897 until 1913.

The Band of Hope, another Queenton mine, was located on ground taken up in 1874 as the Numbers on the Just-in-Time. About 12,000 ounces of gold were won before the Band of Hope Company was floated in 1882. The following year a vertical shaft was sunk which intersected the Victory reef at 700 feet, however most of the mine's production eventually came from the Victoria shoot of the Brilliant

reef. Returns fell away around 1905 and the company sank the vertical shaft to 1,500 feet without finding payable ore. The workforce was paid off in 1912.

Band of Hope - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1887-1896	9,472	13,577		1901	9,960	10,818
1897	4,404	6,185		1902	10,637	15,846
1898	7,935	8,164		1903	9,932	14,136
1899	9,616	10,041		1904	4,362	5,035
1900	10,059	12,032		1905	1,531	809

From 1906 to 1912 8,546 tons of ore were raised.

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 283.

The Papuan, Brilliant and Victoria company's mine began, in part, as the Papuan Block claim. After working the Maude St. Leger reef with limited success the ground was abandoned until the Papuan Block Extended Company combined it with additional ground and worked it until 1892. The Number One Shaft cut a poor section of the Victory reef at 475 feet and the Papuan (a branch of the Victory) at 515 feet. In 1892 the company was reconstructed as the Papuan, Brilliant and Victoria GMCNL and work continued on the Papuan reef until 1895 when the Number Two shaft cut the Victoria (Brilliant) reef at 604 feet. This was stoped

Papuan, Brilliant and Victoria - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1887	836	3,046		1898	5,416	6,145
1888	664	586		1899	2,845	2,967
1889	759	2,284		1900	859	694
1890	336	448		1901	1,526	2,712
1891	229	574		1902	507	821
1892	1,373	4,926		1903	1,817	1,915
1893	1,211	3,510		1904	1,805	1,820
1894	1,703	4,908		1905	3,033	1,483
1895	1,612	3,477		1906	970	736
1896	5,333	12,834		1907-14	2,960 tons raised	
1897	6,435	13,205				

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 282.

out to the 900 feet level, but after 1905 the returns dropped off. The company sank to 1,200 feet but without great success. The mine closed in 1919.

The Victoria mine produced exceptionally rich ore, although its tonnage was not as great as the major mines of the field. The main ore shoot was not discovered until 1888 and prior to that date the Victoria GMC underwent several reconstructions to tide it over financial difficulties. When the Victoria ore shoot on the Brilliant lode was intersected by an underlie shaft sunk from a 247 foot vertical shaft at the centre of the lease, the mine was thrown into full production. Only the one lode was

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1887	9	18		1895	8,529	17,226
1888	1,162	1,889		1896	7,235	13,297
1889	1,528	6,669		1897	7,060	12,182
1890	1,489	7,246		1898	7,108	11,236
1891	1,690	8,082		1899	7,182	10,338
1892	5,217	18,384		1900	5,156	7,334
1893	6,864	15,684		1901	2,333	3,370
1894	7,666	13,245		1902	685	768

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 284.

worked but from that, between the years 1888 and 1902, 60,904 tons of ore yielded 146,940 ounces of gold. When the shoot was stoped out the mine closed down and the company ceased all operations in 1904.

Originating as the Southern Numbers of the Just-in-Time, the Victoria and Caledonia Block Mine was worked by the early prospectors to about 150 feet. The first lease was taken out by Tom Kelly who worked the ground as Kelly's Caledonia until 1898 when the Victoria and Caledonia Block was formed. This company worked the Victoria (Brilliant) and the Caledonia reefs until 1908 when it reconstructed as the New Victoria

[illegible]

Victoria and Caledonia Block - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
	Kelly's Caledonia			1902	6,406	12,166
1893-8	....	8,540		1903	7,357	8,225
	Victoria and Caledonia Block			1904	1,047	2,065
1899	2,980	5,408		1905	1,363	1,358
1900	4,992	8,841		1906	...	...
1901	5,044	7,468		1907	780	596

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 284.

and Caledonia Block GMC. The new company raised 6,780 tons of ore before ceasing operations in 1911.

The Victoria and Queen company was formed in 1891 to work the ground on the southern boundary of the Queen Cross lease. Its vertical shaft cut the Victoria and Queen reef at the south-eastern corner of the ground and between 1893 and 1901 worked it through to the northern boundary. After the discovery of the "new" Queen Cross reef in the Queen Cross mine, the company began to prospect along the northern boundary. It was rewarded by the discovery of a small, but very rich, shoot of that reef, which it worked during 1902 and 1903. When it petered out considerable prospecting was carried on but no fresh discoveries made. Tributors

Victoria and Queen - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1893	151	646		1900	387	317
1894	834	1,325		1901	422	550
1895	865	1,374		1902	1,299	2,731
1896	2,430	6,266		1903	8,312	19,913
1897	3,518	6,749		1904	2,139	2,179
1898	6,280	9,961		1905	647	1,157
1899	5,395	6,432				

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 333.

raised 3,051 tons of ore between 1906 and 1910, but the mine closed the following year.

To the east of the Queenton group lay the Golden Gate, the lease of which was first granted in 1882. The Golden Gate GM Company was formed in 1884 and operations began with a vertical shaft followed by an underlie. The Queen reef was met at 160 feet but no payable ore was found until 1888 when a rich shoot was cut. This was mined very profitably for seven years after which the lease was amalgamated with the Sunburst and additional ground was taken up to the north. Despite extensive prospecting, however, the amalgamation was not successful and no production is recorded after 1896.

Golden Gate - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	|	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1888	330	816		1893	2,713	2,941
1889	3,617	7,519		1894	2,029	2,482
1890	4,034	7,278		1895	933	1,148
1891	10,169	16,059		1896	634	581
1892	10,844	17,802				

Source: Reid, The Charters Towers Goldfield, p. 334.

Ninety percent of the gold yield from the Charters Towers field came from mines in or close to the city. There were, however, a few mines scattered around the outlying country and known as "outside" mines. Of these only one, the Stockholm, is included in the top twenty-two producers. The Stockholm was about four miles south-west of Charters Towers and connected by a branch railway to the main rail link. It was first worked in 1873 but changed hands frequently in the years before 1885, at one stage being known as the Comstock Mine. In 1885 the ground was taken over by the Stockholm PC Company which worked it successfully until 1895 when it was let on tribute. It was eventually abandoned but taken up again in 1905 by the Brilliant Company which struck a cross reef more productive than the original Stockholm reef. Productivity peaked in 1910 then fell rapidly. It was let on tribute in 1913.

Stockholm - Production

Year	Ore raised	Gold	Year	Ore raised	Gold
1875-1901	26,463	28,674	1911	10,517	5,452
1902-1906	...	...	1912	7,858	4,945
1907	3,412	1,234	1913	4,062	2,270
1908	9,935	3,725	1914	4,844	3,636
1909	13,600	6,077	1915	1,950	1,755
1910	13,878	6,559	1916	1,148	567

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 342:

As the gold mines declined¹⁵ some investors turned their attention to the growing silver and base metal industry and early in 1907, when metal prices were particularly high, the Ambrose Silver-Copper Mines and Rio Tinto companies were formed to mine in the Stockyard Creek district.¹⁶ Others, however, retained their faith in Charters Towers and, sometimes subsidised by a Legislature which feared the political consequences of the collapse of the state's largest mining centre, continued to search for yet another parallel reef below their exhausted workings. Pfeiffer's Day Dawn Gold Mines and Brilliant Deep Levels received subsidies and in the old Revenge shaft a government financed diamond drill sank over 3,000 feet, only to augment the already considerable list of failures of this machine in Charters Towers.¹⁷ During 1909 an aggregate of 2,000 feet of vertical shaft was sunk without any new discovery,¹⁸ and in 1911 the Rock-

15. The foregoing information about the Charters Towers mines was taken from the *Annual Reports* of the Department of Mines; Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*; and Levingston, *Ore Deposits and Mines of the Charters Towers 1:250,000 Sheet Area*. Gold yield is given in crude ounces.

16. *AR.*, 1907, p. 34.

17. The Venus Battery was sold to the Queensland Government during 1919.

18. *AR.*, 1909, p. 33.

hampton field, dominated by the Mount Morgan mine, replaced Charters Towers as the state's most important field.

As the mines brought up their last shifts water rose in the complex system of underground workings. Although few mines were troubled by heavy ground water, for many years the field had encountered a growing problem with surface water which leached through the levels to accumulate in the deepest workings. The problem intensified as exhausted mines ceased bailing, hastening the demise of the few still open. It also added enormously to the difficulties of tributing parties which, quite unable to finance drainage, were pursued by rising water through consecutive levels until forced to abandon their operations. Hopes were renewed in 1916 when the new Labor government, in fulfillment of its election promise to "revive the mining industry",¹⁹ subsidised the formation of a Drainage Board to finance and co-ordinate the drainage of the central mines. Nevertheless, by 1917, production was only a little higher than in 1872.

By that year there were five crushing mills left on the field, three of which, the Brilliant Block, the Brilliant Extended and the Burdekin, were owned by mining companies. The other two, the Rainbow and the Venus, were engaged in custom crushing. All of them had made fundamental changes to their flow sheets.²⁰ The new milling technique consisted of crushing coarsely and amalgamating to catch the free gold in the ore. The material not caught on the tables was then concentrated, the pyrites being sent to smelters in other parts of the country and the lighter particles being treated with cyanide. Fundamental to the success of this style of milling was a new invention, the Wilfley table.

19. Murphy, *Prelude to Power*, p. 296.

20. See figure 16.

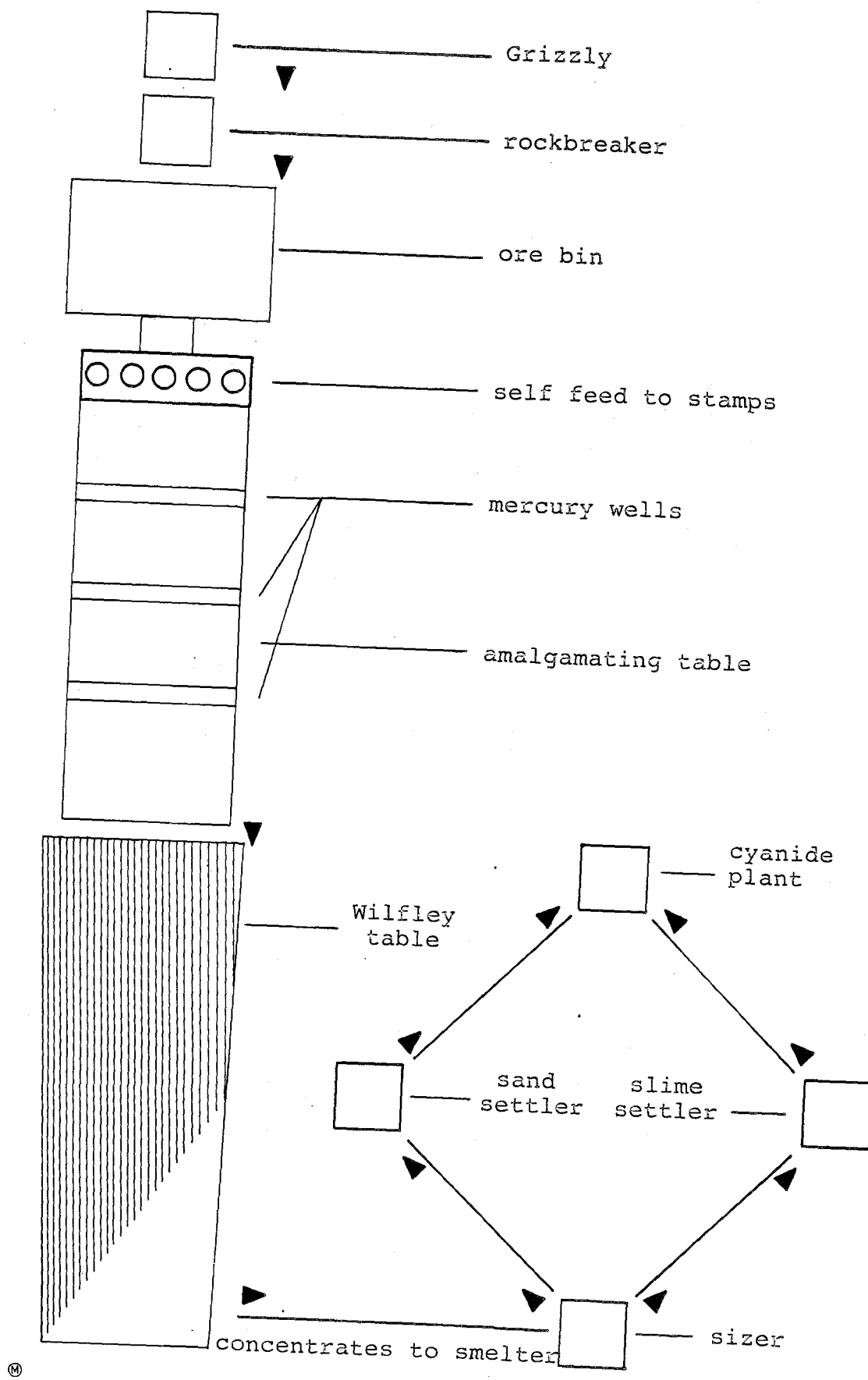


Figure 16: Flowsheet 1917

During the nineteenth century the Charters Towers millers had made few advances in ore dressing. Frue vanners - endless belt concentrators - had been installed at the Burdekin Mill during 1888, but the company's staff had never learned to use them satisfactorily and the mill reverted to the Brown and Stanfields so popular in Charters Towers and so long outmoded on other fields. In the worsening economic climate of the early twentieth century, however, the Wilfley table was readily accepted. It was a percussion table, sixteen feet long and six feet wide, tapering to five feet at the forward end. Progressively shorter parallel wooden riffles were nailed on to its linoleum surface. The grooves so formed were shallow on the feed side of the table deepening towards the other side. The pulp was distributed and washed across the riffles assisted by the percussive jerks of the machine. The heavier particles settled quickly into the shallow grooves, the lighter ones were jerked over the riffles, to settle in the deeper ones. Rows of concentrates thus formed were arranged in order of their specific gravity.²¹

At the Brilliant Extended mill in 1917 the ore was delivered by aerial tramway from the shaft a few hundred yards distant. It was discharged on to a three inch grizzly, an iron grating with bars spaced to allow ore smaller than the required size to fall through to the stamps. The larger pieces went on to a twelve square inch Blake type rock breaker.²² from which it was fed automatically to 1,250lb stamps running through a seven inch drop at a rate of 103 strokes a minute. No amalgamation took place in the mortars, but long plates interspersed with mercury wells were used to catch the free gold in the ore. The remaining pulp was then concentrated

21. See figure 17. and 18.

22. See figure 19.

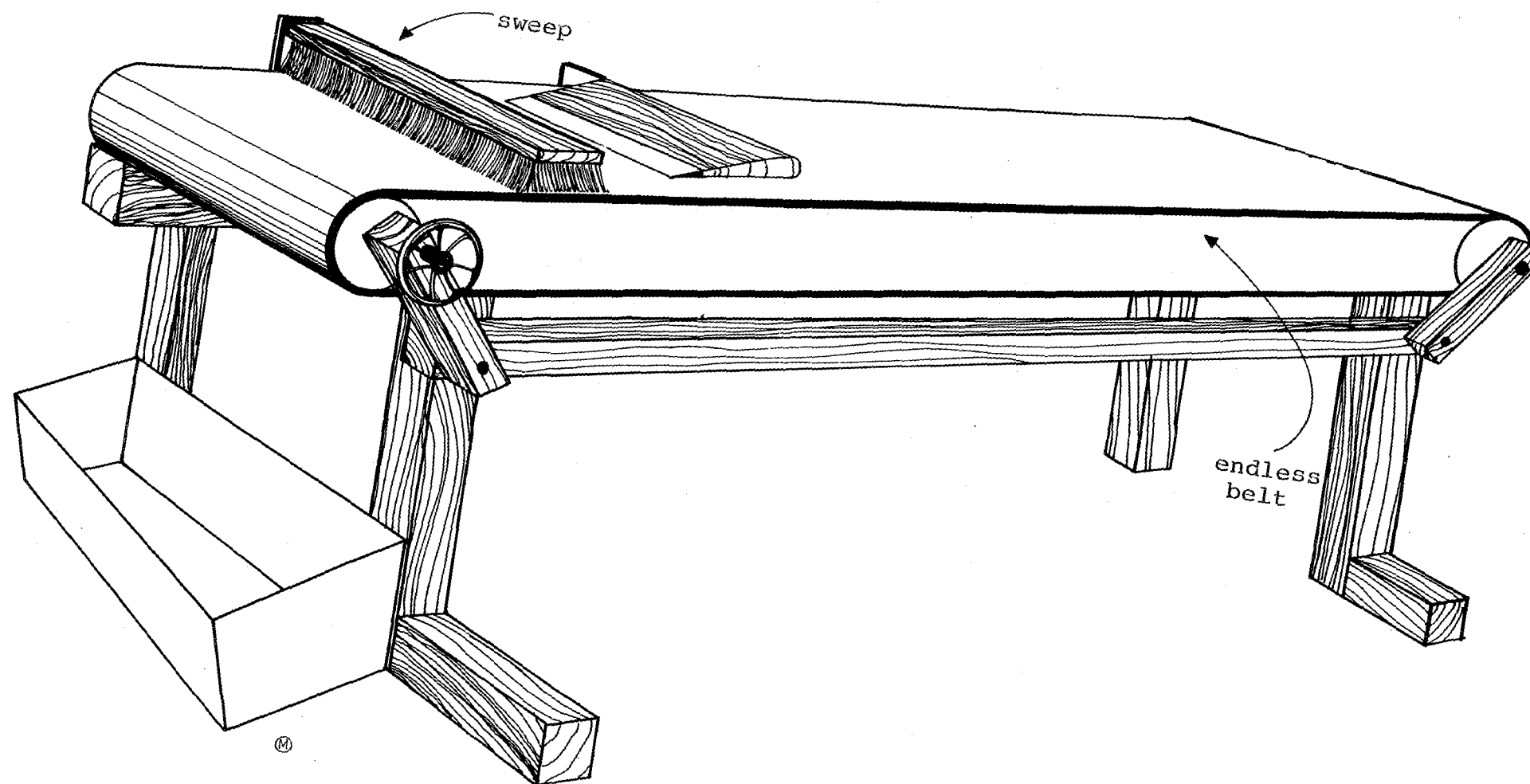


Figure 17: Frue Vanner

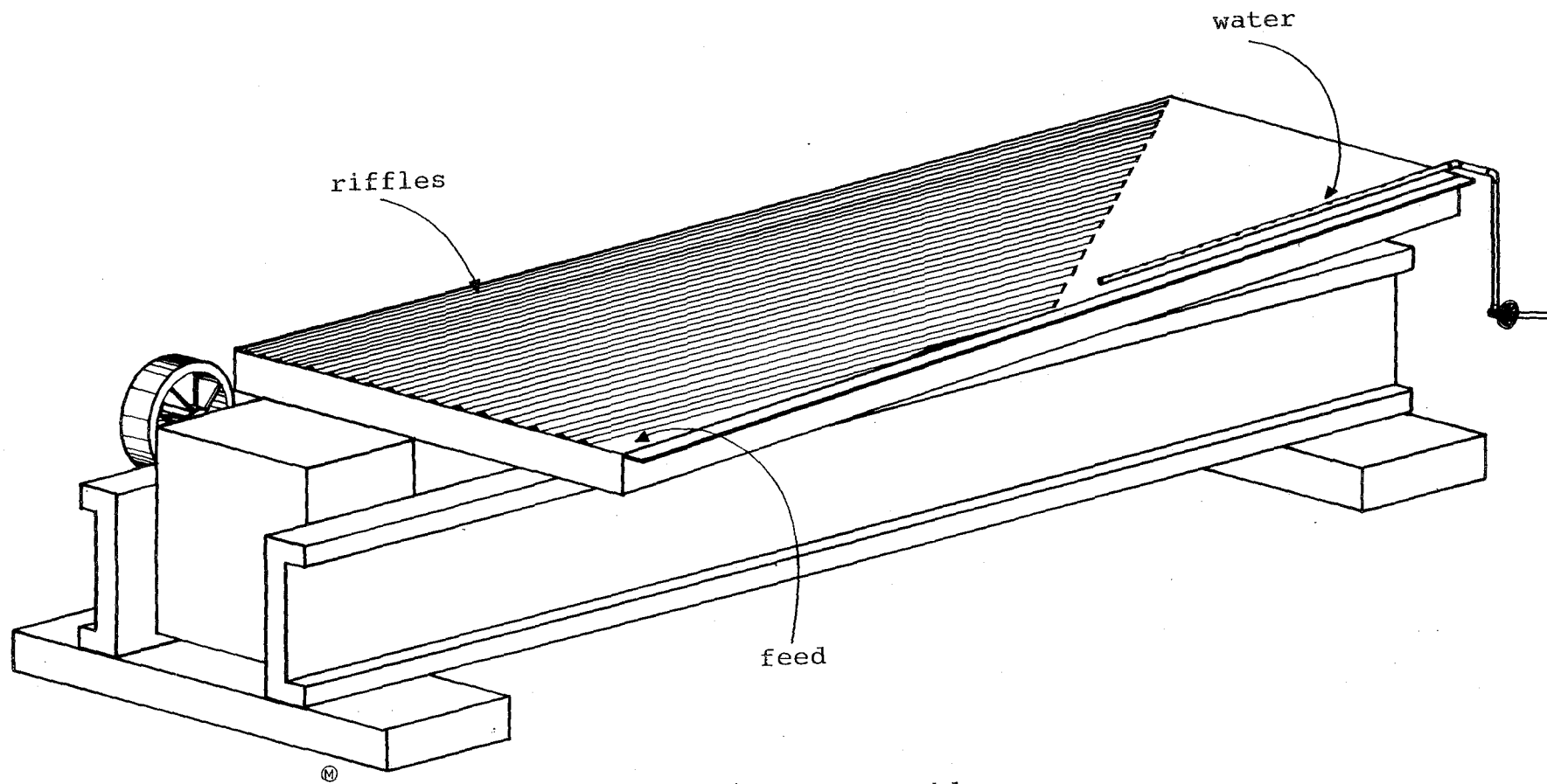


Figure 18: Wilfley Table

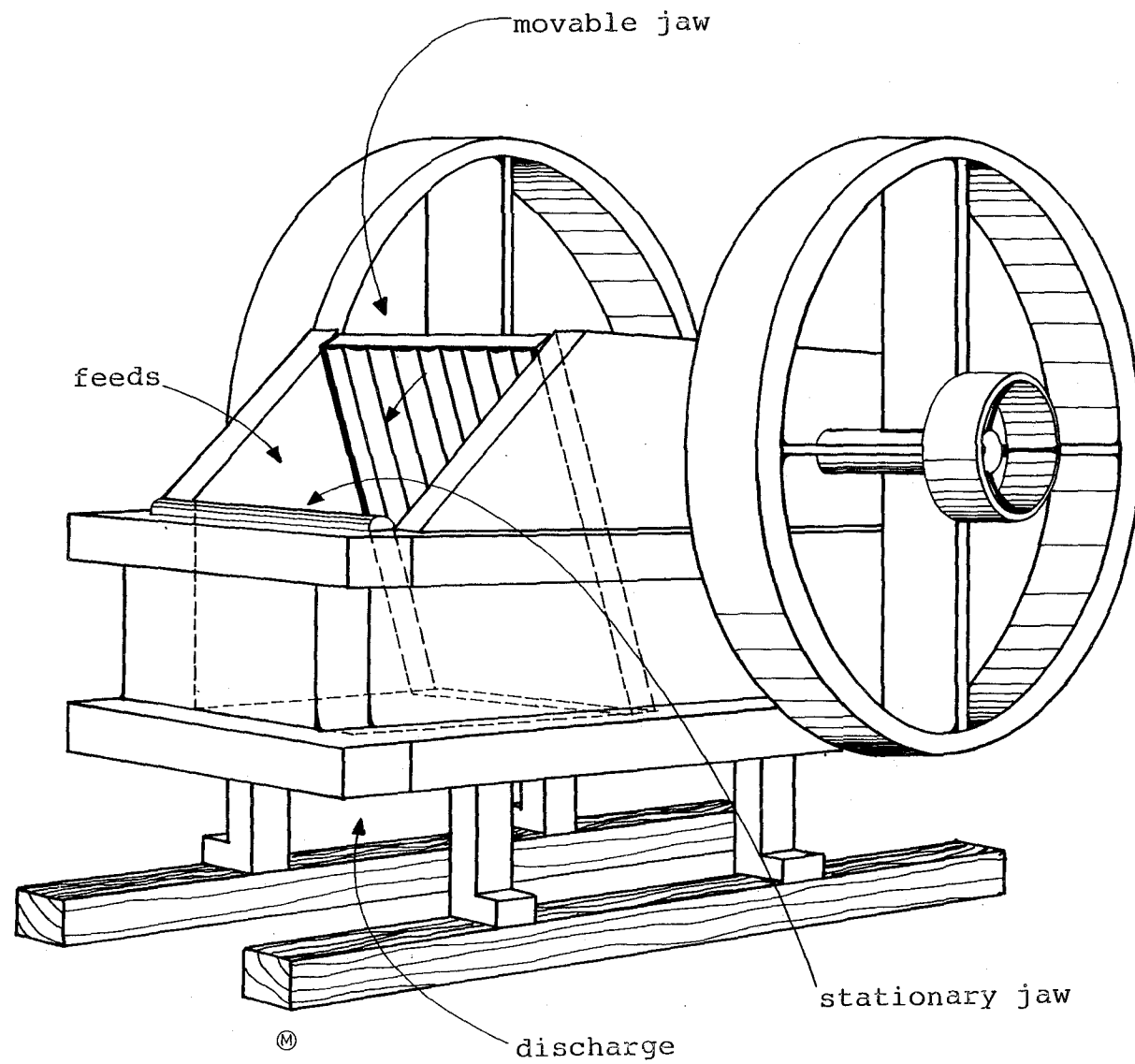
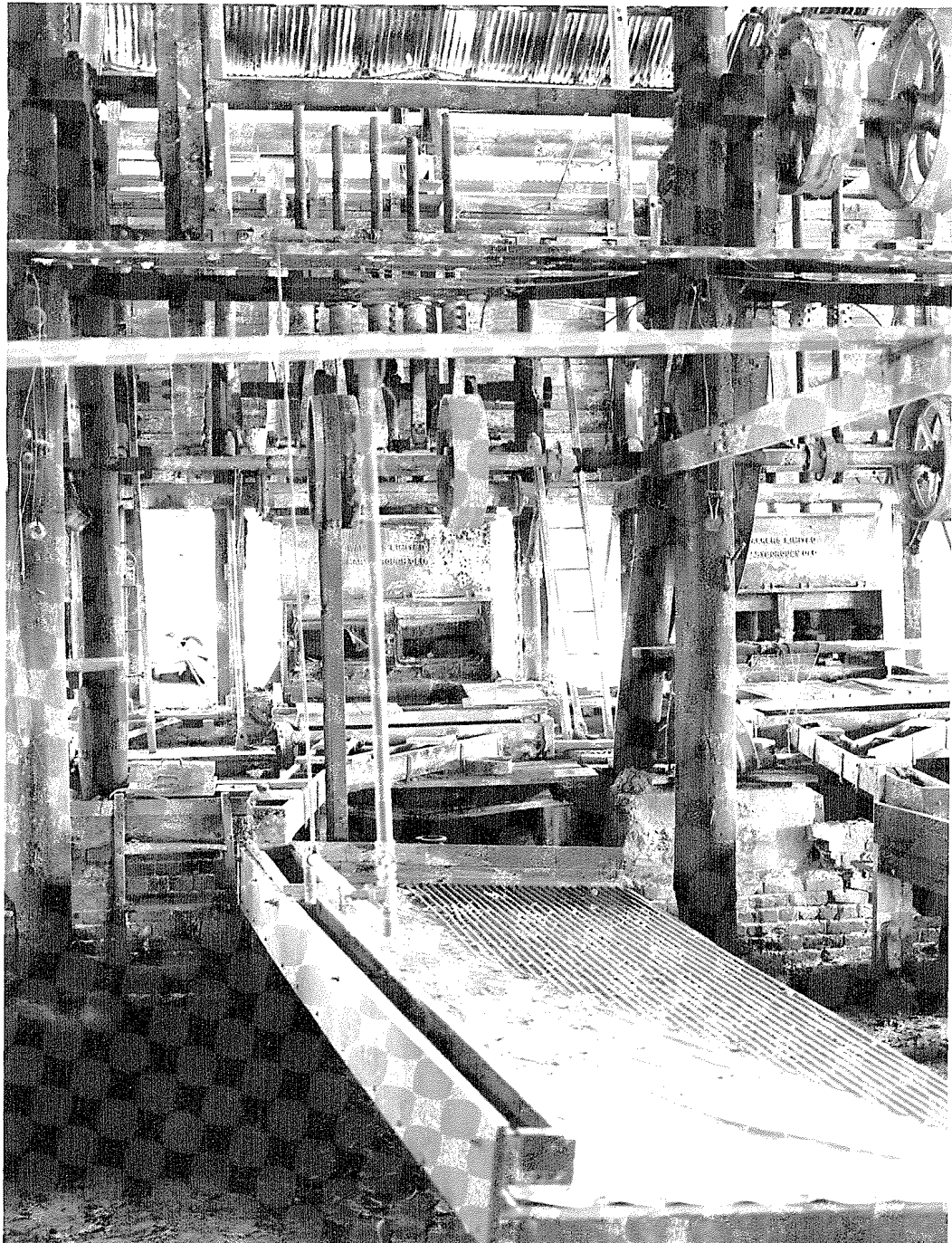


Figure 19: Blake Rock Breaker



General mill: layout with Wilfley table in foreground

Tonnage, Values and Approximate Costs at Different Periods

Year	1895	1905	1910	1915
Tonnage milled	230,672	224,519	168,619	55,066
Values recovered	£784,284	£954,206	£623,891	£243,208
Profits	£153,039	£126,149	£ 53,269	£ 17,132
Value per ton of ore	£3 8s 0d	£4 5s 5d	£3 14s 1d	£4 8s 3d
Profits per ton	13s 3d	11s 8d	6s 5d	6s 3d
Costs per ton	£2 14s 9d	£2 13s 9d	£3 7s 8d	£4 2s 0d

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 66.

on Wilfley tables and the two grades of concentrates produced were sold to local buyers for the smelters. The lead ores of Charters Towers were smelted at the Sulphide Corporation's Cockle Creek works, while the copper-gold ores mined in outside leases late in the life of the field were sold to Charters Towers agents of Queensland Copper Company (Mount Perry) and the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company at Port Kembla.²³ The residues were sized, the sands being deposited and the slimes settling in pits. For cyaniding these were later mixed together in a ratio of two parts sands to one part slimes. The company's milling costs, despite war-time inflation, were 5/7 a ton, and a further 4/4 for each ton of tailings cyanided.²⁴ Pre-war costs at this mill were 4/6 a ton and 3/2 for cyaniding. Although these improvements had probably extended the life of the mine a few extra years, the change in milling practice came too late. The Brilliant Extended Company brought up its last shift late in 1917.

23. C.F.V. Jackson, *Report of the Establishment of State Smelting Works in Queensland* (Brisbane 1909).

24. W.A. MacLeod, "The Charters Towers Goldfield, Queensland", in *The Mining and Engineering Review*, 5 October 1911, pp. 5-12; (MacLeod was the General Manager of the Brilliant Extended); also Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 65.

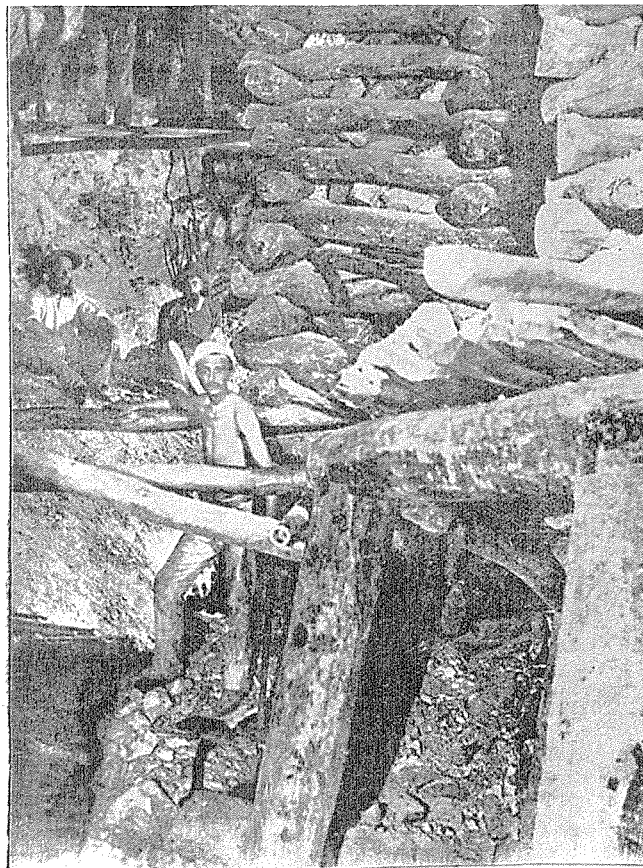
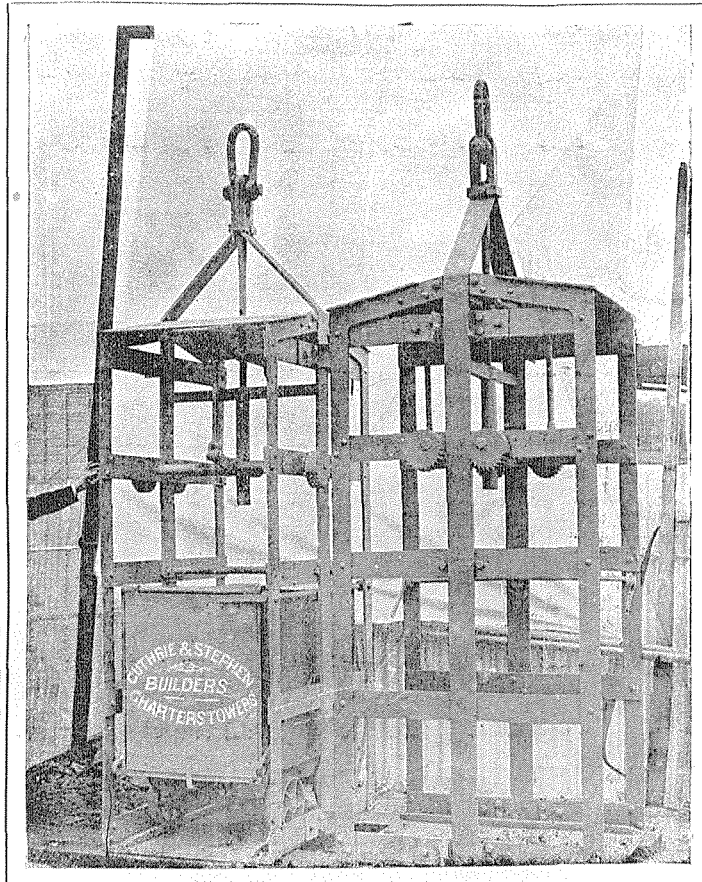
CHAPTER 15. SURVIVING CHARTERS TOWERS

As well as shortening the lives of the mines, emphasis on the speculative aspects of mining investment also contributed to the development of acute operational problems. Profits which were needed to equip and ventilate the workings were disbursed as dividends in an effort to boost the price of shares. As the central mines sank below two thousand feet, their companies found themselves ill-equipped to cope with the problems of deep mining despite the tightening of regulations during the 1890s and the first decade of the new century. The *Mines Regulation Act* of 1889,¹ which became Part XIII of the Principal Act in 1898, brought the smaller mines under the supervision of an inspector for whom a first class ticket of competence was stipulated. In addition he was restrained from holding business interests as a mine owner, land agent, mining engineer, mine valuer or arbitrator. The new Act also required the registration of mine managers and introduced a certificate for them, although it did not insist on their obtaining it.

Safety in the shafts was a constant preoccupation. The Act required that operators of steam engines with twenty-five or more horsepower be certificated and over eighteen years of age, and it prescribed an eight hour day for people in charge of machinery. It further insisted upon additional safety appliances for man cages. Nevertheless the dangers of transport in the shafts increased in proportion to depth. Indeed, since the Act added to the cost of safety cages without insisting on their use, it actually discouraged such devices. Their popularity was further eroded by their tendency to impede ventilation in mines with small diameter shafts: in 1890 there were only three cages on

1. 53 VIC No. 7. This superceded the *Mines Regulation Act*, 1881. See Drew, "Queensland Mining Statutes", pp. 143-4.

A SAFETY CAGE.



THE BRILLIANT—PIGSTYES IN NO. 3 LEVEL

the field, rising to nine by the turn of the century.² In 1901 McLaren noted that in the Brilliant Deep Levels mine the only transport for miners in the 2,556 foot vertical shaft was a bucket, innocent of guides or even a swivel hook.³

Danger in the shafts was increased by incompetent maintenance on some of the winding gear, an extreme example of which resulted in an accident in the Brilliant Central early in 1903 when an ill-adjusted brake on the winding drum allowed a safety cage containing six miners to be dropped down the shaft.⁴ More common were accidents caused by the breaking of steel ropes due to the use of heavy lubricants which did not penetrate their inner fibres,⁵ and during 1902 six accidents, two of them fatal, arose from this source. Despite the Act's establishment of a uniform code of signals for hoisting, they too remained a source of danger in the shafts. In particular the use of the same signal (one knock) to indicate both "stop" and "hoist" caused confusion; three accidents, two fatal, were directly attributable to this practice in 1903.⁶ In the period 1891 to 1910 fifty-five deaths and 219 injuries occurred in the shafts, winzes and passes of the Charters Towers mines. These constituted thirty-three percent of all deaths and injuries as opposed to Queensland metalliferous mines overall where only twenty-eight percent of accidents were so caused.

2. AR., 1890, p. 111; also AR., 1900, p. 162.

3. McLaren, *Queensland Mining and Milling Practice*, p. 8.

4. AR., 1903, p. 132.

5. See for example, AR., 1892, p. 128; 1894, p. 132; 1901, p. 152; 1902, p. 141.

6. AR., 1903, p. 132.

Even more accidents, though fewer deaths, were caused by rock falls which accounted for forty-nine deaths and 236 injuries in the same two decades. Some of these occurred at the working face, but many others were caused by the wide Charters Towers lodes, or by the many fault and joint planes (called "heads" by the miners) which traversed the granite country rock. Accidents occurring at the face were generally considered to be caused by the carelessness of the miner. For instance, when James Little was killed in Kelly's Queen Block in 1901 the Inspector reported that the "sufferer went knowingly and unnecessarily under some ground where a shot had been fired, when a fall occurred and he was crushed to death."⁷ On the other hand, falls from the walls or shafts were believed to be an inevitable part of gold mining. Albert Wilder was "rock drilling in an almost flat stope. A mass of rock fell out of the back of the stope from a greasy head and pinned Wilder to the floor of the stope. He was removed to the hospital and died shortly after admission." He had fractured his spine. While an enquiry was held before the warden it was decided that no blame attached to the accident.⁸

Indeed, despite assurances to the contrary from both wardens and inspectors, underground mining in Charters Towers was a dangerous occupation. Certainly during the two decades to 1910 death and injury figures were consistently higher, in proportion to the number of miners employed, than for the colony in general. The average annual death rate per thousand miners employed on Charters Towers was 2.54 as opposed to 1.55 for Queensland metalliferous mines

7. AR., 1901, p. 139

8. AR., 1902, p. 143.

A Comparative Table of Accidents in Queensland Metalliferous Mines
and in the Charters Towers Gold Mines 1891-1910

Year	Shafts, winzes & passes				Falls of rocks & earth				Explosions of blasting compounds				Machinery				Miscellaneous			
	killed		injured		killed		injured		killed		injured		killed		injured		Killed		injured	
	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.
1891	6	0	20	8	4	1	32	13	2	1	8	3	0	0	4	1	0	0	22	10
1892	5	2	36	19	7	3	31	18	3	3	12	4	1	0	2	0	2	0	23	17
1893	5	3	29	14	4	1	27	10	3	0	11	6	0	0	0	0	3	1	6	6
1894	4	3	31	14	5	1	38	15	4	3	7	5	0	0	9	6	1	0	20	8
1895	8	4	32	26	4	1	30	10	2	2	18	5	0	0	8	1	1	0	17	10
1896	9	8	28	16	9	4	24	14	0	0	9	2	0	0	9	1	0	0	18	7
1897	7	4	14	10	9	5	26	8	0	0	5	2	0	0	11	0	0	0	9	3
1898	4	2	22	9	8	3	34	10	4	3	13	2	2	0	4	0	1	0	13	2
1899	11	2	19	8	6	4	25	3	0	0	8	1	0	0	6	0	1	0	22	4
1900	9	3	27	8	2	1	25	11	3	0	12	4	3	0	2	3	1	0	25	5
1901	10	1	29	7	5	2	30	15	2	0	11	5	0	0	2	2	1	1	22	5
1902	6	4	21	11	6	1	28	10	4	3	8	8	0	0	4	0	0	0	23	6
1903	9	3	22	9	11	5	35	14	7	1	13	7	0	0	15	7	0	0	15	6
1904	9	1	22	10	12	4	32	14	1	1	14	1	0	0	6	6	7	7	15	0
1905	7	2	25	7	11	4	27	12	4	0	12	7	0	0	2	1	1	0	24	5
1906	11	5	23	12	2	2	41	14	6	1	16	2	0	0	4	2	3	1	35	18
1907	1	0	15	5	2	1	27	8	4	2	9	0	0	0	1	1	6	2	31	10
1908	10	4	29	9	17	1	35	11	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	24	4
1909	10	4	17	6	7	3	32	15	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	32	5
1910	5	0	26	11	4	2	33	11	7	1	5	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	52	6
	146	55	487	219	135	49	612	236	62	21	205	64	7	0	93	34	34	15	448	137

Death and injuries as a proportion of miners employed 1891-1910

Year	Miners employed		Killed		Killed per 1000 employed		Killed or injured		Killed or injured per 1000 employed	
	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.	Qld.	C.T.
1891	10510	2800	12	2	1.14	0.71	98	37	9.32	13.21
1892	10323	2154	18	8	1.74	3.71	122	66	11.82	30.64
1893	11421	2139	15	5	1.31	2.34	88	41	7.71	19.17
1894	12049	2315	14	7	1.16	3.02	119	55	9.88	23.76
1895	12019	2950	15	7	1.25	2.37	120	59	9.98	20.00
1896	11527	3275	18	12	1.56	3.66	106	52	9.20	15.88
1897	12576	3021	16	9	1.27	2.98	81	32	6.44	10.59
1898	11245	2514	19	8	1.69	3.18	105	31	9.34	12.33
1899	11951	2417	18	6	1.51	2.48	98	22	8.20	9.10
1900	11804	2230	18	4	1.52	1.79	109	35	9.23	15.70
1901	11622	2400	18	4	1.55	1.67	112	38	9.64	15.83
1902	11046	2535	16	8	1.45	3.16	100	43	9.05	16.96
1903	12715	2730	27	9	2.12	3.30	127	52	9.99	19.05
1904	13541	2948	29	14	2.14	4.75	118	44	8.71	14.93
1905	15581	4288	23	6	1.48	1.40	113	38	7.25	8.86
1906	16273	4452	22	9	1.35	2.02	141	57	8.66	12.80
1907	15416	3026	13	5	0.84	1.65	96	29	6.23	9.58
1908	13759	3059	29	6	2.11	1.96	124	32	9.01	10.46
1909	12050	2770	28	9	2.32	3.25	114	35	9.46	12.64
1910	12312	2009	18	3	1.46	1.49	138	32	11.29	15.93

as a whole. The respective rates for death and injury combined were 15.37 and 9.02. Many of the accidents were ascribed to "the almost incredible recklessness of the unfortunate victims themselves"⁹ and an attempt was made to alert the miners to the dangers of their calling by posting the previous year's accident list in the changing rooms of the bigger mines. The miners, understandably "wantonly destroyed" the lists provided.¹⁰ It would appear that they had no desire for constant reminders of the problems they faced underground: these included not only the risk of accident, but also the threat to their health posed by conditions in many of the mines.

By 1910 the state governments were addressing the problem of miners' health. Queensland appointed a Royal Commission into the Health of Miners¹¹ which reported in 1911. Its general conclusion was that the only special health threat faced by miners was the risk of pthisis:

The general health of the men who were actually at work when examined was exceedingly good. It may safely be said that the general body of working

9. AR., 1892, p. 125

10. AR., 1903, p. 144.

11. Report of the Royal Commission appointed to Inquire into the following matters relating to the Mining Industry, namely:- (1) The Conditions of Work in Queensland Mines in relation to the Health of Miners; (2) The extent to which the said conditions contribute to Pulmonary Diseases amongst Miners, the prevalence of such diseases, and the means which ought to be taken to bring about improvements in such conditions; (3) The expediency of regulating the employment in Mines of persons affected with Tuberculosis, and of excluding such persons from Mines, and the relief to be afforded to persons so excluded; Together with the Minutes of Proceedings, Minutes of Evidence taken before the Commission, and Appendices, (Brisbane 1911).

miners seen would compare favourably in point of physique with any similar class of men in the State. Such observations as could be made on the pulse and respiration rates failed to show any evidently deleterious effects from the working conditions. No evidence pointing to the existence of ankylostomiasis [Hookworm] was obtained, either from direct observation or from medical witnesses. Skin diseases, apparently arising from work in mineral dusts, were met with in a few instances, but did not appear to be common or widespread. Circulatory diseases were rarely encountered. Such few instances of anaemia, marked sallowness, and langour as were noted were invariably found to depend on some ascertainable physical condition. No instance of lead poisoning or other mineral poisoning was met with. The sole direction in which the miners examined appeared as a class to differ from any other class of workmen pursuing an ordinary manual industry consisted in the tendency to special pulmonary disease.... 12

There were, however, problems implicit in drawing conclusions about the health of the miners by examining workmen at the face. In particular, problems involving cross infection between mines and the towns were avoided, and evidence given by local doctors which compared the health of miners and non-miners within the community offered no solution.

Despite improvements to the town's water supply, typhoid was still endemic in Charters Towers in the first decade of the twentieth century. 457 cases were reported between 1901 and 1911 in addition to 200 cases of enteric fever. By the twentieth century a municipal sanitary system was in place. It was operated by contractors on a double pan basis which provided for steam cleaning of the

12. *Ibid.*, p. LXXXII.

Incidence of Typoid and Enteric Fevers in Charters Towers 1901-19

	Year	Men	Women	Children under 16	Total
TYPHOID	1901	4	0	5	9
ENTERIC	1901	3	0	0	3
TYPHOID	1902	10	10	23	43
ENTERIC	1902	3	4	5	12
TYPHOID	1903	52	29	75	156
ENTERIC	1903	24	16	41	81
TYPHOID	1904	4	5	13	22
ENTERIC	1904	7	5	13	25
TYPHOID	1905	11	7	16	34
ENTERIC	1905	10	6	12	28
TYPHOID	1906	8	7	22	37
ENTERIC	1906	7	8	15	30
TYPHOID	1907	6	2	9	17
ENTERIC	1907	0	0	2	2
TYPHOID	1908	14	6	10	30
ENTERIC	1908	1	0	0	1
TYPHOID	1909	18	9	30	57
ENTERIC	1909	4	3	2	9
TYPHOID	1910	7	1	13	21
ENTERIC	1910	0	1	5	6
TYPHOID	1911	14	9	8	31
ENTERIC	1911	1	1	1	3
TOTAL		208	129	320	657

Source: Charters Towers Municipal Council, Registers of Notifiable Diseases: 11CHA/19, QSA.

emptied pans. However, not every householder on the field was serviced and each outbreak of typhoid was accompanied by warnings from the Councils about the dangers of burying nightsoil on domestic premises. Further, the Joint Health Committee occasionally received complaints that contractors were emptying pans over the King Street and Boundary Street

bridges instead of taking them to the manure depot.¹³ Nevertheless, evidence given to the 1911 Commission suggests that the miners themselves may well have contributed to the extent of such epidemics.

Sixteen Charters Towers mines, employing from 555 to ten men, were inspected. The largest of these, the Brilliant Extended which had 127 men above and 428 below ground, had a total of thirteen "conveniences", whose pans measured thirteen inches by thirteen inches. Since they were emptied by the Council's sanitation contractor only once a week, it is understandable that not all passed inspection. On the surface there were seven earth closets, only five of which were provided with sawdust and ashes for deodorizing, situated some thirty yards from the change rooms. Underground there were six galvanised iron pans placed up to eighteen inches below the planks which formed their seats. They were sited in the dead ends of the levels where no provision for deodorants was considered necessary. In the crib areas there were wooden boxes for food scraps; these were periodically burned. However the inspectors reported that the boxes were apparently not used by the men since the floors were littered with bread. Change houses were described as clean, though only three showers were provided.

The great Mills' Day Dawn United mine possessed only three toilets above and five below ground. Those in the dead-ends and worked-out cross-cuts consisted only of a pan with a plank to stand on. The pansteads and seats of

13. Charters Towers Municipal Council, Minute Book of the Joint Health Committee, 1901-16, 11CHA/17, QSA., 23 April 1902, 2 March 1903, 1 December 1904, 2 February 1906.

the surface earth closets and the ground surrounding the underground pans were fouled. The mine also had one urinal which consisted of an enamel basin leading through an open channel to the street. Its two change houses contained five showers each. Both these and the crib areas were judged by the commissioners to be dirty. The New Queen Cross, the Bonnie Dundee, Marhsall's Queen, the Day Dawn PC and the Band of Hope had no sanitary conveniences underground. Above ground the Bonnie Dundee and the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham both relied on cesspits. Almost all were described as "bad", "fouled" or "offensive".¹⁴ Similarly no bathing or washing arrangements were provided in the change-houses at the Band of Hope, Bonnie Dundee or Day Dawn Block and Wyndham mines.¹⁵

Given the large numbers of men using mine facilities and the additional problems likely to result from the high temperatures of Charters Towers, it is not surprising that the Commissioners were somewhat dismayed by their discoveries and reported:

This failure to guard against unnecessary fouling in usage, together with the negligence and apathy towards ordinary cleanliness which evidently characterise their users in most cases, is responsible for the bad sanitary condition in which these conveniences were frequently found. Evidence of wanton and deliberate filthiness was met with in some instances, the ground about the privy being used for defaecation, although the convenience itself was in a reasonably clean condition. Deodorants are not infrequently provided, but are seldom applied regularly by those using the conveniences.... Although no direct evidence of

14. The Royal Commission into the Health of Miners, pp. 340-344.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

definite ill-health arising from defective methods of dealing with excreta was obtained during our inquiry, we are of the opinion that material improvement in the prevailing conditions is both justifiable and necessary. A certain amount of organic pollution of the surrounding air is inevitable from a badly-kept privy in a closed-in space, and this pollution may, by reaching the main air currents, be conveyed into the working places, thereby adding further to the organic pollution of the mine air. Further, a badly constructed or filthily-kept privy is liable to pollute the persons or clothing of those using it, and the presence of a typhoid carrier amongst these may result in infection of others. Men are deterred from using such a place, the result being that parts of the workings are fouled with excreta. The provision of adequately and easily reached privy accommodation on each level in mines over 100ft. in depth is, we consider, a necessary safeguard against communicable disease. 16

Apart from typhoid and enteric fevers, the miners suffered from few communicable diseases, though their children were occasionally smitten by an epidemic of diphtheria. This was particularly prevalent in 1910 and 1911 when, respectively, sixty-five and fifty-five cases were reported.

Incidence of Diphtheria in Charters Towers 1901-1911

Year	Men	Women	Children under 16	Total
1901	0	0	0	0
1902	0	1	2	3
1903	4	2	2	8
1904	1	3	10	14
1905	0	2	4	6
1906	0	0	12	12
1907	2	0	11	13
1908	0	0	4	4
1909	2	3	14	19
1910	1	2	62	65
1911	3	5	47	55
Total	13	18	168	199

Source: Charters Towers Municipal Council, Registers of Notifiable Diseases: 11CHA/19, QSA.

Despite one reported case of Bubonic Plague in 1900, two cases of leprosy in 1907 and a suspected smallpox sufferer during 1913, the field was largely spared the most feared contagions of the period. The Joint Health

Other notifiable diseases (excluding chest complaints)

Disease	Year	Men	Women	Children	Total
Scarlet fever	1901	0	2	1	3
	1902	0	0	2	2
	1903	0	0	0	0
	1904	0	5	7	12
	1905	0	0	0	0
	1906	0	0	0	0
	1907	0	0	1	1
	1908	0	0	4	4
	1909-11	0	0	0	0
Scarlatina	1901	0	0	1	1
	1902	0	0	1	1
	1903	0	0	0	0
	1904	0	1	20	21
	1905-11	0	0	0	0
Erysipelas	1901	0	0	0	0
	1902	0	0	1	1
	1903	0	1	0	1
	1904	0	0	0	0
	1905	1	1	0	2
	1906	0	0	2	2
	1907	1	0	2	3
	1908	1	0	0	1
	1909	0	0	0	0
	1910	1	1	1	3
	1911	0	2	0	2
Pueperal fever	1901	0	1	0	1
	1902	0	1	0	1
	1903-4	0	0	0	0
	1905	0	1	0	1
	1906	0	1	0	1
	1907-10	0	0	0	0
	1911	0	1	0	1

Source: *Charters Towers Municipal Council, Registers of Notifiable Diseases, 11CHA/19, QSA:*

Committee of the Shire and Municipal Councils, formed in response to the Public Health Act of 1900, monitored infections and financed the fumigation by the local Ambulance

Brigade, of the homes of patients and the burning of the bedding of those who died from communicable diseases. It also responded quickly to the leprosy and smallpox reports by setting up a "tent hospital" in the police paddock and the Children's Hospital Reserve respectively.¹⁷

Increasingly, therefore, community fears focussed on chest complaints and particularly on Miners' Phthisis, and it was this disease that the Royal Commission was set up to investigate. In this the Queensland Government was following a world-wide trend, for mining districts everywhere were becoming aware of the vulnerability of their populations. Following a report by Dr. J.S. Haldane on the health of Cornish miners, the Transvaal Medical Society published a report on Miners' Phthisis in May 1903.¹⁸ In February 1905 the Western Australian Government issued its report of the Royal Commission on the Ventilation and Sanitation of Mines and in October of the same year Dr. Thomas Oliver reported in the British Medical Journal on his investigations into Miners' Phthisis on the Rand. The following year Dr. Walter Summons conducted an inquiry into the disease at Bendigo, publishing his findings during 1907. He revealed that, between 1875 and 1906, 1402 Bendigo quartz miners had died from respiratory diseases as opposed to a mere 272 deaths from mining accidents.¹⁹

17. Charters Towers Municipal Council, Minute Book of the Joint Health Committee, 1901-16. 11CHA/17, QSA., 20 April, 1907, 29 May 1907, 26 June 1907, 27 August 1913.

18. For a discussion of Phthisis on the Rand see Brian Kennedy, *A Tale of Two Mining Cities: Johannesburg and Broken Hill 1885-1925* (Melbourne 1984), Chapter 3.

19. Summons, Walter, *Miners' Phthisis: Report of an Investigation at Bendigo into the Prevalence, Nature, Causes and Prevention of Miners' Phthisis*, (Melbourne 1907), pp. 42-3.

Despite considerable confusion about the terminology of the complaint, doctors generally accepted that Phthisis cases fell into two major categories: non-tuberculous and tuberculous. The former was a non-contagious disease caused by the mechanical action of silica particles on the respiratory system. In its early stages these particles attacked the lining of the bronchi, the destruction of which, in turn, facilitated the penetration of the lung tissue itself. There, their jagged edges caused a low, chronic inflammation which promoted the growth of fibrous tissue to envelop the irritating particles. This tissue was not fed by blood vessels and, indeed, interfered with the working of vessels feeding the host tissue, and therefore with the respiratory process. As fresh dust was absorbed more fibrous tissue was formed and small areas of the lung were separated off and ceased to function.

The onset of the disease was insidious; only after irremediable damage had been done did definite symptoms present themselves. The early signs were frequently recurring coughs and mild attacks of bronchitis in men whose general health appeared to be good. This situation could last for some years before the miner began to notice that he was short of breath. The breathlessness increased until, even when resting, the sufferer wheezed and the slightest exertion caused stridor and hurried breathing. By this stage the miner had been forced to leave work and, indeed, was incapable of any physical labour. However, when deaths occurred they were normally due to lung infections, particularly by tuberculosis, which the fibrous organs were no longer able to combat.²⁰

20. See J.E. Paterson, *Industrial Health* (New Jersey 1977), p. 64; also Douglas W. Piper (ed.), *Medicine for the Paramedical Professions* (Sydney 1970), p. 66. For contemporary reports of phthisis see the reports of Doctors E. Hirschfeld, J.B. McLean, A.J. Turner, G. Knowles, C.C.B. Tyrie, W.J. Fearnley, J.A. Forrest, R.B.

The miners showed some ambivalence about reporting symptoms of phthisis. The current debate on the subject gave rise to considerable fear of the disease which produced, on the one hand, a degree of hypochondria. The Commissioners noted:

In numerous instances where men stated that they suffered frequently from colds these proved on further inquiry to be slight coryzal colds in the head not affecting the chest at all. In one instance where shortness of breath on exertion was stated to have been noticed for some months past, it turned out to occur only after rapidly climbing 180 feet of ladders. 21

On the other hand, the men often concealed symptoms for fear of losing their livelihoods. This tendency was also noted by the Commissioners who reported that "the men were not disposed to assist the work of the Commission in this respect, and, despite every effort by means of advertisements, personal appeals to the men, the endeavour of the secretaries of unions, and otherwise, only 171 men presented themselves in all centres visited."²² Seventy-seven of these came from Croydon.

Clearly by this time doctors were able to recognise suspected phthisis in its early stages; provided the miner was

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20. cont. Huxtable, W.R. Kelly, L. Redmond, W.W. Stevens, R. Moni, A.C. Zeitz, J. Ward, A. Stewart, L.E. Row, J.L. Cuppidge, L. Morris, L.G.A. MacDonnell, H.F. Perkins, J.C. Craig, J.A. Cameron, A. Dunlop, P. Thornton, W. Wittbrock, V. Poggioli, E.J. Savage, H.L. Garde, P.C. Higgins, S.J. Richards, O. Smithson, T.J. Wallace, T.E. Abbott, A.W.L. St McDowall, R.A. McLeod to the Royal Commission into the Health of Miners; also Summons, *Phthisis*. Informal communication was held with Dr. I. Dickson (23 March 1981), for which the author is grateful.
21. The Royal Commission into the Health of Miners, p. LXXV.
22. *Ibid.*, p. LXXIV.

able to leave his underground work immediately, his prognosis was good. Charters Towers journalist and ex-miner George Goodman told the Commission:

I used to feel-as any man will feel-a bit exhausted after the shift was over. I remember on one particular occasion coming up the ladder, which was a long climb, and I got this tightness in the top of the lung.... Then I got a cold. It was not a very severe one at first, but it rapidly got worse and tackled me in the throat. The local doctor treated me for some time, but he was not satisfied, and then I went to consult Dr. Bacot in Townsville.... Dr. Bacot asked me if I had been mining, and when I told him I had, he said "Don't go mining again", and I said, "I will not".... He told me I was suffering from incipient consumption, but, if I was careful and looked after myself and kept in the open air, he thought I would get better. He fed me on cod liver oil, white of eggs, &c.-the usual diet-and when I came out I practically lived in the open air.... today I am perfectly sound in body. 23

Few miners, however, were as free as Goodman to choose an alternative occupation. Fifty-six year-old Thomas Croft was interviewed at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum to which he had been committed when he was no longer able to support himself. He had been mining in various parts of North Queensland for a quarter of a century. He was interviewed by Dr. Elkington, one of the Commissioners.

581. Where did you feel ill?

In my chest. I had a bit of a dry cough, but took no notice.

582. Have you had much cough?

Sometimes a good bit on the coast.

583. When did you first notice the cough?

Close on two and a half years ago.

584. Did you suffer much from colds before that?
 Not much from colds. I had good health. I noticed something was wrong about four and a half years ago. I got a kind of dry cough. I got a pain in the right side, but I took no notice. I could sleep very fairly. That is as far as I can trace it back.
585. Did you sweat at night?
 Sometimes I sweat too much.
586. Did you cough up blood?
 I have thrown up a lot of blood.
587. Have you been losing weight?
 I should think I had.
588. How much?
 Twelve stone was my working weight, and now I am only 8 stone 6lb.
589. Do you feel as good now as you used to?
 No. I wish I did. I would not stop here if I did. I would like to be out of this. 24

Not only the miners "took no notice" of the dangers from the mine dust. In 1911 E.H.T. Plant was a Member of the Legislative Council in addition to being a mine owner and a director of several of the Charters Towers (and other) mines. He told Commissioner Jackson:

We have no direct evidence that they are affected by the dust.... I have not noticed very much of it. There are occasional cases, but I do not think that lung diseases are much more prevalent amongst miners than among other people, particularly than people working in factories, where they are working together in perhaps not too good an atmosphere...it seems to me that most of those cases have not originated in the mines where they had to knock off work, and that they were men who were predisposed to lung trouble before they ever went into a mine.

When asked whether he thought that miners suffering from tuberculosis should be excluded from the mines and if men so excluded should be provided for, he replied:

I do not think it is necessary to exclude men suffering from fibrosis, as I do not believe there is much risk of infection in that case. I do not think there is much danger of infection in a mine at all where men are not working close to each other. My own opinion is that the fumes of explosives act as disinfectants on the atmosphere to a large extent; but if a man suffering from tuberculosis works in close proximity to a healthy man, I think there is some danger of infection... there are places in every mine where such men could work in safety.... If there were two or three suffering from the same complaint, they could work together.

In reference to compensation he stated:

It is so difficult to prove with absolute certainty that a man has become affected through working in a mine. He might have been working in a mine all his lifetime, and yet he might get the complaint outside the mine altogether. He can go fishing or shooting and catch a severe cold, and that might bring on lung trouble. Many things outside mining are just as likely to induce the disease as mining, and it would hardly be right to victimise the companies for something that did not take place in their mines. 25

Reluctance to acknowledge phthisis combined with the high mobility of the miners and problems of diagnosis to make phthisis statistics dubious. The commissioners tackled the problem by tabulating only deaths from lung diseases and classifying these as "phthisis (all forms)" and "other lung diseases".

Death rates, per 10,000 mines living, from lung diseases

		1881-5	1886-90	1891-5	1896-00	1901-5	1906-10
Ipswich	phthisis	n/a	14.4	9.4	2.3	8.2	-
(coal)	other	n/a	10.8	31.3	6.9	14.3	9.6
Gympie	phthisis	18.9	12.2	18.2	12.8	18.5	9.2
	other	9.4	8.1	22.75	34.6	16.2	21.4
Charters	phthisis	18.9	28.9	25.4	22.3	32.1	39.3
Towers	other	13.6	25.7	13.7	22.3	41	20.6
Croydon	phthisis	n/a	8.2	8.9	11.2	36.6	64.6
	other	n/a	3.4	4.4	8.4	32	18.6

Source: *The Royal Commission into the Health of Mines*, p. LXXXVII

25. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

However the complexity of the problem is demonstrated in the Charters Towers Register of Notifiable Diseases:

Lung Diseases Notified in Charters Towers 1901-1911

Disease	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911
Tuberculosis											
male	0	0	0	4	0	5	6	4	1	6	5
female	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	3	2	2	1
Phthisis											
male	1	8	1	11	11	6	6	8	13	12	7
female	2	1	6	3	4	1	0	2	2	3	1

Source: Charters Towers Municipal Council, Register of Notifiable Diseases 11CHA/19, QSA:

Clearly the numbers of women contracting Phthisis is unexpectedly high. In addition there are several cases listed which are not included. Firstly there is that of James Wasley whose doctor notified the Council in 1904 that he had contracted Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and in 1906 that he was suffering from Phthisis. Evan Davies apparently had Phthisis Pulmonaris in 1905 and Pulmonary Tuberculosis the following year. Harry Gardner followed the same course between 1906 and 1907 while Elizabeth Condon was reported to have Pulmonary Tuberculosis in 1910 but Phthisis later in the same year. It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that the terms "tuberculosis" and "phthisis" were being used interchangeably, not only to refer to different forms of silicosis amongst miners, but also to describe chest complaints in the community in general.

Despite such problems of quantification the Royal Commission was probably justified in reporting that in Charters Towers pulmonary diseases were not yet widespread among the quartz miners but that their incidence was increasing noticeably. Further, it commented:

The conditions of work render it probable that this relatively low prevalence of pulmonary fibrosis will not continue, but that unless efficient means are provided and adopted in respect to stone dust, and, particularly, unless these means receive the definite support of the men employed in the mines, pulmonary fibrosis and its attendant dangers will increase amongst Queensland metalliferous miners, and especially amongst rock-drillers. 26

It might be mentioned in passing that the late introduction of machine drills to the field probably saved a number of miners from contracting the "miners' complaint".

It was, however, undeniable that during the early twentieth century conditions underground deteriorated rapidly. Many of the mines were dry, and blasting operations filled the air with fine, but insoluble particles of the granite country rock. Where possible, firing was carried out just before crib or at the end of a shift to allow some of the dust to settle before the men returned to the area. However in much of the ground it was impossible to fire all holes of a shot at the same time, and as one "dusted" Charters Towers miner explained:

When the shots go off they make the dust rise in dry mines where there is no water. The explosion raises the dust for hundreds of feet, and, if it is a hot mine, the men working there have to breathe harder than they would if they were in a cold place, and the result is that they breathe more dust. Then there is a certain amount of mineral in that dust, and a certain amount of it gets into your lungs. You notice it when you spit up. So long as you can spit it up it is all right. 27

26. *Ibid.*, p. XC1.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

Probably the worst dust problems were caused by the machine drills, particularly when they were used in a rise. In North Queensland, miners called connections sunk downwards between the levels "winzes" and those driven upwards "rises". Rises were greatly favoured since they were much cheaper to cut than winzes because material fell away rather than needing to be manhandled. It was this falling away of material from the drill which constituted such a danger to the miner operating the machine. Two methods of coping with dust in rises were available. Firstly, the miner might provide himself with a "respirator" - a cloth mask, or in its simplest form a sweat-rag - to protect his mouth and nose. However these cost 1/6 to 2/- each and deteriorated quickly as they became clogged with dust and sweat. Further they were uncomfortable to wear - one miner told the commissioners that after a few hours in one his lips felt "parboiled".²⁸ The second possibility was to use water sprays or jets attached to the drills themselves. The use of water to lay the dust was considered effective, but Charters Towers temperatures often turned the water to steam which the miners found more unpleasant than the dust itself.

At the root of the trouble, of course, lay the problem of ventilation. This was the area which suffered most from the short-sightedness of the Charters Towers directorates, which for so long had sunk shafts without consideration for future air circulation. Almost all the ventilation on the field was effected by what were somewhat euphemistically called "natural methods": that is, air entered the mine through a downcast and left through an upcast shaft, with-

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 218 and 228.

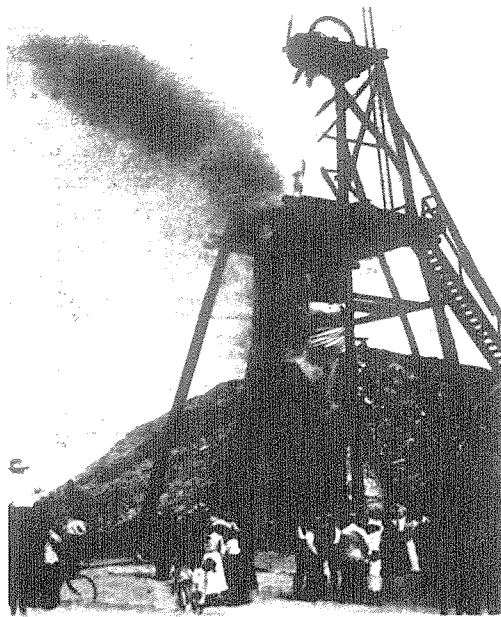
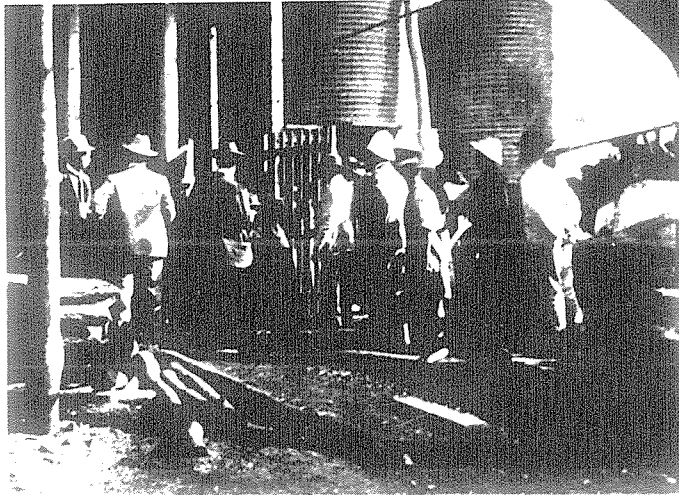
out mechanical assistance.²⁹ At best, due to the high surface temperatures, the system was inefficient; in mines with only one shaft it was impossible. On other fields single shafts were divided into separate compartments to provide an upcast and a downcast, but the size of the Charters Towers shafts often precluded this practice. Indeed, in 1901 Blane commented on "the ridiculously small shafts, which would be quite inadequate for the proper ventilation of the mines even if filled with the best known appliances",³⁰ and as late as 1912, when there were twenty shafts between 1,500 and 3,000 feet deep on the Brilliant and Day Dawn reef systems, their aggregate unimpeded downcast was only 123 square feet.³¹

Clearly the solution lay in connecting the underground workings of adjacent mines to co-ordinate the use of their shafts. However this system gave rise to many problems, one of which was tragically demonstrated during the underground fire which virtually ended the life of the Brilliant PC in October 1904. Carbon monoxide generated by burning mine timbers travelled through the underground connections to kill three miners in the Brilliant Block and another three

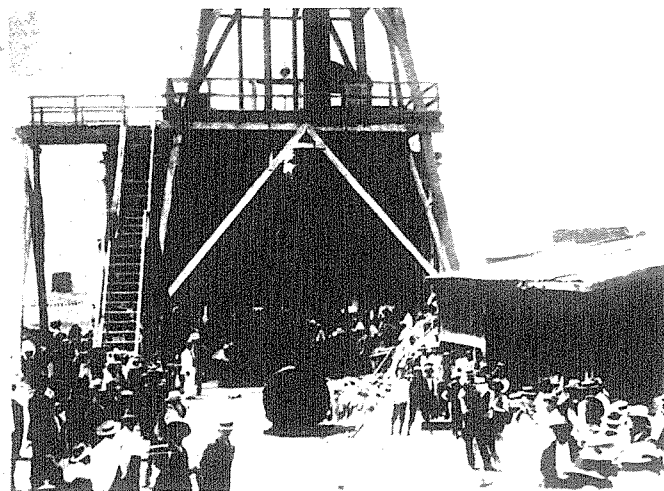
29. A Cappell fan was installed in the Brilliant Extended during 1897, and the Brilliant Deeps experimented briefly with a 4'8" Sirocco fan during 1912.

30. Blane, "Report on the Conditions and Modes of Working on the Goldfields of Queensland", p. 39.

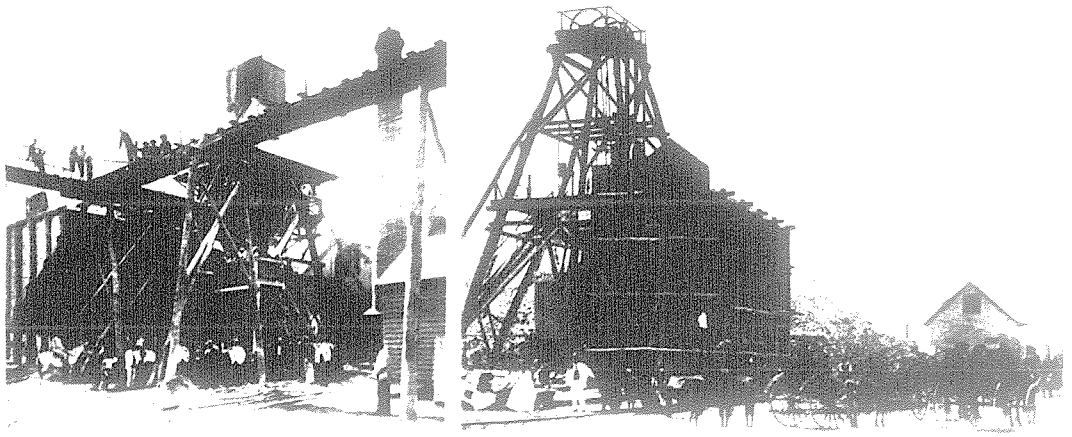
31. *Report of the Board of Inquiry*, p. xv. There were seven downcast shafts with an aggregate superficial area of 340 square feet, and a superficial area unimpeded by cages of 123 square feet. The average shaft size was 7' X 7', compared with 12' X 16' or 16' X 16' which was the practice in deep mines in Victoria. Circular shafts of about 18' diameter were in use on the Rand.



NO. 2 VICTORY SHAFT UP WHICH DEADLY FUMES
FOUND THEIR WAY, DRIVING RESIDENTS FROM THE
NEIGHBOURHOOD

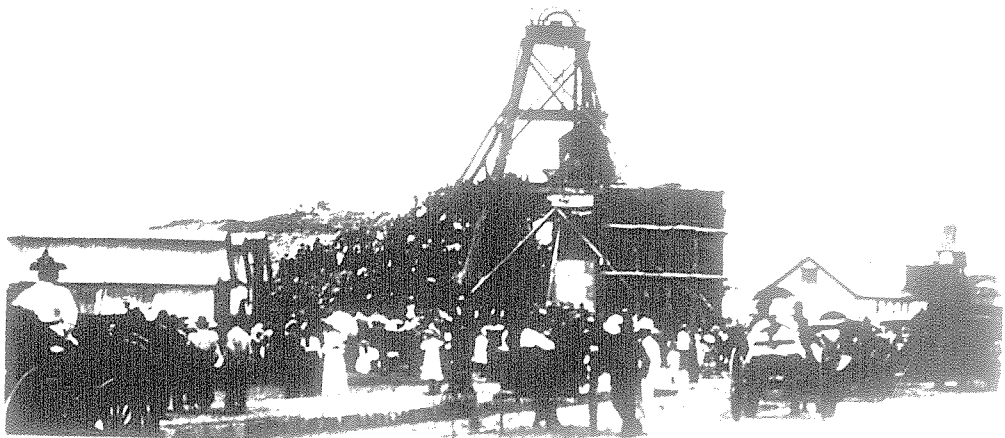


AT THE DRILLING EXTENDED SHAFT THE CROWD ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THE RETURN
OF A SEARCH PARTY

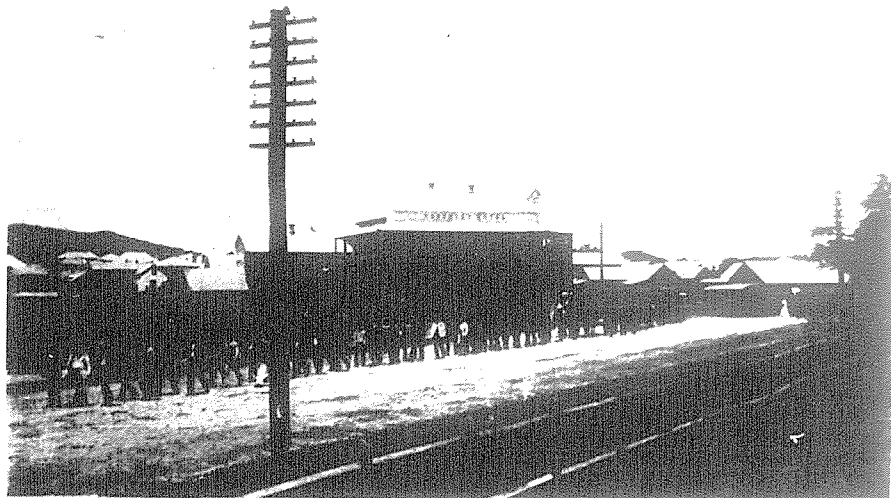


THE BRILLIANT P.C. WHERE THE FIRE ORIGINATED

AT THE BRILLIANT BLOCK CHAFF WHERE THE LIFT WAS



VIEW OF THE BRILLIANT BLOCK CHAFF UP WHICH ALL THE MEN WERE AT THE TIME



FUNERAL OF THE LAST TWO VICTIMS MOUNTAIN AND ELLIOT

REPRODUCED BY THE

in the Mexican, as well as a member of the rescue team.³² Lack of co-operation between the managers of the connected mines was common as each manager naturally wanted his shaft to be used as the downcast. To this end they resorted to a variety of dubious practices such as hanging doors in their levels, some of which led to interference with the ventilation of the neighbouring mines.³³ The respective managers of the Brilliant Extended and the Brilliant Deep Levels took advantage of the 1911 Commission to lay complaints about each other before the public.³⁴

The most serious effects of such disagreements were felt by miners working in the deep levels and the dead ends of these mines. The Mining Inspector recorded temperatures of up to 110 degrees in the Brilliant Extended which, with a vertical shaft of 2,800 feet, was the biggest employer of underground miners on the field. He reported that "the conditions under which some of these men have to work must

32. AR., 1904, p. 31.

33. AR., 1909, p. 155. See also The Royal Commission into the Health of Miners.

34. Their letters were tabled before the Commissioner but their contents were not published. Oral evidence suggests the nature of their complaints: "The Brilliant Deeps connected with the Brilliant Extended at the Number Two Level at 2,400 feet vertical... They thought it would be good for air you know - circulation. But all the Brilliant Deeps got was the smoke from the Brilliant Extended. There were a big lot of men there and they were firing at anytime at all and it made it nearly impossible for them to work in the Brilliant Mine. So Tim Webb, he sent a couple of men over and they put bags up to stop the circulation.... They knew straight away what he'd done because it had made the Deeps a cooler mine, a good mine to work in; and the manager of the Extended sent the men over and they pulled the bags down. And Tim Webb put up an iron one then - with sheets of iron. He thought that would do the job; and the Extended went and pulled it down again. So it went to court and the Brilliant Deeps won the day. They had to put a brick wall in with a door in it that could be opened either way in case of an accident." ID 96, North Queensland Oral History Collection.

be highly injurious to them", and added that "in most places the air was so heavily charged with dust that it was almost impossible to enter them."³⁵ By 1911 several mines were so hot in places that their men could only work for ten minutes at a time, "cooling off" at the plat in between these periods. In the Brilliant Deeps, where in 1906 150 men worked nearly 3000 feet underground, the only air came through a single shaft of three four foot square compartments and it was commonplace for men to faint at the face³⁶ before 1914 when a government subsidy enabled the cutting of a connection between that mine and the Brilliant Block.³⁷ The heat problem had not escaped the Royal Commission.

The witnesses who were examined by the Commission viewed the matter of high temperature largely from an economic point of view, that it is of enormous importance to the mines in this respect is abundantly evident from the evidence obtained; but, as regards the actual effect on health of temperature, the evidence we have been able to obtain from witnesses and authorities is not at all conclusive. Practically all leading authorities agree, however, that a high temperature in still saturated air produces a definite and rapidly increasing effect upon the working powers of those exposed to it after it reaches from 78 degrees to 80 degrees Fahr. Dr. Haldane (Royal Commission on Health of Cornish Miners) considers that when the wet-bulb temperature exceeds about 85 degrees Fahr. continuous hard work in a mine appears to be hardly possible: "When the wet-bulb temperature reaches 100 degrees Fahr. the extreme limit of temperature is reached in which a man might conceivably remain for a short time without being disabled." The effects of high temperatures vary with the relative humidity of the air, its condition

35. *Ibid.*, p. 156; 1910, p. 39.

36. *AR.*, 1906, p. 159.

37. *AR.*, 1914, p. 38.

of movement, its purity, and probably with the personal idiosyncracies of the individuals exposed to them, but our own observations lead us to agree with the general principals above quoted. 38

Thomas Munro, an ex-miner interviewed at the Dunwich Asylum explained to the investigators how he had coped. He said "There is a good lot in the way a man doctors himself when he is working amongst dust and dynamite.... Some might think it was not right, but this is what I did. I would get a crust of bread or a piece of boiled fat bacon and eat it. Some people drink a pint of beer, but that will not wash the dirt out of your throat at all. I boil the bacon fat and eat it, and it takes away the dirt out of my throat. You want to put something rough in your throat to remove the dust before you have a drink. And then afterwards, if you feel inclined, you can have your pint of beer. But I know some people who would sooner have the pint of beer first."³⁹

38. Royal Commission into the Health of Miners, p. XCIX.

39. Royal Commission into the Health of Miners, p. 15.

CHAPTER 16. THE END OF A DREAM

In August 1900 Andrew Dawson resigned as leader of the Queensland labor party for reasons of health. The poverty of his childhood combined with his early exposure to the dust of the mines and amalgamation works to leave him with a weakened chest, and he suffered increasingly from colds and assorted respiratory complaints. Further undermining his health was his love of convivial company and alcohol. Croydon's Billy Browne took over his positions as leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and President of the Central Political Executive and though the alliance versus independence debate continued to be central to the ideological differences within the Party it was, for a time, overshadowed by the issues of the Boer War and Federation.¹

The Boer War had broken out on 11 October 1899, seven weeks before Dawson's short-lived ministry. The government of the time, under J.R. Dickson, was the first of the Australian administrations to offer support to the Colonial Office. This offer was re-endorsed by Dawson's successor, Robert Philp, and seven contingents left Queensland in the eighteen months prior to federation.² The labour movement had no clear policy on the issue, though considerable support for the Boer cause came from within its ranks, notably from William Holman and Billy Hughes in New South Wales and from Andrew Dawson in Queensland. From the outset Dawson announced to the Legislative Assembly his disapproval "of the action of the government in making an offer of troops to serve with Her Majesty's army in South Africa, and thus committing the colony to an indefinite

1. Murphy, "Queensland", pp. 165-6.

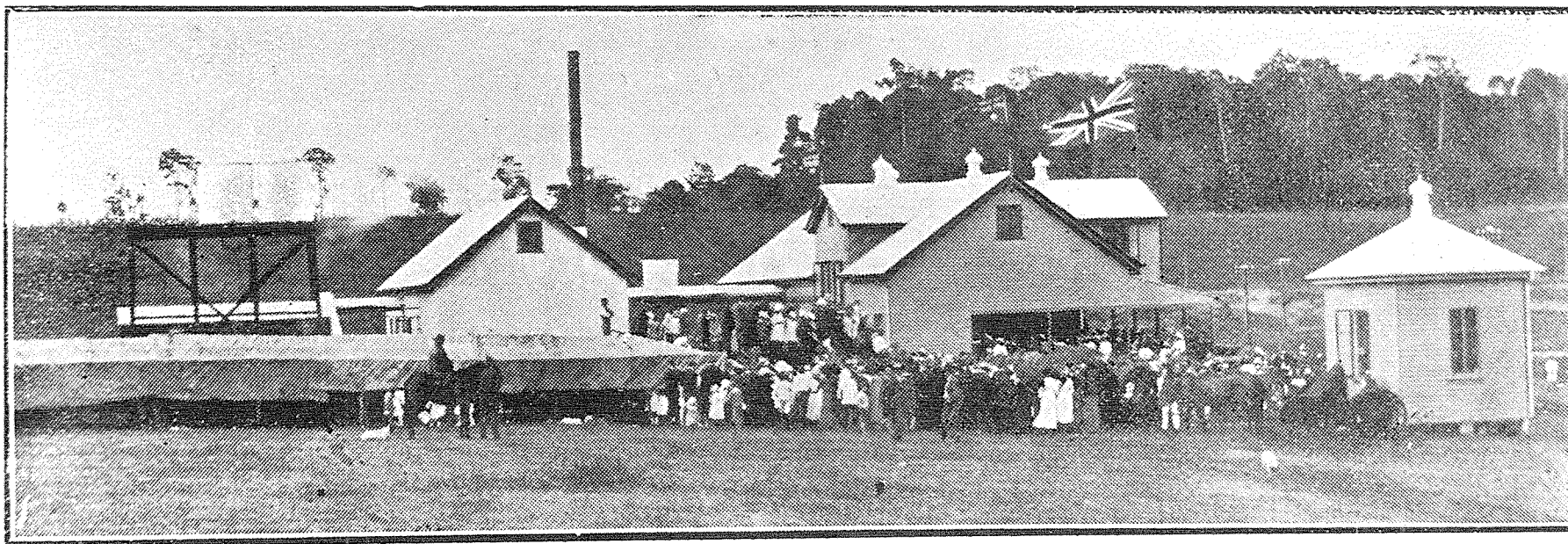
2. For details of Charters Towers' involvement with the Boer War see Joan Neal, Charters Towers and the Boer War, B.A. Hons. Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland 1980. The following brief discussion of the war is based on this thesis.

and practically unlimited expenditure without the sanction of parliament."³ This was not a popular stand in Charters Towers.

While the city's allegiance was undoubtedly to the labour movement and its sympathies were, presumably, with the "underdog", as Neal has shown, other factors decided its attitude to the war. Probably the most important of these was the miners' perception of a community of interest with the "Uitlanders" over whose rights to citizenship and the franchise the war was ostensibly being fought. Throughout the nineteenth century the miners, in a sense, comprised an international community which followed the gold from Victoria and New South Wales to New Zealand, Queensland, New Guinea, Western Australia or South Africa - wherever the trail of discoveries might lead. Wherever they might find themselves their political obsessions remained the same - and high among these was the demand for democratic rights which had exploded at Eureka half a century earlier. Despite the increasing permanence of the Charters Towers population, the miners were frequently of British birth and some had themselves lived and worked for a time as Uitlanders on the goldfields of South Africa. Therefore the Boer War became a major issue on the field - an issue joyously fanned by the local press which was, undoubtedly, delighted to discover such rare support for a conservative cause.

The labour movement's journal the *Eagle*, maintained a colourful stream of invective about the war throughout the period. It put forward the, probably justifiable, view that the war was not about the rights of British miners in

3. QPD., LXXXII, October 1899, p. 347; *Ibid.*, p. 4.



Farewelling the Troops

the Transvaal so much as Imperial control of the country's gold mines; the logic of this argument was marred, however, by a typical resort to anti-semitism to reinforce its message. At the root of the problem, claimed the paper, were the Anglo-Semitic Financiers:

Will some Jingo kindly explain to this paper, what are the British fighting for? We have examined the whole question with a microscope and can see nothing in it but gold and a Jewish nose. 4

It became heated on the matter of reportedly compulsory donations for the Patriotic Fund taken up amongst the miners by their managers, and mocked those community leaders who whipped up the town's enthusiasm for the cause. Into this category fell R.J. Sayers, Fred Johnson, W.J. Paull, Jacob Benjamin and E.H.T. Plant, who chaired the function held to give the first Charters Towers volunteers a "send-off":

If Bullswool Plant were small enough,
a soldier he would be,
He'd hide himself behind a rock,
Or plant behind a tree,
If he could get exemption from
The Bullets of the Boer
He'd saddle up at once and go,
And squash the nasty war. 5

Although Dawson and Dunsford continued to make an occasional statement in the House, the Parliamentary Labor Party in Queensland failed to take strong concerted action against the war. As Billy Browne told Members in July 1900:

We opposed the sending away of the first contingent because it was done in an unconstitutional manner, and when the question went to the vote I, with other members, voted against

4. *Eagle*, 13 January 1900; *Ibid.*, p. 120.

5. *Eagle*, 14 October 1899; *Ibid.*, p. 124.

sending the contingent because I believed it was unnecessary. I did not think that Great Britain required assistance from the colonies, and if the same thing happened again I should give the same vote. But since then the war has developed into a bigger fight, and has become a sort of racial contest between the British and the Dutch in South Africa. I did not make myself - Providence made me - a Britisher, and I stated on a public platform after that my sympathies had gone all with the old country. 6

In Charters Towers Dawson had been forced to beat his retreat some two months earlier when the Relief of Mafeking triggered "unparalleled demonstrations of patriotic fervour"⁷ on the field. On 23 May, the day designated as a public holiday to mark the event, some 12,000 citizens of Charters Towers joined in a parade, bonfire and general drunk. In the course of the evening Dawson made a speech from the balcony of Collins Hotel during which he called for three cheers for the defender of Mafeking, Colonel Baden-Powell.

On the other major debate of the period Dawson was in closer accord with his electors. The issue of federation split the Queensland labour movement into two camps - or perhaps by this period it would be more accurate to suggest that the two factions adopted opposing views. The political (pro-alliance) faction, notably Dawson, Browne, Fisher, Glassey and Seymour supported the bill while the industrial (anti-alliance) faction opposed it. Opposition was generally to the Commonwealth Bill rather than to federation itself, and centred on the complaint that the bill was undemocratic. The proposed senate and its franchise were criticised on several grounds: that any

6. *QPD.*, LXXV, 1900, p. 25; *Ibid.*, p. 138.

7. Neal, Charters Towers and the Boer War, p. 78.

upper house was undesirable, that its powers could lead to the frustration of popular will and that the equal power should not be given to states with smaller populations. There was also opposition to the amendment clause by those who wished to see amendments carried by "mass" referenda and objections to placing the constitution in the hands of the High Court which was seen as an elitist body.⁸

Much of the opposition, however, centred on the south-east of the colony; northern labor men tended to support the bill on regional grounds. The removal of internal tariffs was viewed as a move which would increase markets for the north's primary produce while decreasing the cost of tools and equipment. Thus the bill was seen to favour employment in the north. Perhaps even more important was the belief that the creation of a federal government would decrease the supremacy of Brisbane. The old separationist arguments surfaced again, this time with the added attraction for the mining settlements that federation would introduce uniform immigration laws. Sections of the labour movement had for some time believed that the Queensland sugar lobby was too strong ever to allow the colonial government to expel coloured labour from the canefields. White Australia remained high on the mining fields' list of political priorities. Speaking in Brisbane during August 1899 Dawson was reported as saying that "he tackled the alien question from the point of view of a Northerner whose experience with the coloured party was personal acquaintanceship, and not per medium of hearsay evidence. The alien curse was growing, and, judging the future by the past, Mr. Dawson could not see much hope for the democracy of Queensland fighting by itself and effectually checking the evil. 'It is essentially for this reason, if

8. Scott Bennett (ed.), *Federation* (Melbourne 1975), pp. 7-11.

for no other', he declared - 'that we shall federate in order to bring to our assistance the real power of our democratic brothers in the other colonies. I feel confident that when we are under the Commonwealth, with our own efforts and the tremendous assistance of our fellow-Australians, we shall put a very speedy and a very effective check on the coloured aliens, and whatever wealth there is to be gained, or comfort to be enjoyed, or work to be done, it will be for the white Australia, and not piebald.' " ⁹

While the north was overall strongly in favour of federation, on Charters Towers it was not a clear-cut issue. Possibly because of the political sophistication of the town, lines were already being drawn within the labour movement. The "industrial" wing included the union and its mouthpiece the *Eagle* which firmly opposed the bill. Thus it was that members of the union executive William Hill and Harry Hubbard found themselves working on the Anti-Convention Bill League with local businessman Daking-Smith and doctor Leonard Redmond as well as labour politicians Joe Lesina and George Jackson. Their opposition was the Towers Federation League headed by the liberal Fred Johnson, who organised speaking tours for the conservative premier, Robert Philp, and labour politicians Dawson, Dunsford and, curiously, the fire-eater Charlie McDonald. During the final week of the campaign Lesina spoke at Ravenswood, Sellheim and at the Stock Exchange in Charters Towers while Jackson campaigned at Hughenden. Late in the week Dawson, Dunsford and McDonald arrived to put the other side at Millchester and the Charters Towers School of Arts.¹⁰

9. Andrew Dawson, speech at Brisbane, *Brisbane Courier*, 8 August 1899; cited in Bennett, *Federation*, p. 210.

10. *Eagle*, 5 August 1899 to 2 September 1899.

On Friday 1 September some seven to eight thousand people were reported as attending meetings on Charters Towers. The Federationists held a procession during which a brass band led the public to their meeting at the Theatre Royal, and addressed the intransigent from the balcony of the Occidental Hotel. The Anti-Billites conducted an open-air meeting on the corner of Gill and Church Streets - a meeting which was said to have attracted a crowd of a thousand people and to have lasted from eight o'clock to midnight. Despite the triumphant capture of a federal flag from a contingent of mouth-organ playing boys led by trade unionist John Jenkins, it was clear that the main battle was already lost. The result of the following day's poll was a resounding "yes".¹¹

Of all Australians, Queenslanders were the most hesitant about federation. Indeed, had it been left to those living in the south and central districts of the

Results of the various referenda on federation

Colony	Date	Result
Victoria	3 June 1898	100,520-22,099
Tasmania	3 June 1898	11,797- 2,716
New South Wales	3 June 1898	71,595-66,228
South Australia	4 June 1898	35,800-17,320
South Australia	29 April 1899	65,990-17,053
New South Wales	20 June 1899	107,420-82,741
Victoria	27 July 1899	152,653- 9,805
Tasmania	27 July 1899	13,437- 791
Queensland	2 September 1899	38,488-30,996
Western Australia	31 July 1900	44,800-19,691

Source: Bennett, *Federation*, p. 243.

11. *Ibid.*, 9 September 1899.

Results of Queensland Referendum (excluding envelopes)

Electorate	Yes	NO	Electorate	Yes	No
Albert	464	585	Aubigny	145	900
Balonne	488	155	Barcoo	493	308
Bowen	487	93	Brisbane North	935	712
Brisbane South	855	1554	Bulimba	465	670
Bulloo	169	18	Bundaberg	697	285
Bundamba	250	465	Burke	350	17
Burrum	671	260	Burnett	660	319
Cairns	814	72	Cambooya	245	885
Carnarvon	511	120	Carpentaria	256	23
Charters Tws	2438	832	Clermont	704	325
Cook	471	49	Croydon	767	35
Cunningham	687	623	Dalby	290	299
Drayton & Toowoomba	869	1034	Enoggera	264	613
Fassifern	236	711	Fitzroy	1212	559
Flinders	323	66	Fortitude Villy	847	1544
Gregory	238	35	Gympie	967	525
Herbert	410	43	Ipswich	558	1096
Kennedy	393	172	Leichhardt	310	183
Lockyer	355	844	Logan	231	469
Mackay	1283	296	Maranoa	492	342
Maryborough	1078	418	Mitchell	568	272
Moreton	458	729	Murilla	282	167
Musgrave	581	190	Normanby	228	187
Nundah	268	651	Oxley	303	645
Port Curtis	540	186	Rockhampton	888	1248
Rockhtn North	343	507	Rosewood	116	630
Stanley	177	543	Toombul	453	763
Toowong	573	1059	Townsville	1376	328
Warrego	451	152	Warwick	489	182
Wide Bay	391	358	Wooloongabba	485	920
Woothakata	740	51			

Source: *Eagle*, 9 September 1899.

colony the move would have been rejected. Before the counting of the "envelope votes", which did not, in fact, change the situation, Brisbane voters registered 5,440 votes in favour and 9,531 votes against federation. The South was almost even at 13,239 to 13,296 while the Centre could not have retrieved the situation with its 5,492 for and 3,786 against. The balance was swung by North Queensland which voted 10,157 for and 2,041 against. In Charters Towers there were 2,438 "yes" votes while 832 people chose not to federate. There were also 22 informal and 73 envelope votes which did not materially alter the result.¹²

With federation achieved the parties set about gaining control of the new federal parliament. Queensland was to be represented by six senators and nine MHRs, one for each of the new federal divisions of Brisbane, Moreton, Oxley, Wide Bay, Darling Downs, Capricornia, Maranoa, Kennedy and Herbert. The elections were held in April 1901 and, in Charters Towers, generated extraordinary meetings of up to 4,000 people. It would appear, however, that much of the interest arose out of Dunsford's involvement as co-respondent in the Leysley¹³ divorce case rather than the political issues of the election and, in the event, only 3,435 of the 4,881 electors went to the polls. Eighty-two fewer votes were cast than in the previous state polls in an electorate that had increased by 400.¹⁴

Indeed, on Charters Towers the results were a foregone conclusion. The federal seat of Kennedy was contested by

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Eagle*, 9 March 1901.

14. *Ibid.*, 6 April 1901.

Maurice Barnett who, despite the support of Charters Towers Mayor W.J. Paull and ex-Miners' Union secretary Bill Richards stood little chance against Charlie McDonald.¹⁵ Labor also contested Capricornia (Wallace Nelson), Herbert (F.W. Bamford), Maranoa (James Page), Oxley (Henry Turley MLA) and Wide Bay (Andrew Fisher MLA).¹⁶ Of these only Nelson and Turley failed to win seats.¹⁷ Only three of the sixteen senate candidates were Labor, Andrew Dawson (north), J. (Jim) Stewart (central) and W.G. (Guy) Higgs (south). Opposing them were a Ministerialist team consisting of Jack Hamilton and Alfred Cowley in the north, John Ferguson in central Queensland and Andrew Thynne and Thomas Murray-Prior in the south. The other eight candidates comprised two renegade Laborites, Thomas Glassey and "Plumper" Hoolan, and a group of liberals and independent conservatives who had failed to gain preselection by the Ministerialist Commonwealth Electoral League, James Drake, John Bartholomew, Charles Buzzacott, Seymour and Ahearne and Charters Towers' E.H.T. Plant.

Plant, who had lost preselection to Jack Hamilton, campaigned on a conservative manifesto which laid great emphasis on the importance of increasing the size of the defence forces. He did not attract great support since even the deeply conservative *North Queensland Register* saw Plant as a "Johnny-come-lately" who had demonstrated little interest in politics before becoming a candidate.¹⁸ During the campaign the Labor Party paid him little heed, apparently regarding Thomas Glassey as the greater threat.

15. *Ibid.*, 2 March 1901.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, 20 April 1901.

18. *North Queensland Register*, 11 February 1901.

In the event Andrew Dawson topped the poll across the state. He was followed closely by Guy Higgs with Jim Stewart being elected in fourth place. Third came the liberal James Drake while the remaining seats went to John Ferguson and Thomas Glassey.¹⁹ All of the successful candidates had the advantage of free rail travel across their vast electorate during the campaign. Dawson, Higgs, Stewart and Glassey were Members of the Legislative Assembly while Drake and Ferguson could claim their rail passes as Members of the Legislative Council. Dawson's replacement in the Queensland Parliament was chosen at a by-election on 6 July 1901. Perhaps the Charters Towers voters were wearying of elections; only 2989 of the 5702 registered voters went to the poll to elect John Burrows, another ex-editor of the *Eagle*, over the Democrat candidate W.R. Soileux.²⁰ In Flinders, McDonald was replaced by Peter Airey, a teacher who, like Dunsford and Burrows, was re-elected at the State elections of 1902. Twenty-five Labor members were returned at this Queensland election.²¹

During the federal campaign Dawson had occasionally shown signs of his old brilliance but, increasingly, his electoral oratory was degenerating into mere racist diatribe. Nevertheless, as an ex-premier, he was still the senior Labor man and, when the members met at Parliament House in Melbourne on 7 May to form the Federal Labor Party, it was Andrew Dawson who occupied the Chair.²² He was voted

19. *Eagle*, 20 April 1901.

20. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1901.

21. Murphy, "Queensland", p. 167.

22. Minutes of Meeting of 7 May 1901, in Patrick Weller and Beverly Lloyd (eds.), *Caucus Minutes 1901-1949: Minutes of the Meetings of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party* (Melbourne 1975), Volume 1, p. 43.

to the Chair of the first three Caucus meetings, but on 22 May the position was occupied by J.C. Watson.²³ After this meeting Dawson attended no more caucuses until late September; indeed he was so rarely in the House that in July his fellow Members sent a deputation to request his presence in the Senate.²⁴ Then, in a flurry of activity apparently inspired by the Immigration Bill, he appeared at some six caucus meetings late in 1901 and early the following year before dropping from view for most of the remainder of the term.²⁵

It was perhaps fortunate that he did not have to stand for re-election at the House of Representatives and half-Senate polls of December 1903. These produced a good result for Labor in the North where McDonald was returned for Kennedy with a handsome majority over the liberal party's Fred Johnson. In the Senate Jim Stewart, the only sitting Labor senator up for re-election, was returned and the Party gained two new senators in Thomas Givens and Henry Turley.²⁶ Indeed results were extremely good over the whole state. In the House of Representatives a 56.7 percent Labor vote returned seven members out of the Queensland quota of nine. In the Senate the Party polled 53.5 percent of the total vote to win all seats. It was, as Murphy has written, a "stunning" result.²⁷ Consequently when the Government fell in April 1904, J.C. Watson led the first (minority) federal

23. Minutes of Meeting of 22 May 1901, p. 47.

24. Minutes of Meeting of 24 July 1901, p. 56.

25. Minutes of Meetings held during 1902 and 1903, pp. 72-112.

26. *Worker*, 5 December 1903 and 19 December 1903.

27. Murphy, "Queensland", p. 169.

Labor Government, from 27 April to its collapse on 17 August. It was a measure of Dawson's standing in the Party that, despite his problems, he was Minister for Defence in this Government.

The 1903 election had, however, revealed the shakiness of Party finances, which depended on the one pound registration fee payable by each branch. One of the first tasks of the Queensland Central Executive (QCE), under the "powerful political triumvirate" of Henry Boote, Matt Reid and Alfred Hinchcliffe, "abetted by the faithful if prosaic Seymour and by Bowman",²⁸ was to pay for the 1903 campaign. To this end the QCE meeting of 20 June 1904 resolved to ask each of the Labor senators to contribute fifty pounds to the Executive during each of their terms in office.²⁹ Stewart, Higgs, Turley and Givens responded quickly to the appeal;³⁰ for Dawson such a donation was not possible. From September of that year relations between Dawson and the Executive were acrimonious rather than, as before, merely tense. They aired the matter of his contribution publicly at the stormy Labor-in-Politics Convention of May 1905.³¹

In fact Dawson's ideological position had always been at odds with that of the Queensland machine which he was later to refer to as a "Trades Hall Junta". Under pressure he began to deteriorate rapidly. He was rarely in caucus during 1905³² and little was heard from him in the parliament.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

29. Queensland Central Executive (QCE) of the Labor Party, Minutes 20 June 1904.

30. QCE Minutes for July 1904.

31. Fourth Triennial Labor-in-Politics Convention: Official Record of Proceedings (Brisbane 1905).

32. Federal Caucus Minutes 1905.

His colleagues may have regarded this as something of a blessing since his rare public utterances took the form of jumbled harangues which, regardless of the topic under discussion, always returned to his hatred of the Chinese and, after their victory over the Russians at Mukden in March 1905, the Japanese.³³ Even his vote in divisions became unreliable and, on 19 December 1905, Labor lost an amendment to the Electoral Bill on his vote. About this time the Victorian press, notably the *Age*, began to publicise his drinking bouts, his shabby appearance and his alleged accounts at the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms as well as at bars associated with the Caulfield race track.³⁴ He no longer visited Charters Towers to report on his stewardship; indeed the visits he so frequently made with Dunsford when he was a Member of the colonial legislature, had ceased on his entry into the Senate.

Even so the death, in September 1905, of his old partner and mentor, John Dunsford, must have dealt his already fragile psyche yet another blow. Dunsford, lacking Dawson's brilliance, had gifts of his own. He had, as his obituary noted, "a record of attending the House second to none in Australian politics; he rarely missed a sitting.... He was true and staunch to his political principles".³⁵ With his death the first chink appeared in Charters Towers' Labor armour. On 7 October 1905 the voters allotted the Labor candidate, John Mullan, 1,529 votes - so electing by a majority of 466 votes the Independent W.J. Paull. Paull was a Cornishman, a former mine manager who arrived in

33. See Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 25, 23 August 1905.

34. Deduced from Dawson's campaign speeches.

35. *North Queensland Register*, 23 September 1905.



MR. W. J. PAUL.



MR. D. ROLLESTON.



MR. THOS. MILLS.

Charters Towers in 1882. There he had a most successful career as a mine owner (Mexican PC) and manager (East Mexican); later mining director and managing director and a grazier. He was a member of the Stock Exchange and was on the committees of the School of Arts and the Chamber of Commerce. In 1898 he was elected Mayor and, unusually for Charters Towers, was re-elected in 1901.³⁶ For Paull his successful bid for the Assembly was the peak of a long career of service to and profit from Charters Towers. For the labour movement it was a disaster of the first order. Worse, however, was to come. Storm clouds were gathering rapidly over its favourite son, Andrew Dawson.

With the federal elections in sight, in March 1906, Dawson finally answered the many letters he had received from the QCE on the subject of his contributions to the campaign fund. He wrote a rather indiscreet letter "stating that if he did not contribute his quota before the fight then he would not be a competitor but a helper [in the forthcoming election]." The letter, noted secretary Hinchcliffe, "provoked a lot of discussion, after which it was decided to hold it over for consideration at a further meeting."³⁷ Clearly the Executive considered the possibility of Dawson voluntarily resigning from the Senate and decided to canvass the Federal Party on the matter. In Melbourne fellow Queenslander, the teetotal W.G. Higgs, was detailed to talk to Dawson, but if he had hoped to persuade him to resign he was disappointed. They did, however, manage to arrive at a compromise; the QCE meeting of 30 March 1906

36 See Lees, "The Charters Towers Gold Field", pp. 4 and 19; Green, *Mining History of Charters Towers*, u.p.; also *Northern Miner*, 24 June 1882.

37. QCE Minutes, 7 March 1906.

tabled a letter from Higgs, on behalf of Dawson, offering a donation of £10 in five monthly instalments. The Executive was not placated. "In reply to the letter from Senator Higgs on behalf of Senator Dawson, the Secretary was instructed to state that they appreciated the interest he had taken in the matter of Mr. Dawson, but that it would be much more satisfactory to the Executive if Mr. Dawson made his offer direct."³⁸ It was this meeting which resolved to call nominations for three Senate candidates for the coming half-Senate. The sitting members due for re-election were Dawson and Higgs.

Dawson never replied to the QCE's letter, and in May another emissary, a Member of the House of Representatives named James Page (Maranoa), was asked to call on him to "endeavour to obtain from him a definite answer as to his intentions re coming senate elections."³⁹ No reply came from Melbourne until August when, on the day of the Senate plebiscite, a five pound donation to QCE funds was received from Dawson. Due to the vacancy on the ticket, seventeen nominations were tabled at the meeting. Under the recently reconstructed plebiscite rules, candidates were nominated by the registered branches, and the candidates chosen from these nominations by the members of the QCE. Sitting Senator Higgs' candidature was "unanimously accepted" and the remaining names, including that of sitting Senator Dawson, went to exhaustive ballot. The result gave the two places on the ticket to J.H. Lundager of Mount Morgan and James Griffith of Townsville. Apparently unnerved by its action the Executive decided to hold over its final

38. *Ibid.*, 30 March 1906.

39. QCE Minutes, 31 May 1906.

decision until the next day.⁴⁰ On the morning of 10 August, Kerr and Hinchcliffe wired the three QCE members who had not been at the meeting for their votes. The two replies which were received brought the number to thirteen for Lundager, nine for Griffith and eight for Dawson. Kerr moved to declare Higgs, Lundager and Griffith the candidates but the motion was lost and yet another ballot held. This time Dawson won two votes more than Griffith and the team of Higgs, Lundager and Dawson was announced to the press. The ticket, however, was far from finalised.

Further moves were subsequently set in train to persuade Dawson to withdraw. This time the messenger was Dawson's long-time friend from Charters Towers, Tom Givens. Later varying accounts of the manoeuvres in Melbourne were circulated in the heat of the campaign. Whatever happened, the result was a letter of resignation, written by Givens and signed by Dawson. This, accompanied by letters and telegrams from J.C. Watson and the Federal Party who indicated their endorsement of Dawson's action, were tabled to a QCE meeting on 15 October. The Brisbane machine immediately accepted (unanimously) Dawson's decision and moved to contact northern branches before the press obtained the story. Griffith was selected, though not without opposition, as the substitute candidate.⁴²

The press picked up the news of the resignation without a query, and on 20 October the *North Queensland Register*

40. *Ibid.*, 9 August 1906.

41. *Ibid.*, 10 August 1906.

42. QCE Minutes, 15 October 1906.

expressed its "extreme regret" that "good old Andy Dawson" had been forced by ill-health to retire from the senatorial contest.⁴³ By then, however, Dawson had already dropped his bombshell on the Queensland Labor Party. He telegraphed the QCE of his intention to stand after all. It would appear that Matt Reid, by then President of the QCE, then took matters into his own hands. The Executive was not called, but Dawson was notified that his change of heart was unacceptable. By 27 October the papers were claiming that he was to stand for the Senate as an Independent.⁴⁴ Dawson's telegram announcing the withdrawal of his resignation was not tabled at a QCE meeting until 5 November, by which time there was no pulling back.

Already both Reid and Dawson had communicated with the AWU in Charters Towers. Despite the shock and confusion generated by the quarrel, the union leadership rallied behind the Party line. As early as 29 October AWU secretary W.J. Wellington was stating firmly that since the QCE was elected by representatives of the Queensland AWU branches at the Convention of May 1905, the Executive spoke for the branches. He expressed his surprise at Dawson's decision to run, saying that his health was so bad that "he could not possibly carry through single handed a successful election campaign." There would be, he announced firmly, no Labor votes for Andrew Dawson.⁴⁵ Already, however, Dawson's telegram had been leaked to the press. In it he said that he believed that the Executive's decision was based on a misunderstanding. He reaffirmed his belief in Labor Party policy and announced emotionally that he intended to "seek

43. *North Queensland Register*, 20 October 1906.

44. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1906.

45. *North Queensland Register*, 29 October 1906.

election in the interest of Labor - the work of his life". He concluded that he had "no wish to fight, but must and Will!"⁴⁶

By mid-November, despite a flood of queries and protests from the branches, the QCE had formalised its explanation of the incident.⁴⁷ By this time the executive was under pressure from a worried federal parliamentary party, particularly from Higgs and Givens, to release an official version of the story. The meeting agreed to have the *Worker* print 50,000 leaflets to be distributed throughout the state. Thoroughly alarmed by the direction the matter was taking, George Kerr, the leader of the state Parliamentary Labor Party, attempted to modify the Executive's stand, but Reid, like Dawson, had made up his mind to fight.⁴⁸ The campaign, as a result, was extremely bitter and damaging to the Labor cause. When the votes were counted it was revealed that the Labor Party had won only four seats in the House of Representatives and none of the Senate positions. Certainly not all of the blame for the debacle lies with Andrew Dawson. The controversy surrounding the 1905 Labor-in-Politics Convention had cost votes and had polarised the electorate into "socialist" and "anti-socialist" voters. However, given this polarisation, a split within the Labor ranks could only constitute a disaster both for the Party and for the dissident candidate who tailed the senate field with only 25,000 votes across the state. In the Kennedy Charlie McDonald had again easily beaten Fred Johnson, but though Dawson had polled better there than elsewhere, he was the electorate's fourth choice after Higgs, Lundager and R.J. Sayers, the new northern senator.⁴⁹

46. *Ibid.*

47. QCE Minutes, 15 and 21 November 1906.

48. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1906.

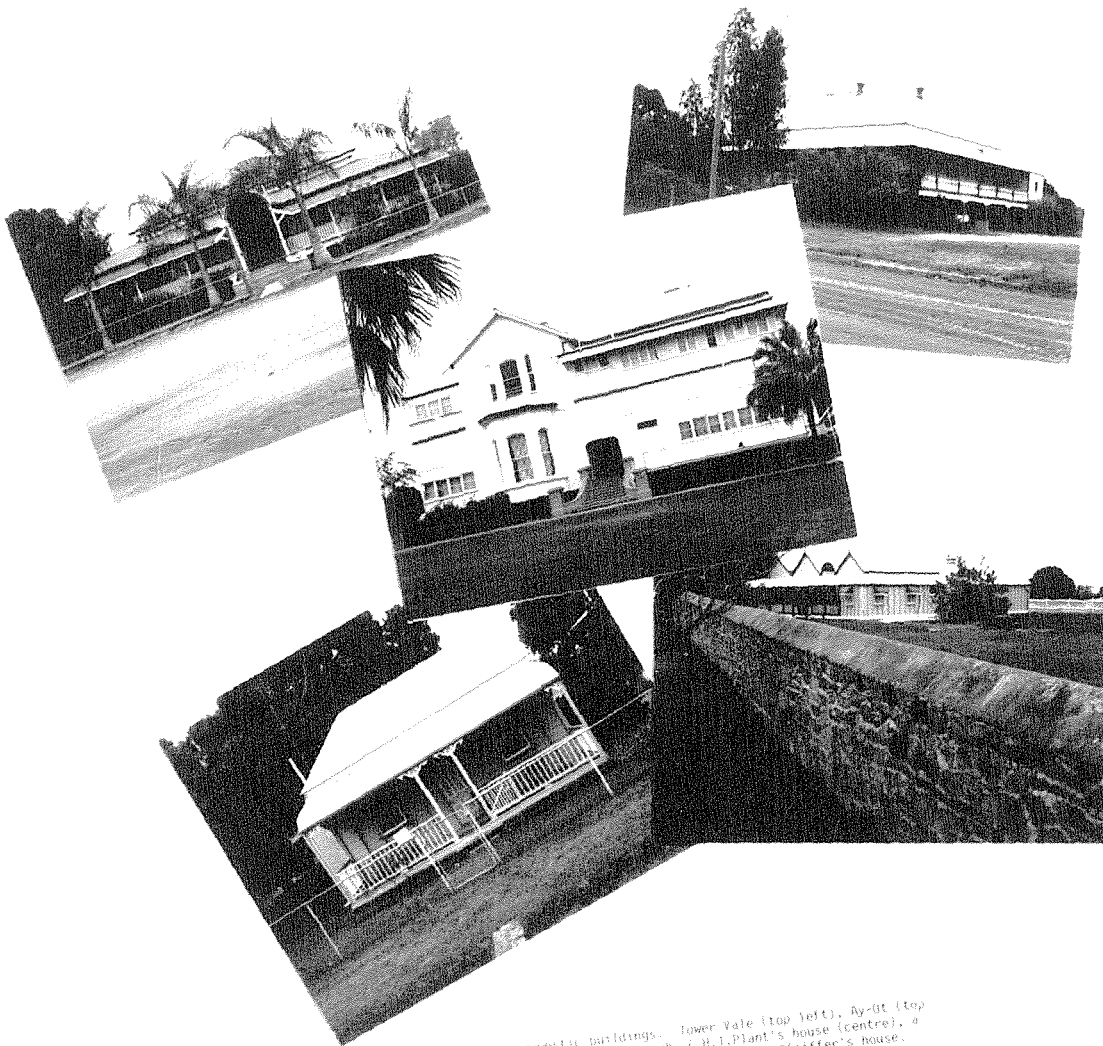
49. *Queenslander*, 22 December 1906.



Joe Millican addresses a machinery christening gathering in 1912

Robert John Sayers was the Liberal member for Charters Towers in the Legislative Assembly from 1888 to 1893, when he was beaten by Dawson and Dunsford. In 1906 he had his revenge. When, in the state election of 1907, John Burrows was defeated by another mine director and member of the stock exchange, Joe Millican, the reign of the labour movement on Charters Towers had clearly ended. With it had ended the career of its most gifted son, the flawed leader of the world's first Labor government, Andrew Dawson. He never returned to the town. At the age of forty-seven Dawson died of alcoholism in Melbourne. The field's new political leaders belonged to the class which dominated the early life of the field. Dawson's demise reflected the end of an era - the dynamic era in the history of Charters Towers.

CHAPTER 17. MEMORIES

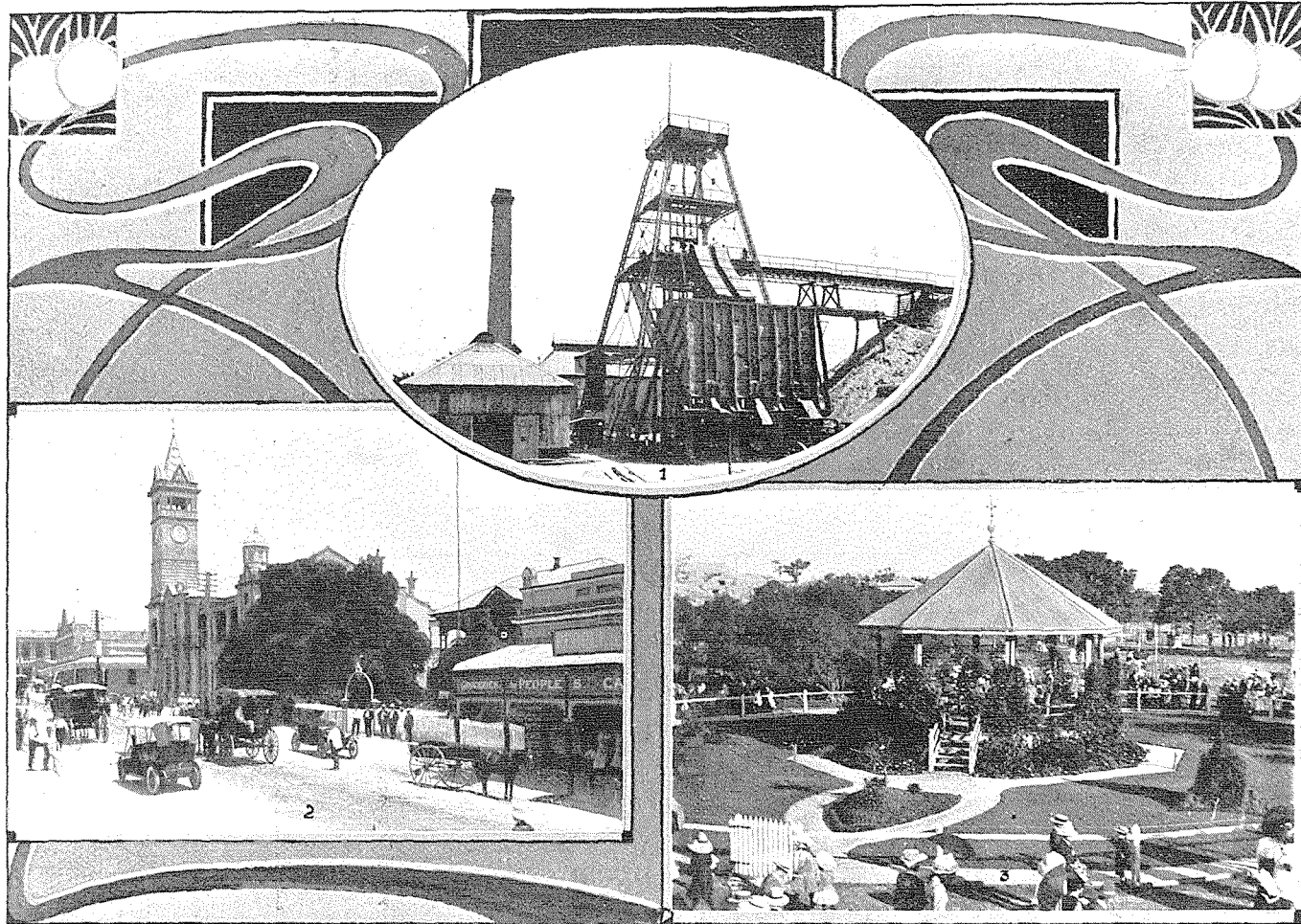


domestic buildings. Lower Vale (top left), Ay-Bit (top right), Thornborough, L.H.I. Plant's house (centre), a miner's cottage (bottom left) and Pfeiffer's house.

This chapter consists entirely of extracts from taped interviews. With one exception the tapes are held in the North Queensland Oral History Collection. The superscripts provide the identification (ID) number under which the interview has been computerised. All the interviewees were born in Charters Towers in the 1890s and grew up there in the hey-day of the field.

They called it the World.... It was one of those places where everyone knew everyone else. You knew everything that was going on in the place.... The shops used to open on Friday nights, and Gill Street there, you could hardly walk. The buses weren't allowed to come up Gill Street, they had to go around Hodgkinson Street on a Friday night.³⁴ You see nothing but a street of heads walking in the main street. The main street of the Towers had like a slope, and when you were up here you could just see a sea of heads all the way.¹⁶ We used to put our buggies in the back of hotels and walk up and down the streets - every man with his hat on.... Next thing there'd be a fight on somewhere round the back of a hotel and you'd be rushing to see the fight.... If you lost your mate you had a job finding him again.⁵⁸ Everyone went to town on a Friday night.²⁵ On a Sunday afternoon a band was in Lissner Park. Sunday afternoon we used to go from Sunday School...to Lissner Park for a walk. And we'd walk right round the band rotunda, and the band would be playing in the centre. It was nice.¹⁶

They were very proud of their bands in Charters Towers As kids we used to march along with the bands.... The Defence Force Band - they had their Kennedy Regiment. They were all volunteers and they had their own band, and it was a good band too - the Kennedy Men.



(1) *View of the Brilliant Deep, Charters Towers.*
 (2) *Town Hall, Charters Towers.*
 (3) *Band Stand in Lissner Park, Charters Towers.*

The grand old Fire Brigade - the Fire Brigade Band. The fire brigade in Charters Towers was just down from the post office in Gill Street. Only horse waggons in those days; they had to harness the horse and go out and tow the reel behind it. And the Towers Concert Band with Jimmy Clark; now Jimmy Clark, his name was synonymous with music. He was a band conductor in Charters Towers for years and years and his Towers Concert Band, they went south and they won heaps of contests.... This Billy Hay...was an enthusiastic Salvation Army fellow. He used to conduct the band there. They had a good Salvation Army Band.... And every Sunday night the bands used to play in the park in the rotunda.... The band was not allowed to play in the park until nine o'clock after the churches came out. And we'd all go down there after church with our girl friends and we used to walk around that; round and round that rotunda while the band used to play; every Sunday night.³⁴

Clothes were important:

When we were kids I can remember we used to have a white dress for Sunday in summer and a navy blue one in winter - that's for Sunday. And then for Saturday afternoon there was a material they called Brilliant - with the little red flower or the little blue flower in and a silver fleck. It was a washable thing. Well I used to always have a dress that, if I went anywhere Saturday afternoon, I could wear that. It wasn't a school dress and it wasn't a Sunday dress.... I can remember having a lovely white embroidery dress one time - it was all embroidery. And my mum bought my sister and I pretty floral sashes - oh they were pretty. We always wore a pinny; always had to wear our pinny

to go to school.... all white and made frilly round the neck - starched.⁶⁷

When I went to school I had two plaits there, and they used to go...down the back.... Then as I got older I used to do it with two twisted curls down the back.... You'd wear a big bow across the back.... It was fashionable. And you always wore black stockings. I used to wear cashmere. Can you imagine us wearing cashmere in the heat? Because I felt the cotton would go shabby too quick. I never liked shabby things.⁶⁷ I started to sew at fourteen, and whatever was the fashion I'd make a dress up.... I made a hip yoke and I ruched all the material on to the hip yoke and it just fitted me and then it flowed down from there.... The yoke was underneath. Another one I made had a double skirt on it. One was what they called a muslin tissot and the other was crepe merle.... It was my birthday and they gave me this money. I had ten shillings and I thought I was made. I bought enough material for two dresses for ten shillings.⁷³

You all dressed up on a Sunday. Men wore suits - black mostly or dark blue. You wouldn't go down there without a tie on. You got [the suits] made at the tailor's. The first three-piece suit I ever got made...cost four guineas from the best tailor in Charters Towers.... You wouldn't think of going down the park without a coat on. We used to wear a waistcoat and trousers to match. Three-piece suit and a tie, and those starched collars - we used to wear those. We always wore a hat - stetsons. Straw boaters were worn a bit but they weren't popular. That's where you used to wear a white handkerchief just sticking out.... The ladies would wear their best clothes. They'd be dressed for church;

we'd just come out. We'd go straight down from church.... We'd go straight down to the park at nine o'clock.³⁴

Though there was only one Lissner Park, there were many churches:

The churches were all well filled. Of course there wasn't the counter-attractions in those days that there are now.²⁵ We weren't allowed to play cricket or anything on a Sunday. We had to go to church.... I went to the Methodist Sunday School, you see, and the Grand Secret Methodist Church. It was on the outskirts of Charters Towers.... To win that bible I had to go to church and Sunday School three times on a Sunday, and every Sunday morning learn six verses of the bible. In the afternoon you had to answer two questions on that and learn another two verses. And in the whole twelve months I never missed a mark.³⁴ We always went to Sunday School and we were given a penny for the collection. And we'd walk along all the shops and look in the shop windows and think what we could buy with that penny. But we daren't do it.⁶⁴

It was three miles to walk from Sandy Creek to the main part of the town, and this was my recreation.... To walk three miles in and stand around listening to the Salvation Army for about half an hour. And the old lady then would say, "Well we've done our bit. Come on. We'll go home."... They were always beside a pub. It had to be beside a pub. That was the only way you'd get the men out. They had carbide lights on about six foot high sticks, and down the bottom... they had big syrup tins. And they must have had the

carbide in there with probably a small seepage of wet - of dampness - going in to get the gas out. And the stem would be six feet or more high. That would be over their heads and that way they didn't burn themselves. And when they'd done all the hoorahing and singing of songs, each of them grabbed a stick and carried it to the next place. That was for lighting. It would be fantastic because they must have had at least ten or twelve lights and they would have had anything up to fifteen or so people. I can't ever remember women those days as being Salvationists. I think they were all men those days. They had their own trumpets and things.... I don't remember a drum though, don't remember a drum at all. Don't think they had a drum, but they all had their own wind instruments.*

Saint Patrick's Day - the whole town used to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day. You see there's so many Irish settlers there and it was a holiday for most of us. The band used to come down [to Millchester] from the Towers...and a great many of the men would have a few beers too much.... And they used to have a great procession. And they had the Hibernians...a great big banner with the Celtic Cross and their motto.... They used to keep up all the saints' days - Saint George and Saint David - all these used to be holidays.... There were so many on the Towers that were Irish or of Irish descent.... That's why, I think, there's so many...religious vocations from the Towers.... There must be over eighty Sisters.... The priests used to come down from the Towers to Millchester. They used

* Daisy Kelly; taped interview conducted by Janice Wegner.
Subsequent asterisks also refer to this tape.

to come down regularly to the school and they'd go round and visit the people too. Not every week but you'd see them occasionally, and the Sisters used to visit. There was a kind of reverence you know, and we used to think the Sisters were something marvellous.⁶⁵

Even for the young, life centred on the mines and mills:

My grandparents came from Ireland. My grandfather always had this craze for finding gold. Small mines you know - small shafts - you just go down a little way. I often went down in the bucket and then, when you get down, there sometimes used to be underlies and you'd go under there. He used to get rocks and he'd break them up...and they'd put them in the pans and they'd wash them.... I was born in Millchester in 1896...my father worked in the mill.... The stone was all brought in by dray.... I was going to school then. I remember going to the mill and taking my father's crib down.... The noise of the breakers - the big machinery - it's colossal. This great big iron thing breaking the big boulders that's in the mill.... My father died at about thirty-five...Miners' Pthisis; and that was like consumption you see. It was like dust on the lungs and they said a great many miners got that.... Mum was left with the family.⁶⁵

The streets along the route between the cyanide works and the mill were fine dust about as deep as this. It was a lightish putty-grey, the sands...the residues from the Wilfley tables that went into the pit. Uncle used to take a sample and assay it and buy it by the ton.... They used to let it dry and then screen it and put it in big...wooden vats and pour a cyanide solution on. My uncle used to buy cyanide in tin drums

from Sweden. And the gold from the vats used to go into a little trough with zinc shavings. Then my uncle used to burn the shavings to get the gold...the recovery works. And he'd take the little bar of gold to the bank and assay it. He'd get a brace and bit and get a little sample and the bank would pay for the little bar of gold on the strength of the assayer's report.... When I was working in the Union Bank in Charters Towers...we used to be the Gold Escort. We were issued with an old rusty revolver that wouldn't shoot five yards; and it would go to Townsville where they'd get the shipping manager to lock it in the safe. Then it would go to the mint. We used to put...gold in the box under our seat in the carriage.⁹⁶

Some miners worked on tribute:

I was born here in Charters Towers, just on the back of Pfeiffer's house in 1893.... Dad came from Cornwall - Cousin Jack. He was a miner.... He'd never work wages and he always had his own mine or he worked tribute in other mines.... It was a pretty hard job for the tributer. You'd go and see the manager of the mine where the mine was out on tribute when it was nearly worked out.... You'd see the manager and he'd give you permission to go below and most likely he'd give you a place where to go and look.... You'd pick your place and you were mostly given twenty-five feet square for each man that was in the party.... From there you'd start breaking your ore. When you had a growth you'd tell him you wanted to pull your ore and he'd make arrangements for you to pull the ore to the surface. And from there it would go to the crushing batteries to be crushed. In those days it used to cost 12/6 a ton to cart the ore and crush it at the

mill. When the crushing was finished the gold would be collected off the plates and out of the Berdan pans and it would be smelted in a retort box. From there it would be weighed - carefully weighed - by the amalgamator, and you would be given a note for the amount it was. And you'd take it to the assayer in town.... Then smelt the gold and put into one little piece... and then he'd bore a hole in it and take an assay.... When you got it from the assayer you'd take it to the bank.... You'd go back then to see the secretary of the mine where you were working.⁹⁶

The secretary...well the first thing he'd do, he'd take twenty-five percent of the determined value.... And then it used to cost three, sometimes four shillings a week to ride up and down the shaft in the man truck, per man in the party. Then you'd have to pay to get your tools sharpened. That would cost you another three or four shillings a week per man.... That would be taken out and...the carting and crushing.... Possibly you might have bought a bit of timber - a lot of them places had to have a bit of timber put in. They always had a stack at the surface and you'd tell the braceman on the top and he'd send you down a couple of saplings and a prop, or whatever you want. And that price would be taken out - and they'd give you the rest. They'd give you a note to go to the bank.... You might finish up with fifty percent.⁹⁶

Other miners worked for wages:

At one time they got suspicious of the miners all coming up. Their pipes used to hang low. They used to have little bits of gold in them. They used to search them all after that. They used to all smoke and they'd

be smoking when they came up from down there. They got away with a lot.... They used to work three shifts in the mines - eight to four, four to twelve and twelve to eight.... When dad was afternoon shift you'd go down after dark with a sprat to fill the square-face.... That was the big square-face bottles they used to fill for sixpence.... They took that home. They used to send the kids down for that - to get the beer. You see dad would knock off afternoon shift at twelve o'clock...so dad would have a drink when he came home at midnight.³⁴

The miners wore dungaree trousers with strings round them - bowyangs - strings round their knees; and flannel shirts. Little cap things - almost what you see cooks wear. They had elastic round them and they used to keep the sweat from running down their face.... I remember when the Brilliant mine went on fire. I was only eight or nine and I can remember coming home from school. There was an old disused mine in York Street where we lived and all the fumes from the mine were coming up through this. My grandfather had been in the mine that was on fire, and when he went back he said there were cockroaches still running around because they can live.... There was a Mary Nickson went to school with me in Richmond Hill, and her father was lost in the fire. And there was a May Jordan - her father. You know they'd tell me about it. Those Mitchell boys, they lost their father in it.... There was often somebody killed. You'd just hear about it and think it's awful. But you don't know any details or anything.... If a man was killed...the women went out washing for other people and things like that. That's all. One would help the other you know.... If there was a woman left with a child or that, another

one took them while she went to work.⁶⁷

There was a Miners' Accident Association in Charters Towers...into which they paid and they got certain amounts each week if they met with an accident.... The lodges had certain doctors that were called lodge doctors. They were on your panel and every month or three months...the secretary sent each doctor a list of members. Then you paid the doctor so much for each member on his list whether he attended them or not.... The Friendly Society Dispensary was run by the lodges ...if you are a member of the lodge you get a discount ...and certain medicines you get free.³⁴ Also a funeral.... Of course my father was in the Manchester Unity in England before he came to Australia and he continued. There were sickness benefits - the lodges paid sickness benefits too.²⁵

Father died at sixty-two of Miners' Pthisis.... He was a braceman at the end - a much easier job.... We had a house at a place behind what they called Pfeiffer's place. The Pfeiffers were rich people up there. Their back fence was our side fence. He was a great man in mining - a very wealthy man. He had a beautiful home.... Ours wasn't a flash house. It was all iron.... Dad gave us what convenience he could.... We weren't fortunate. We never starved at all, we always had plenty to eat. Never had any spare money.... I think my father built the house. It was comfortable. You opened the door and that was the lounge. There was a room behind that. Across the passage there was another room...and another one behind that. That's three bedrooms. My mother had six; six of us. Iron beds...wood stove. We had a very nice boiler built in with bricks. Then when we got on our feet we put the

gas on.... We had vegetables and fowls. Sister had chookies and we had goats. We'd got to bring the kiddies in at night and lock them up - keep them away from their mother.⁶⁴

Not all houses were made of corrugated iron, and amenities varied:

The house? It might sound funny, but it's the truth. My father used to go out and cut down trees and we'd get the bark and flatten it all out and dry it, and that made the walls. We had iron on the roof and... these big bags. They used to be sewn together and put inside.... We had the woodfire in the kitchen and if we made bread or anything my mother used to have it in the camp oven outside.... Three rooms divided off with hessian partitions.... We ate in one room and cooked in the kitchen.⁶⁶

In Marsland Road our house was a wooden floor on little blocks; an iron roof and wooden walls.... Marsland Road opposite the Brilliant Block Mill.... We used to go through the mill to school...there was a little passageway to go through.... We had a washhouse down the back.... You'd walk a little bit down for the bathroom and the washhouse. It wasn't on to the house, it was set apart from the house. We had a kitchen and then a big back verandah. Then we had a dining room and a bedroom and another bedroom. A front verandah - a fence around it. We grew a few little vegetables - not much; a few lettuces and a tomato.⁶⁶ A lot of people whitewashed their homes - particularly their chimneys and things. They got whiting and water and painted that on their places. All the chimney recesses were done with whiting.... You'd have to do it twice

a year or so, depending on how fussy you were.²⁵

Water was always a problem:

Most people would have a small tank or that for drinking water. But there was a public spring at Mosman Park and I can remember when they built a dam around it and all the boys of the family had little billy-goat carts and you used to go out to the spring for water for the washing and that sort of thing.... Then, of course, later on they went to the Burdekin and we got reticulated water in the Towers. But in the early days - a neighbour of ours had six daughters and the youngest daughter was very tall and she said it was because she grew up in good soil. She had a bath after the other five and there was good soil in the water.... When they had to go a few miles to get their water they had to treat it sparingly. Most people had a tap after the weir was built.... Everybody had a tank, a big galvanised tank for rainwater.... And in the early days most people tried to get rainwater to wash with because the tap water was not very clear.... You had a big hole in the backyard. Everybody built holes in the backyard and built a closet over it.... You have a big plank across with a big hole and a little hole - one for the adults and one for the kids.... Then when your hole got full you dug one in another place and shifted this thing on to the new hole.... You were a bit afraid of it too - you used to be a bit scared of falling in.²⁵

The laundry was at the back. First of all they used the kerosene tins. Then when you got along a bit further they started building these cast-iron boilers and that sort of thing. They were still out in the back



"The women had the family...."

yard. You put your fires under these iron things. At the beginning we just used kerosene tins for boilers in the yard. Then my grandfather built a high kitchen out of stone from the mullock heaps and built a copper in. Of course you could have that in under the house because the fire was contained in that. But these other things, you couldn't have them in your house in case of fire.... Open fires were all very well away from the houses. That's why the women all used to get up at four o'clock to do their washing before the heat of the day. They liked to get their clothes out on to the lines before the heat of the day.²⁵

We used to have Potts' irons - you'd stand them on the stove and get them hot. And then sometimes you'd rub them all to get the soot off them and you'd start to do something and there'd be a big black streak go by. You'd have to throw that aside and wash it again.... You'd have about three Potts' irons on the stove at one time. That was called a set. And the Sadds' irons - they have a handle...but the Potts' you had one handle and squeezed it and it fitted into the top of the iron. I can't remember having an ironing board. We did it on the end of the table.⁶⁷

The saucepans were all black iron saucepans...they were heavy. The fires were all woodfires and the bottoms got very dirty. They cleaned them with sandsoap and elbow grease.²⁵ And I remember mum had a whatnot in the corner with all a lot of little knick-knacks on it. And I hated that whatnot because I had to dust all the things.... I was the eldest. Clean the knives - polish the spoons and forks. I hated that. And mum had a bed with all the brass on the end of that and I had to polish all the end of that with Brasso.... The

knife board for cleaning knives.... It was just a board with a top on it - sort of felt. And we used to sprinkle knife powder on the board and rub it.... Those knives stained easily and had to be cleaned every day.⁶⁷

Lighting was a major concern:

We had candles for short periods you know. You'd light a candle and take it from place to place. In the main living room...the lamp was on a stand which raised it so the light would be diffused better. For that you'd have a wick which would be, I suppose, about an inch wide. That would give a good light. Then in the sitting room you'd have a hanging lamp which would sometimes be on chains that you could move up and down. Bring it down to light it then pull it up so that the light illuminated the whole room.... That was a cylindrical wick, open in the middle, and the bigger ones would be less than a quarter of an inch thickness.... It was made out of cotton material Your wick...would be dipping into the kerosene. It went into the burner, and the burner had a screw on it where you could turn the wick up and down. You put it up high to light it then turn it down to just what you wanted.... Very often it would have a lampshade, but sometimes it didn't. The little bedroom lamps didn't have a shade. They just had the lamp glass. But the hanging lamps and the table lamps had a very ornate shade.²⁵

Part of the housewife's duties every day was to collect all the lamps and wash and polish them ready for that night again. They smoked and if they weren't clean and shiny they didn't give such a good light. Then of

course the carbide came in.... That is a rock broken up into pieces. You put the rocks in a container and put the water on it and then you put the thing that went over it which had the tube, and the burner on top of that, and this gave you your light. The carbide formed a gas. The burner that was on it was very like the burners you used to have on the gas.... You used to buy carbide by the pound. Like buying a small bag of sugar.... It's an awful smell, carbide.²⁵

Keeping food fresh was difficult, particularly in summer:

The butter container was made of porous earthenware. I think probably the saucer might not have been porous, because that contained water. The thing that went over it was like a bell and fitted down. And the butter was put into a basin which went inside that bell, resting on the saucer.... The material, which very often was a piece of old blanket, went right over the top of it, touching down into the water. And then it was put in the breeze. You'd usually wet the covering before you put it on...it was kept cool by evaporation.... The butter was kept reasonably firm that way. The meat safe was...about eighteen inches square at the bottom.... Then half way up there'd be a shelf. It was made of tin, galvanised tin, or something like that. There was a panel of gauze in each side and that was hung in the breeze. Round the screw that it was hung on would be a receptacle for water to keep out the ants. In those days the first thing you had to do when your milkman came was to boil the milk to keep it. If you didn't boil it straight away it went sour. Lovely clotted cream...you'd skim that off and have it with your jams and things. Usually you kept your bread in earthenware crocks. The butchers used to

come twice a day. They'd bring you your breakfast meat and then get the meat for the rest of the day and come back with it. The baker came every day.²⁵

A storekeeper's daughter elaborated:

We had two runs a day - delivery runs from the shop - to a different area of the town. I used to go out sometimes in the sulky with the butter only. People used to get their weekly order, then they'd get their butter in the middle of the week - butter only.... There was one man who had a butter run only.... And there was a widow woman and she started a tea run. She used to go out and just sell tea.... You had an orderman who went around to the customers and got the order and then he came in and brought the order in and you delivered it.... We weren't in the main street - we didn't have the street trade.... And of course with produce it was all delivered to the dairies and all those sorts of places - the cabs and the buses - they were all horse-drawn.²⁵

We stocked everything - all crockery and groceries and produce.... The perishables used to come out on the mail boat. Sometimes some of it was railed from Brisbane to Gladstone and then put on to the mailboat and came by boat from Gladstone to Townsville. Then it was put on a train and came to Charters Towers. And there was not pats of butter in those times, it was all in fifty-six pound boxes. And many's the time that Monday afternoon - the mailboat got into Townsville Sunday night - the butter was put on to the train straight away and the railway would ring. "Your butter is here. Come and get it, it's running out of the cases." And you always had someone standing by to go



WYATT AND GATES, GILL STREET, CHARTERS TOWERS.

PROVISION AND PRODUCE MERCHANT.
GILL STREET, CHARTERS TOWERS.



"We stocked everything...."

down.... You'd be ringing the railways: "Has the butter come yet? Has the butter come yet?" Because you couldn't let it stand in the railway goods shed waiting to be delivered.... Butter was a problem.²⁵

You only got nuts once a year, at Christmas - almonds and walnuts; Barcelonas and Brazils.... We got cheese every week - well that was a problem too. They used to come in great big cases - I think there were five or six on top of each other on a shelf in each one. Of course as soon as your cheese came you got it into a breeze somewhere. When you put it out on a slab for cutting up it soon got very oily. Fortunately we had a high-block house next to the shop.... The bacon flitches and hams they all hung up under the house. Your Christmas hams they'd always arrive somewhere at the end of November, beginning of December; and they all had to be hung. They'd be weighed when they came in and the weights marked on them. By the time they were sold at Christmas they'd lost a pound.... I remember when we were growing up we'd always spend our Christmas sorting onions. The onions and potatoes would come by boat to Townsville and by road to Charters Towers. Very often the whole lot would be thrown overboard the boat. They'd gone bad. Very often they did come to us and, well, everybody had to get on to sort the bad ones from the good ones.²⁵

Whiting and washing soda, they all used to come in kegs and you weighed it out. Sugar came in seventy pound bags and you tipped it into a zinc-lined box that you pushed in and out under your counter. You weighed it out - ones, twos and sixes and twelve pounds as people wanted.... You had glass jars for some things - ground ginger and things. You'd put it into a glass jar and

serve out from that.... The people used to use a lot of gingerbread in those days.... There was a local boiled sweet factory on the Towers. They used to come in seven pound tins and you'd dish them out from that...they mainly used to buy a pennyworth. We had wooden pats which you kept in a basin of water. You got the butter from the box on to your scales and you had your piece of paper on the scales...and then with your pats you made it the shape you wanted. The wooden pats were scrubbed every day.²⁵

A lot of hardware came from England - the Manchester district.... My father used to import shovels.... They were shipped from Liverpool I think...and he used to pay eighteen shillings a ton freight, Liverpool to Townsville, and sixty-four shillings from Townsville to Charters Towers.... A lot of wares came from Germany - the part, I think, which is now included in Yugoslavia. But my father used to also import from Bohemia. It came in crates - it would be about three of these tables together, the crates.... All the glassware, butterdishes and fruitbowl dishes and that sort of thing - and earthenware crocks.... Mother helped out with the books, but she was not often in the shop. She had the family.²⁵

"Having the family" was the most common adult occupation on the field:

My mother painted before she was married. And then when she had the family she found herself hitting the youngsters with a paintbrush. So she gave it away altogether until the family were past that stage.²⁵ She was the housekeeper. Mother had thirteen children and my father had two. She had two stepsons.... My

parents didn't teach us anything about sex. My mother delivered my sister. Mother would do midwifery duties.... My sister's child was born and we saw her feed the baby and all that...but it never worried us...we were protected.... My last brother was born in 1904. Mother was having trouble with the birth and they sent for old Granny Power. And it was a breech birth, but Granny, she handled it without the doctors.⁴⁴

I mustn't forget the babies coming. By this time I was fifteen and old Gran she was the one that brought all the babies along. Well anyway as it gets along I'm asking her "When will the baby arrive?" "You'll know in plenty of time." [I got married when I was fourteen] yes.... Being young, of course, and immature probably, part of the body would have been immature... and fright really. Fright, when you don't know it, fright is a terrible thing. But luckily there was a Chinese bloke who had a garden just down the road, not very far away. And we got pretty clobbered with her... not the old Chinaman, he was frightened that people would come up and pinch his things. No we never got friendly with that Chinaman. But with his wife we got very friendly. And it was pretty lucky that she came along before the baby was born. Gran was in a fix because most of the women that she'd handled had had babies before - you know - and there was actually no problems. Whereas having a first baby and having it at fifteen was a problem and a half actually. Well that woman she just said to Granny, "Mrs W. let me with baby for a while." So she made me get up off the bed and she walked me around and around until the baby arrived. That would have taken the thing off your mind. That's part of it I suppose, but then again too

I guess it would have been helpful to the body - moving the body. That was my first child. And the second one I decided I wasn't going to have any second-hand people bringing him along. Dad was a bit on the mean side, but he could afford it. I went into Charters Towers, but I went into a nursing home; big difference, big difference.... A year and eleven months there is between the two boys. And then the girl arrived...she's the baby. By that time the oldest one would have been about five and in that country five year olds can look after themselves, especially with a horse under them.*

Understandably, perhaps, not every woman chose maternity:

I was born at Sandy Creek.... The old lady she came from England and I'll tell you she was a mighty old lady. I've got an idea I must have been her daughter's child but I've no proof of that. She reared me.... Then the woman that I presume was my mother - I've got no proof that she was at all...she kicked up a hell of a row with the old lady and cleared out. Then she got married.... Then the next thing I know they came back again after several years and she had another child. I've no proof that she was my mother actually - no idea who my mother really was. But she came to live there for eighteen months.... The child was a girl, and no one could see any resemblance. I was fair and she was dark...I don't know where I come from really. But the old lady - Cousin Jack...she had two sons, but they, of course, like all good sons, when they get old enough to work they clear out. She also had another girl and this girl, being what she was, all she was used to was work. She knew nothing else only work. And the younger girl of the two, she went off to



"They managed...."

Townsville.... And she stayed in Townsville for maybe six months.... That girl was always dressed up with rows of beads around her neck. Those days you weren't considered a good person if you had, say, an extra long row of beads. "Where did you get them from? And how much did you pay for them? And are you sure you did or did someone else pay for them?" You know - this sort of thing went on in those days....*

Boys' freedom was quite different to girls' freedom. And in those days we weren't told the Facts of Life as you call them. We weren't told not one word what to expect out of life. You could imagine that there was quite a lot of girls with -. But the mother did stick to her daughters those days.... The only thing was, if you did walk out of your house you weren't allowed back in again. That was the idea those days. Those days if you walked out without your mother saying "Yes, you can have the job", you weren't her daughter any more. You were a Bad Girl. They didn't have many names for it, but that was one of them. Boys, of course, they were quite different. They had the freedom. They could do what they liked - go out when they liked, come home when they liked.*

Old Luddydah Walker - he apparently was an abortionist. But we knew nothing about it.... We knew Luddydah Walker and the rest of it, but we knew nothing about prostitution or anything like that. Oh no, you weren't reared that way. You were reared to find out things for yourself really.... The red light area as far as I know was up behind the showgrounds. The Pink House I think it was called.... Was on a corner there and the man standing outside or sitting in the gutter.⁴⁴

They were tolerated - they were not licenced but they were tolerated.... There was a big house...and there were two or three girls in that place and I remember the lady who lived next door. She was telling us that she was doing her washing and her husband met with an accident. She had to go to the hospital and she sang out to these two girls next door. Those girls came over and helped her till the ambulance came. She said, "When I came back all my washing was dry and not only that, all my ironing was done." She said, "We don't like them as neighbours but...you couldn't wish for anybody nicer, so long as they kept to themselves."³⁴

Non-Europeans were less easily understood and so aroused laughter, fear and sometimes persecution.

I was born in a place called Gards Lane.... There used to be a big lane and they were all Japs and Chinese.... The Japanese, they just sat there, and through the windows we used to watch them do up their faces you know, of a night. They did no harm.³ There was a girl - Lulu - she was known as a character on Charters Towers.... She was a Jap. and she was a prostitute; and she used to ride a one-wheeled bike - one of those trick bikes. She used to ride that up the street. Oh everyone knew Lulu.... There was Lulu, then there was Flora or something.... A mate was on the telegram counter on Charters Towers and I was relieving one day.... And he says to me, "Remember if they come in, those Jap. flies," he says, "there's a standard charge - five shillings for each telegram." It was only ninepence for sixteen words.... He was just as big a rogue as they were.³⁴ She used to sit... in the window, and she'd be all dressed up in Chinese

stuff and all painted up and done up. We kids, for devilment, used to rattle the iron and run for our life.... I think the shops and them had a sort of pak-a-pu.... Only the men; I think the men used to go there a lot.... Young fellows you know, playing pak-a-pu.⁶⁴

Pak-a-pu was just a gamble.... They had a sort of little ticket and it had little squares on and you marked the squares. And they used to draw the bank - I don't know much about drawing the bank - but ten marks broke the bank, eight marks, seven - if you'd get anything under seven you didn't get anything. It was sixpence a ticket and they used to have two banks a day; two o'clock and one at night. It was a standing joke - "you welly lucky boy - four marks - you got four marks".... It was fair. I don't think there was any roguery or anything like that; drawn properly. Then they used to have their gambling shops down there to play Fan Tan.³⁴ I didn't play Fan Tan. I never gambled in my life much. I used to buy these pak-a-pu tickets...but I never gambled much.... I've seen them playing Fan Tan and one thing and another. In fact I think I was only in there about twice. The first time I went up there I heard the police were going to raid it and my mate was in there. I was at a dance. So ran up and said "Get out of here quick Dave.... The police are going to raid it." And he said, "Oh that's all right.... I'll finish my game." I said, "Well I'm not waiting for you. I'll get straight out." And there the buildings were very close together. And as I was walking out there was a bloke coming up, and he stood against that building. And when I looked in his face it was a big John Hop. I went cold. But when Dave came to the dance I said,

"Did the police get you?" He said, "No. Why?" I said, "I passed one going up." He said, "He came for his cut."⁵⁸

It was not a society which tolerated difference:

It was a little lane - ran from the top of Mosman Street down to Deane Street.... There were big merchants there. Ah Lin and Company was a big merchant.³⁴ We went down to Hip Lee Jong - I wasn't game to go alone, and she wasn't - but we got together and we bought Chinese silk. It was just like tafetta. They had beautiful silk.... We went in through Gards Lane. The Joss House was there. And so I said to Jess and Jane, "Come on, we'll go through the Joss House today." Well, were they scared! I said, "What are you scared of?" Jess and Jane were scared stiff.... I had a mate who used to live a couple of doors from the Joss House on Bluff Road.... And they had a beautiful big Chinese Joss and they had beautiful big banners all the way around the church. And if they prayed for rain and didn't get any they used to belt the devil out of poor old Joss. Anyhow, we'd stickybeak. I was only about seven or eight. And we'd go through their reception hall and there'd be a pig, about that size, roasted whole with an apple in its mouth - and that used to tickle us. And that was where they had their feast. There were all little Chinese bowls round the big wall - the big room. We used to wait for the crackers though. They had them on a string up the big post and they'd be going off in every direction.⁶⁷

I can remember when the Chinese used to go around with baskets and those cabinets and you could buy material and all. They used to have big box-like things on

their shoulders...and they'd take materials and things around in them. And there used to be a man with a turban round his head...Gunga Singh or something. They used to go around selling materials too. We weren't to be frightened of any of these.⁶⁷ It used to be one of those - you had to do it. You see the Chinaman used to come around bringing fruit - and they had baskets. A big stick across the shoulders and a big basket on each side. They were the green-grocers in those days.... Oh big baskets - you'd wonder how they carried them. And all the kids had to throw stones at any Chinaman they see. You see a Chow and - they'd stand and throw stones back at them. Apart from that they had general stores, general merchants. Of course they had silk stores and things like that. Then down opposite where the ambulance is in Charters Towers, over the other side, there was Chinese all along there too.... There were big shops there.³⁴

Down in Millchester there were a lot of Aboriginal couples with their families. I don't know where they used to live. We just took a lot of things for granted you know - they just happened. We were never frightened of them and there was never any trouble. They'd come around and the men would chop wood for people.⁶⁷ You see you used to buy your wood by the load.... You'd get a load of sawn wood and the men...chopped it up.... They'd come in for the day and you fed them for the day - fed them their three meals and then sent them home with a few little bags and you filled them up with tea and sugar and flour and they took them home. And you gave them a shilling I think, besides, for the day.... There were a few that had sort of gunyahs out in the bush and they'd come in.... They

used to sell clothes props too.²⁵ These Aboriginals used to cut these props, see, in the bush and they'd bring them in. They used to sell them for two shillings each.... They'd sing out, "Clothes props!"... These Blackfellows they used to come in from the camp. They had their camp about two miles from our place and they'd come into town and...sell the props...then they'd go back to their camps.... Pretty unhygienic conditions they used to live in out there but, I don't know, they seemed to be happy enough. Oh they'd cadge, some of them. There were some of them was independent even in those days. They weren't fond of working. They'd just come to town - they used to get some rations from the police.³⁴

There was an old King Billy from Millchester.... Well he used to go to my grandmother to chop the wood for her; and she was pretty generous with him. [She died] Anyhow mum heard him singing out...he called "Mabel - where is Missee? Missus! Hey Mabel!" Anyhow mum went out to him. "What's wrong Ben?" "Where Missee? Nobody in that place." She said, "No. She died. She's gone." Oh and I believe he sat down and cried and he put on such a turn. Anyhow he didn't come round for a while and when he did come round mum said, "Where have you been?" "Ah, Missee," he said. "Man said, 'Take this parcel and deliver it somewhere.'" And he said, "Policeman come this way and one come that way.... And I've been in jail." They'd given him opium. Poor old Ben had nothing to do with it. He didn't know what was in the parcel.... Yes old Ben used to wear a brass plate - like a moon shape. "King Billy of Millchester" - that was what was on it.⁶⁷

Old John Flourbags, he was a character on Charters

Towers. His name was John Bowerbank.... He used to put up all the bills and when there were any singing contests John would always sing there.³⁴ Some of the boys - Harold Moore and Bertie Burke - they used to live out the Ridge way you know - they came in and they said, "What do you know? Old John Flourbag died." They kidnapped him and with Frank's lot they took him [to Townsville] and he got chucked off the boat there. I reckon that when they went to dress old Flourbag for the coffin they had to scrub him. And they found three singlets underneath.... And did you know Tin Joe? I remember he always had the kerosene tin, old Tin Joe.... Annie Baggs slept anywhere. She had a pile of dogs with her - under the bridge mostly. And I believe if you had a piano she'd ask you if she could play it. She was an accomplished pianist.... Some say, but of course whether it's right or not - she had a setback.... She was jilted and that's how she went. I heard she was a countess in Germany and she was engaged to this doctor. Anyhow he cleared out and left her and it played on her mind so much she went off her head. And she was travelling the world looking for him. And they used to sing out, "Annie Baggs, full of rags, floating down the river. Seven years in silk, seven years in satin, seven years in rags. Look out Annie!" They used to tease her.⁶⁷

There were, however, other entertainments for the children of Charters Towers:

My mother used to take the family after Christmas every year to Magnetic Island for a fortnight.... There were boarding houses there.... Come down by train and when we were very young we used to go over by sailing boat on the old Hephsibah.... I can see now the old Heph-

sibah and all the kids were sitting right down on the floor of the boat with a kerosene tin in front of them all sick - all sick in the kerosene tin.²⁵ When I was a little boy my grandmother used to give me a shilling and a bucket to go to the brewery and buy a shilling's worth of yeast. They used to skim off the beer casks. And I used to buy a shilling's worth of yeast. Then I used to go around Mosman Park where all the Cornish people were and I used to sell it to them for a shilling a cup.... A lot of them made their own bread with yeast and some of them made yeast buns and saffron cake. The cake was coloured with saffron.⁹⁶

We'd go fossicking in the creeks when the rain had come.... I loved to see the specks of gold. It wouldn't be very much but still it was exciting.... The boys they used to play rounders and football and those sorts of things. And they had horses, they loved to go on horses. Jacks - we had the knuckle bones of the sheep. That was a great game. Marbles of course; skipping. Then they had a lot of games they used to play and sing to them. "Here we go gathering nuts in May" and all that.... We'd have two - a line here and a line there. And they'd say, "Who are you gathering nuts for?" And then they'd say somebody's name. Then they'd say, "Who have you got to pull her away?" Then they'd get the strongest one to pull you over. And if they pulled you over the line you went over to that side.... Hop Scotch...Hide and Seek, seesaws, Drop the Handky, Oranges and Lemons - many times. Of course you'd climb trees too - after mulberries and things, fruit you know, Chinee apples.... There was a lot to do.⁶⁵

We played with the children next door through the fence. One of the Deanes, the magistrate, lived in the same block. But we weren't allowed to run - not my sister and I and the younger brother. And the three of us when we went to school we had to go together and come home together.... We never went to other peoples' houses. My mother had an old friend from Victoria.... Well that was the only place we visited.... Mrs Gibson had a big family. We'd go down and mother and Mrs Gibson would be sitting out in the yard talking and we kids would be playing around. The Gibson girls played the piano. We sang and danced. And we played the old - Red, Red Rover, Padded Pudding - you know, the ring. Oh and we sang:

We are three Dons from outer Spain
 To call upon your daughter Jane.
 My daughter Jane is yet too young
 To understand your flattering tongue.
 Go back, go back, you saucy Jack
 And clean the spurs behind your back.
 My spurs are clean and shined like gold
 And in this world will not be sold.
 Come into my kitchen, come into my hall
 And choose the fairest one of all. 44

My father played the English concertina. He had a skating rink and he also had a dance hall. I can remember skating. I can remember the skates being brought home, and I got on the skates and I skated all round the house.... And we sang all sorts of things. Charlie used to sing, my younger brother. We'd sing "The Old Rusting Bridge" - we got them off the phonograph too. My brother-in-law had one of those Edison phonographs with the little cylinder that fitted on and he was a cornet player.... They sang all those Gay Nineties songs you know - "The Old Bull and Bush" - and, you see, my father was born in London in 1842 and he came out here in 1862. He was there in Gilbert and



"The girls played the piano...."

Sullivan's time and he had the old Cox and Box and the Pinafore and The Gondoliers. They were all just his memories.... Then we got one of those Edison flat ones and my father used to go down to McCulloch's music shop and play the new things when they came in. Mrs McCulloch used to allow him to sit and play the records. In fact she was glad for someone to sit and play the records for the people in the street. Well he'd bring home "Irene Allanah" and different songs. Then Billy Williams was the comedian who was most selected. They were Edison records.⁴⁴

A lot of girls I was friendly with would go to mass on Sunday morning.... I went to Sunday School in the afternoon. And we had a big Tamarind tree and my people would go out for a drive and there'd be only grandma in the house. And when I'd come home from Sunday School I'd have to see that my sister, the one next to me, that her clothes were hung up and so were mine. And the other girls - I would leave the billy can and they would collect the tamarinds in season and put all the tamarinds in. When I came home there would be a big kettle of boiling water on the stove and I'd pour it over the tamarinds and then get sugar and make this big tamarind drink, and we'd all have a tamarind drink.⁶⁷

Hopscotch, yes. We used to get into trouble because we used to hop our shoes out. I'll tell you another thing they used to do - I was never game. The railway line used to run from the Queen mine right down to the Venus battery, and the kids used to get the pins and put them in this fashion, and then run after the train to see if they'd squashed them - the pins on the line you know.... I had money given to me because I didn't

cry when I had a tooth out. And your two brothers took me in their billy-goat cart - I'd be about six - they took me in their billy-goat cart around to the shop to spend the money - sixpence or whatever I had. And they were dying to have some limelights. So we bought some limelights and came back, and were throwing the limelights around and one came down and hit George in the neck and burned his neck.... I'll never forget one New Year's Eve we were all for letting off crackers and my mother had these sparklers. And in the morning she came out and showed us the dress where they'd fell and burned little holes. We used to have crackers and limelights on Guy Fawkes night and New Year's Eve. And mum used to put sixpences and threepences...in the pudding. And she used to put a lot in and all the money we got out of that we used to always save it up and buy all our limelights and crackers and things.... Mostly the Chinese sold them, old Hip Lee Jong.⁶⁷

We lived out at the Wellington you see - out near the old Pyrites Works. All we kids used to go up on the side of the hill of tailings and we'd get on a sheet of iron and slide down.... It used to make a terrible noise - this iron on the sand. Down in Millchester we used to go around and there were shafts. And we'd drop a stone down to hear the water splash. It's a wonder we didn't fall in....⁶⁷ There was a tramline running from there right through to the mine on the other side. And we used to get on that and come right down the rise on the gallop and old Granny used to sing out, "They'll break their legs!"⁵⁴ Charters Towers was very well served with buses, horse buses. Very well served.²⁵ Much the same as an ordinary bus today...only they were pulled by horses.... They had a whip; and the kids

used to hang on the back, see, and they used to throw the whip round from the front to knock the kids off.³⁴

If a merry-go-round came to town my father would take us up to town to have a ride.... I went to circuses. I can remember one time when I was little - there was an auntie of mine - mum's sister - took me to the circus and I saw the acrobats.... We always had a sulky and pony.... The cousin, his father died young ...he used to always give me rides in his billy-goat cart.... They had beautiful carts. Things for lights and all on them; beautiful carts.⁷³ The boys had a billy-goat cart. You had to keep away from that - that was for boys!⁶⁴ Practically everyone had billy goats. We had races in the showgrounds.³⁴ The boys had a couple of good billy goats there. The one called Nelson, the other called Buffalo.... They weren't easy to train. All they'd do when they started was to go and rap themselves against the fence. Often they would run out of the race you know.... You couldn't guarantee that they would finish the course.²⁵

Every year the Inspector of Nuisances used to run in the goats. See you were supposed to register your goats every year. I think it was sixpence each registration fee.... And you'd see the kids out there and the women and everything and they'd call their goats and they'd run to and pull them out from the great mobs.... He used to have three or four fellows to drive them. Then they'd put them all in the pound and you could get them out. I forget exactly what it cost to get them out, I think it was a shilling. And any left they'd sell them by auction. This was one of the events of the year in Charters Towers.... Inspector Jolly, he was the inspector. And he used to

ride in his sulky - a sulky is a two-wheeled buggy - he used to ride behind. How they'd abuse him!³⁴

The town also had plenty to offer adolescents and young adults:

Balloons came up there and gave a demonstration. These fellows went up in those balloons - hot air balloons.³⁴ And in 1910 Maggie Moore's show came to Charters Towers. "The Gambler's Wife" at the Theatre Royal at the top there, near the church.... Sid and Nellie - that's my sister and her husband, she took Kitty and me and that was the first time I was ever out at night really. I never forgot "The Gambler's Wife". Back in those early days too the moving pictures came in, and Mickey Robbins played the piano.... Later on the pianola came in but those days they had the piano.... Then the film with Harry Lauder and the record came. He was singing and dancing and the record was playing "I Love a Lassie".⁴⁴ Of course there was a professional pianist always and he had a great repertoire, and he knew what was coming. He always played music that fitted in with the theme of what was on the screen.... They had some very good musicians. They had to play non-stop for two and a half hours.... And then you'd get this furious music with an exciting episode. Soft music for the soft parts. They were very good those musicians. Of course it was a musicians' town in those days. We used to go to the Tivoli Pictures when we were kids.... There were about half a dozen of us kids and next door was the Reefers' Arms Hotel and...you could get a pint of beer and a Cornish pasty and as much radishes and shallots and onions and cucumbers as you liked to eat for sixpence. We used to go to the Lyceum for sixpence

and you'd get threepence worth of peanuts and you'd have enough peanuts to chew on all night.... Good seats - all on raised platforms you know. And there was a few that paid a shilling - they got canvass chairs right down the front.⁹⁶

There was a lot more entertainment in your own home. Friends gathering for a sing-song - playing cards.... You'd go to Mrs So-and-So's for the evening. If there was a crowd you'd have singing and packs of cards.... Mostly it was whist and euchre in those days.²⁵ We used to go to each others' homes and that for dances or parties, and dance to a concertina or something like that. It was great fun.⁶⁵ You had concerts, socials and that sort of thing - dances. The churches had a lot of socials. There were different societies who ran dances.... Waltz, Schottische, mazurka, fox-trot. Tango was a new one in those days.... They'd have a piano and some instruments - violin, cornet and whatever.²⁵

We lived right down in Millchester and when I got about fifteen I used to go to dances, school dances and that. There were some girls living near to me and their brother used to take them, and he'd take me with them. And by the time he went to the war we were sort of out - that we could go on our own.... As long as we went to the dance and stayed at the dance and went home together we were allowed to go. They used to be held to raise funds for the school. Nearly every Saturday night - that was the only entertainment we had. You had to go up to town for the cinema.⁷³ As far as our home was concerned - well even in 1917... one of the brothers wanted to take us to a dance - we were going to learn to dance. And my father said

to him, "Who's running this show?" He said, "So-and-So." "Well", he said. "You can please yourself but the girls are not going." That was the end of it. There was no argument about it.⁴⁴

I used to go into town every night to dances. Every night I went to a dance.... Mrs M. was my partner and we won four waltzing competitions. A beautiful dancer she was, full of life.... Waltz - and we called them sets: the Lancers, waltz, cotillion and all that.... You went around the hall in a circle, very steady dancing. There were many halls in Charters Towers in those times. There was the ANA hall - they call it the Buffalo Hall now. Then there was the Foresters' Hall. There was the MU Hall. They danced every night.... Piano, beautiful - lovely tone...and a man with a cornet. Oh yes! The music we used to have! And the MC stood in the middle and watched you. You called him the Master of Ceremonies you see. And if you went through the hall - through the centre - it was "Move over! Move over!" He wouldn't let you go through the middle. Very strict, no drinks allowed; they kept them real good.... Just below the Hibernian Hall there's a hotel and you had to go down and have drinks. I never saw a drunk at the dancing all the time I was going. If you came there drunk you wasn't allowed in. So they kept everything very clean. Only thing, I once saw two girls having a fight in the hall. They fought by pulling one anothers' hair. Over a boy it was - both wanted the boy.⁵⁸

They used to have a lot of excursions from Charters Towers down to Macrossan. All the picnics were held on the river bank. You'd go for the day. You'd go

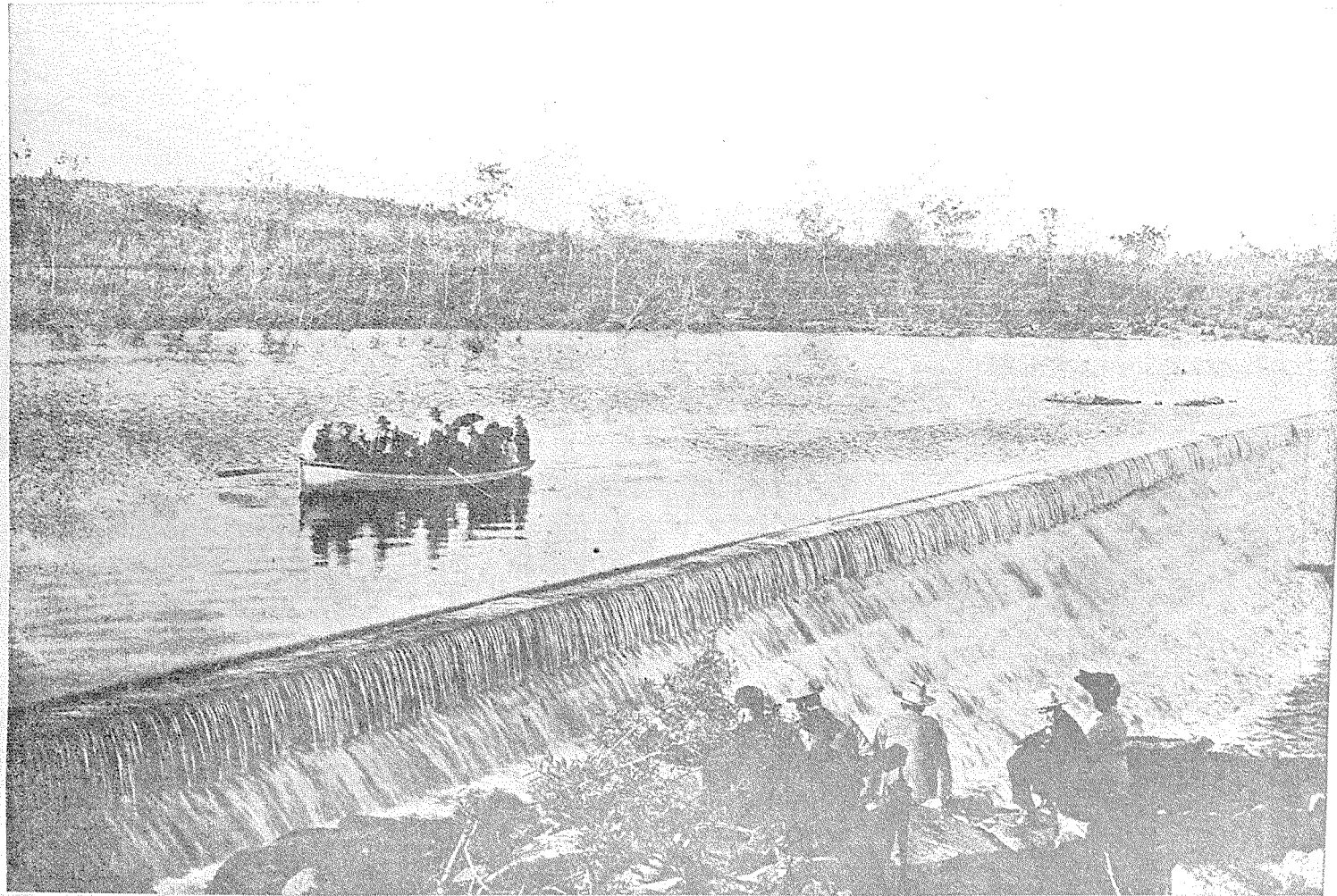
straight after breakfast and be back in time - around dusk.... Families or groups you know. Lot of Sunday Schools would go on excursions either down to Macrossan or up to Southern Cross - up that way.... You used to take the train to Macrossan to the bridge. And then of course, once the weir was built you set off very early in the morning to get a position on the banks of the Burdekin at the weir.... Half the town would be picnicking on the banks of the Burdekin ...on holidays. Very often family parties or parties of friends or societies where the whole society would go for a picnic on the river bank. You had to have a conveyance to get there, a buggy and horse. They had double buggies and that would take six. Or buses - a society might hire a horse bus for the day. Then the Broughton too was a favourite picnic.... And Towers Hill - we used to climb Towers Hill and have a picnic on the top of the hill.... Usually you boiled the billy. You took your sandwiches and cakes and boiled the billy. Took your milk and sugar.... Fresh milk wrapped well in damp cloth.²⁵

For the young the weekdays were occupied by school. Experiences varied:

On Charters Towers there was an Infants' School and the State School - the Girls' School. When you were five you went to the Infants' School and when you were seven you went to the Girls' School and the boys went to the Boys' School behind the Courthouse Hotel.... You stood in line...then the music would start and we'd start to sing going into school:

The cat came into school one day,
Shoo, shoo! Go out black cat.
The teacher chased it round and round,
Shoo, shoo! Go out black cat.

TOWERS WEIR BUILT ON THE BURDEKIN IN 1902



I can't remember any more. But when you came to your seat you stayed there..... Then when you were seven you went over to the Girls' School - that's in High Street.³ Girls' School, that's where I learned my education. And when I left school there were no secondary schools and that. When you finished primary school that was the end of it.... You could be sent south to be educated. If their parents had money they sent them away.⁶⁴

We were all born in Charters Towers, three girls.... Then we were all sent away to school. Ethel went first to Armidale, to NEGS; and I went to Melbourne because I used to get bronchitis rather often and I had some aunts there and so if anything happened they could look after me. And my youngest sister, she really followed a headmistress who the family thought a tremendous woman.... She bought Abbotsleigh in Sydney.... Once a year was all we got home.... We had only five weeks holiday.... For boys there was the grammar school in Townsville.... In Charters Towers...Tommy Martin had a school.... Once they were sitting in...Euclid, and nobody was enjoying it.... Mr Martin had lost his wife and was having a frightful time bringing up his four children. And he had a little garden - a vegetable garden. He was oh so proud of this. And all at once a boy put up his hand and said, "Sir, the goats are in the garden." With that the whole school went chasing goats. After that, if anybody got into trouble with his work he'd say there were goats in the garden.... I remember when I wanted to do the scholarship my father explained that I mustn't do it because I was going away to school and all I'd do was stop another little girl from going It was a great effort to get children away. The

expense was so great.... Crowds of us went.⁶

I started school when I was five - I stayed till about fifteen.... You see you used to go up to sixth class - primer one, primer two, primer three, fourth class and up to sixth class. Sixth class was the highest.... You went through a lot of hard books. We had a nice little library and learned a lot of things. Good sewing.... We had a Sister - she was a Good Samaritan - who could do anything in the line of lace, anything. She even taught us point lace. She was wonderful.... At school reading and writing - copybooks! I'm telling you you did proper writing.... In the other grades you got printing - the German printing and the Old English - all that. We used to have exercises and you printed the parsing or grammar or geography. You'd print it and put scrolls around it if you could do it and make it pretty like that. We'd got to do our homework properly, I'll tell you. You could get the cane - or they'd get you to do it again.... If you went home and said you'd got the cane, she'd say, "You must have deserved it!" They usen't to wear uniforms. Any dress, so long as you were clean and tidy. You wore your shoes at all times - shoes, stockings and a hat.... If you were going to give a concert to the bishop or somebody, we'd dress out in our best white if we had one - and a bow. The Sisters would get them made, a nice little bow of colour - the bishop's colour. And I remember reading the address for the concert being very proper - you didn't turn your eye. Everything would be so quiet.... We had a certain amount of awe.⁶⁵

I went to the Queenton School. I'll tell you old Charlie Edwards was teaching me. Anyhow, he was

always sending me up to the cane for bad writing in my exercise books. And one of our brothers was only young when his mother died and he came and lived with us.... Anyhow he met him in the street one night and he said, "Hey listen, you keep off young Beat.... You're getting too hot.... We're going to send a report to the Education Department." There was about four or five of that class that left then, and anyhow he got the sack from teaching school. Oh he was a beast.... We had to do the right thing you know. Oh you'd get the cane. I didn't like getting the cane so I tried to behave myself.⁶⁷

In those days the caning was very strict and I can remember seeing a senior teacher lay a cane across a girl's bottom at Richmond Hill School.... In a class-room of about four sets of desks and this poor unfortunate bent over and.... It was a singing lesson and she was probably playing up.... Things were hard [Father] drove a boy especially to school. Got down and chained the wheel of his cart to deliver the boy to the office and by the time he got back into his coat the boy was gone. Mr Cunningham gave the boy a notebook and everytime he came to school Cunningham was to stamp it.... So the scamp stamped his own.... Cunningham was very good. But I can remember the children had been stealing Chineese apples and apparently the police had complained and old headmaster came out and he had a dirty black spoon... had been put in the flame of a candle to sterilize, and he made this boy take this stuff.⁴⁴

I went to the Boys' School when I did go. I hated school and they had a job to get me there. And many times dad laid it into me too for it. All my fault.

It wasn't his fault. He was a good old dad. I wouldn't go to school.⁹⁶ I got an idea old granny might have asked me which one I wanted to go to.... Three mile out there - and that was the bush mind you, every inch of it - is Black Jack School. Three mile that way - and I had to pass through a lot of mining heaps and stuff they'd spewed up out of the ground. You had to get around these somehow to get to the State School - both state schools.... Whichever way I went it was three miles. So I chose the one going into town.... The school teachers were thoughtful. I got up at three o'clock. They used to watch me... if I went to sleep they used to tell the others to be a bit quieter and after I'd had a bit of sleep I might be ready to go. I don't know how they handled the part of waking me up, but I know I used to go to sleep.*

I went to the Boys' School for a while and there was a teacher I didn't get on with. This fellow there, he had to pick out some youngsters who could skip the class. He picked them out and gave them to the headmaster at the Boys' School. Then he said he might want a few more. He picked out the second lot, and I wasn't in any of these. Then they had an examination ...they had ten subjects and ten marks for each subject. I got ninety-eight. I always remember I got nine for copybooks and I spelt GARDEN as GANDER - carelessness. They were the two marks I missed. The headmaster came in and he abused this teacher - he didn't know his class.... He shouldn't have done it in front of the class. And you know that fellow set to me after that. Oh he used to belt me like anything. Course they did belt you in those days. So any rate my mother took me away and I went to this other school.... And I sat for

the examination - the telegram boys' examination - and I topped Queensland and went to start in the post office in 1911.³⁴

I went to Queenton School of course and then I went to Ipswich Girls' Grammar School, in the days when there was no connection. We had to go by boat then.... I didn't even do my Junior. Girls didn't in those days - girls didn't. They kept all their time to educate the boys that had to be trained to enter their profession and that. And then I went home and went into the shop with my father...until the boys were able to take over and I could get out. And I went nursing. I was in my late twenties when I went nursing.²⁵

There was still work for those who left school in the first decade of the twentieth century:

At sixteen my father got me a job. He was getting a new pair of trousers made and he asked them if they had any vacancies. They said yes they had.... London and American, in Gill Street, Charters Towers.... [I was] paid half a crown, that's two and sixpence. My mother gave me sixpence for pocket money and kept the two shillings - that went on for twelve months. Sixteen I was then. We never had a chair to sit on; we sat on boxes, kerosene boxes. You all had your own box. I was there for twelve months and then I plucked up courage to go for a rise.... And one of the girls who was there used to stutter very bad, and so she said, "While you are there will you ask for one for me?" And I said, "Oh yes. I'll do that." I plucked up my courage to ask the manager.... He said, "Do you think you're worth it?" I said, "Yes, that's what I'm



"I went nursing...."

here for." So he gave it to both of us.... And the union man came around. I was on piece work - it was a very slack time, and the union man came round. It was only five shillings for a ticket in those days.... The job I had was only worth eight and six, and he wanted five shillings out of it. So I said, "Well you can't get it." He never came back.⁶⁴

I was a milliner and I did all the millinery for the family. I used to do the millinery at work, then I'd come home at night and do a little bit of millinery for the other girls. I worked at Daking-Smiths.... In those days they had like a sort of frame you'd make. And then you'd get this stiff stuff and put it over wet and make a frame for a hat. Then you'd do all the trimmings on the hats and that. In those days they wore big sun hats; they'd put all the ruche underneath and ruche on the top and put flowers around. And all the children had these lovely big hats.... Straw, and sometimes we made them out of soft material - flowers, ribbon - they were material flowers and ribbons. They used to do all nice colours - pastel colours. And, oh, we used to have a terrible lot of orders out west.... I think they put out a catalogue. You'd get a picture and you had to make that hat from the picture.... You are taught, you know. When you'd go there first you'd only have a little bit of running and that. You've got to start from the bottom; and you're taught then as you go up. In the workroom there must have been a dozen girls.... They'd have a millinery room, a dressing room - they had a head girl over us, Miss Tollington I think was the name.... And there was another girl there, she'd make all the babies' bonnets...oh, they were lovely. All tucks and lace on them.... There was plenty of work for girls -

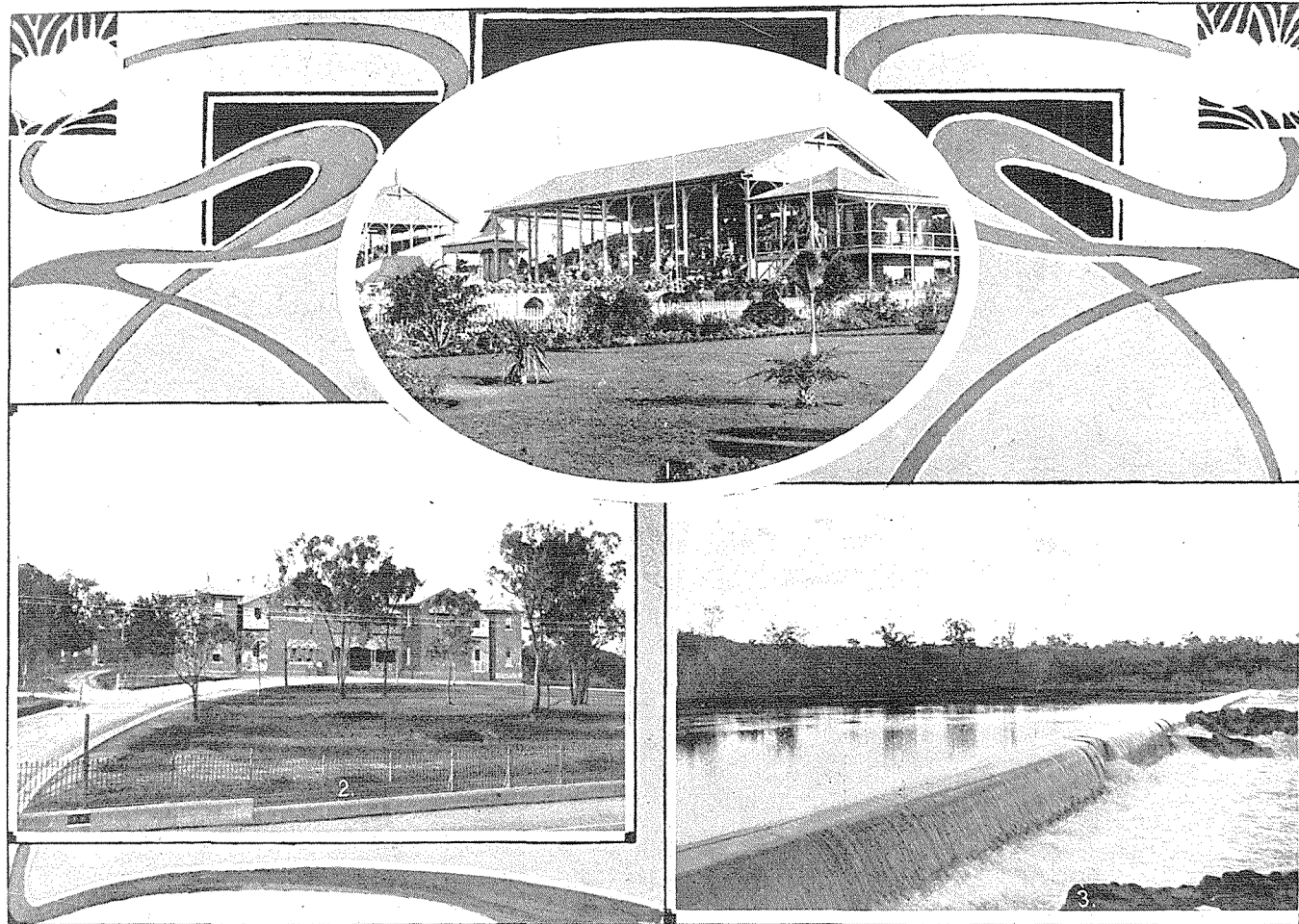
most girls got a job then.⁶⁶

I think our boys were working in the mines. My father put George to school. Walter went into the foundry...Alf was apprenticed to Ben Toll, carpenter and undertaker, and Robbie was apprenticed to old Alec Weimar the blacksmith under the Pyrites Works.... Well Alf came to Townsville one time with a crowd of boys, and apparently they won some money in a pak-a-pu and they got on and went to Rockhampton.... And the police cab went out and brought them home.... Well of course Alf was out of his apprenticeship and when Walter turned a certain age his foundry didn't please him - he went into the mines. Robbie was at the blacksmith's shop but...used to leave old Alec and go up the steps to Brown's monument. And he'd sit and watch old Alec do his blacksmithing.... George went to school till he was twenty-one or twenty-two, and Martin, the grammar school master, said to my father, "He knows as much as I do now. Don't send him any longer." So he took a job as book-keeper at Surgeon's butcher's shop. But he was getting twenty-five shillings a week as book-keeper...and my brothers were working in the mines getting two pound five shillings a week.⁴⁴

At thirteen I went mining. [Dad] had a tribute over here at the Mexican.... We had a show there on the surface and it was a pretty good show. It lasted about three years that job. And that's where I started work. I used to be down below and him and a man called Campbell, they had the show between them.... And there was D'Arcy Campbell, the son, and my brother - they used to do the windlass work - had a windlass on top pulling the stuff up. And I used to go down below,

and there was a little truck. I used to have to fill the buckets on the little truck, to run it in and hook it on the rope and pull the knocking line. And they'd pull it up. Then I went to work for this blacksmith, Mr Lowcock, just up the road here he had his blacksmith's shop. And he used to build the big waggon wheels - all horse teams there were in those days.... He was a hard old man but I put in a couple of years with him and I learned a lot from him.... I got seven shillings a week, that's what I got. And I asked him for a raise and he went crook at me. He said, "My father had to pay for me to learn my trade in England." And he said, "I'm giving you seven shillings a week and learning you the trade. "No," he said. "You'll get no rise here." But he gave me an extra shilling at the end of the week.... One thing I'm proud of: I would hand it over to my mother. Always did, right through.⁹⁶

I left school about fourteen.... The first job I had - spare boy they called it - on teams.... Then later I had my own horses.... I had thirteen all in one string. One in the shaft for the dray...then I got a wagon with four wheels and you had to have two horses in the shaft.... One you called him the leader. When I wanted him to go that way I said "Hoot Hootover!" The shafter he was a strong horse.... It was pretty rough on him too.... They had a sort of saddle on him with a groove in it...and the chain was greased and used to run through that.... I carted wood to Wallaces Day Dawn, Bonnee Dundee, Recompense - all over the place. Sometimes I'd have four cord: 128 feet is one cord. You put it in stacks...and then they measured it.... You go by the height. Six feet and six feet long - they multiplied these and that's how they found



(1) Grandstand at the Racecourse, Charters Towers.
 (2) Charters Towers District Hospital.

(3) The Weir on the Burdekin, from which
 Charters Towers draws its water supply.

out how many cords.... And they paid you thirty shillings a cord. That was the most I ever got.... Three cords a day - then, when we got out further we could only make three trips a week - nine cords a week.... Get up early in the morning and muster the horses. You see there were no paddocks those times - no fences or anything like that. You just got up early in the morning and brought them up.... You had a spare boy for company more than anything.⁵⁸

As the mines petered out, however, work was harder to find:

Well I did anything I could get. I used to shift a lot of houses. A lot of people living away out you know, and it is surprising that dozens and dozens of houses went to Townsville. Dozens of them went out west and the stations would come in and buy them.... And I tell you that's when Charters Towers went bung. There was a lot of empty houses everywhere and you could get them for fifty and sixty - up to a hundred, hundred and fifty pounds.⁹⁶ Its decline started in 1912 and went down suddenly.... All those miners took jobs anywhere.... Over a thousand houses went from Charters Towers. They came down to Townsville, Home Hill, Ayr.³⁴

You'd see people going of course. And other towns were progressing and the population of Charters Towers ...dropped from 30,000 to 7,000 over all those years. They scattered all over - particularly all over North Queensland. Everybody knew everybody else and you knew where they'd gone.... They went out and left their families in Charters Towers. The husbands worked out in the western mines. The women stayed home in Charters Towers and looked after and educated

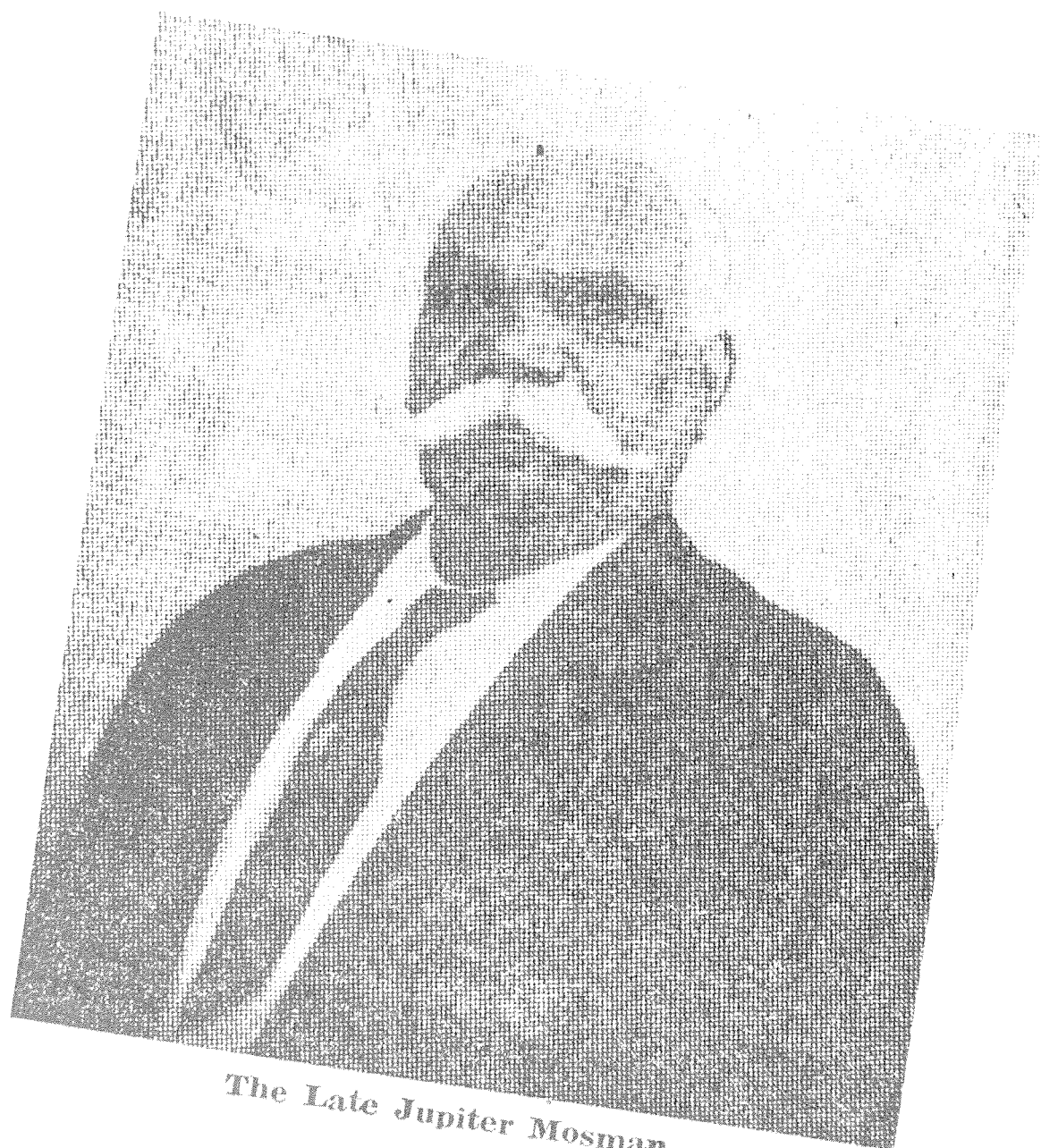
their children and the men went out. Then they all closed down for three weeks at Christmas - the western mines. There was one of the great nights early in the New Year when they all went back. The trains were crowded when they all went back.... They always had to go away to work...the mines were closing. The women coped. They had their families to look after, and of course the men sent them the money to keep them.... It was hard on them because the husband had to be kept where he was. But they got on.²⁵ Dad went out to Duchess to work but we stopped in Charters Towers. And as each one left school, they came to Townsville to get work. Till it got to my age then mum decided that we'd all come to Townsville.⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

Although the town of Charters Towers survived, it was no longer The World. Despite its being declared a city in 1909, production and population were falling rapidly. In a last-ditch effort to revive large-scale mining Thomas Mills, in 1913, proposed a scheme involving the amalgamation of Mills United and the Brilliant Deeps to sink a circular shaft, twenty feet in diameter and 4,000 feet deep, in Lissner Park. It was projected that it would meet the Brilliant reef at around 2,300 feet and the Day Dawn at 4,000.¹ However the necessary government loan of £60,000 was not forthcoming and the scheme was abandoned. With its final hope shattered, that year the town's population fell by 1,600 and 220 houses were shifted to Townsville.²

The outbreak of the first World War further inhibited investment, hastening the decline of the field.³ By 1920 production was down to 10,000 ounces and the population was half that of 1900. The state Labor government, committed to the revival of the mining industry, had purchased the Venus Mill during 1919 and its batteries crushed small parcels of ore until 1930 when Thomas Egan took over on a royalty basis.⁴ As the depression and the revaluation of gold led to a rise in the activities of fossickers and

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1. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Report of the Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Proposal of Thomas Mills*.
 2. K.Buckley and K.Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp: The Australian Company in the South Pacific* (Sydney 1981), Vol.1, p.200.
 3. Queensland Department of Mines, *The Effects of War on the Mining Industry*. A/6490, QSA.
 4. Queensland Department of Mines, *The Venus State Battery*. A/8617-9, QSA.



The Late Jupiter Mosman

Gold Production in Queensland to the end of 1915

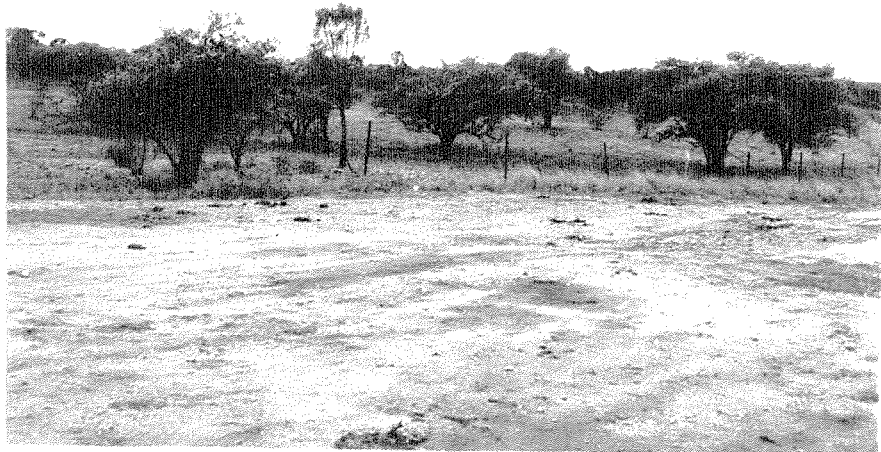
Goldfield	Total Production	% of Total output of Queensland
	fine oz.	
Charters Towers (incl. Cape River)	6,548,705	34.6
Mount Morgan (incl. Rockhampton)	4,370,455	23.1
Gympie	3,235,416	17.1
Palmer	1,327,929	7.0
Ravenswood	857,806	4.6
Croydon	761,666	4.0
Etheridge, Oaks and Woolgar	589,142	3.1
Hodgkinson	229,706	1.2
Other fields	1,015,511	5.3
State of Queensland	18,936,336	100.0

Source: Reid, *The Charters Towers Goldfield*, p. 63.

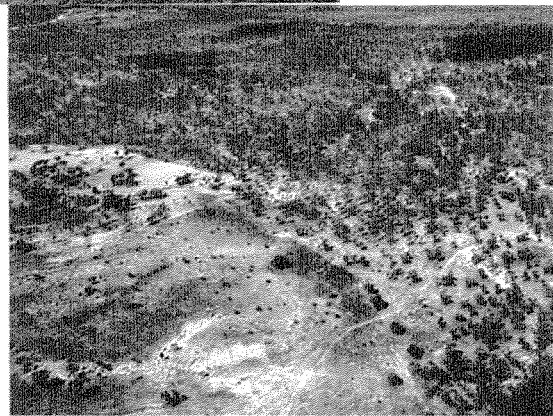
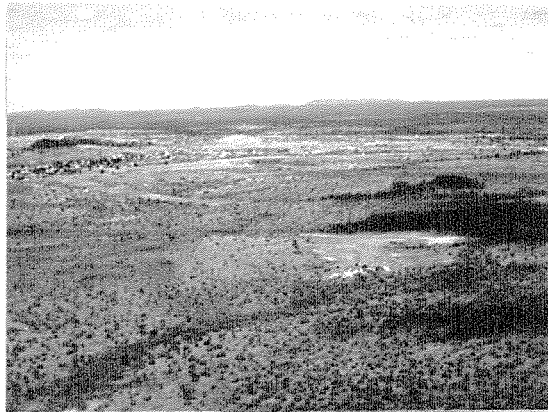
small-scale miners, the mill was refurbished in 1937. production rose to a peak of 16,000 ounces in 1939 before the outbreak of World War Two brought the industry to a virtual standstill. Despite this flurry, the only sizeable mine to reopen during the 1930s was the Black Jack.

By this time, however, the town had long ceased to be dependent on the mining industry. Charters Towers' survival was due rather to the presence of educational and other institutions to service the needs of the surrounding pastoral districts. Indeed the "inside" mines, which had been responsible for the bulk of the field's production, were vanishing, leaving remarkably little trace on the face of the city. Such mining machinery as had not been shifted to other fields was broken up and sold for scrap-metal. Mine and mill buildings were moved or demolished. Even the chimney of the Pyrites Works was pulled down during World War Two for fear it would act as a landmark for enemy aircraft. The shafts filled with rubble and goats took over the hills of the North Australia line which had first attracted Hugh Mosman's band of prospectors to the field. The keening of crows replaced the thunder of stamps. Even the massive dumps of yellow cyanide tailings which mark the sites of the larger mills are currently under threat from rising gold prices and improved extraction technology.

The landscape has kept its scars. All the tall timber within a radius of ten miles of Charters Towers has been cut out, and secondary regrowth inhibited by grazing horses, cattle and goats. Exotic plants, in particular Chinee Apple and Rubber Vine, have proved tougher than native species, and it is unlikely that



Environmental damage - erosion and replacement of original vegetation by Chinese apple.



Altered vegetation around Charters Towers. Aerial photographs show changes in vegetation types. Surface photograph shows typical regrowth vegetation.

the vegetation will ever again resemble the "open-timbered" country remarked on by the Gregory brothers in 1856. Timber cutting and excessive grazing have left erosion gullies, while natural water courses have been polluted and often blocked by the cyaniders. In this ravaged land stands Charters Towers - a small monument to the deeds and misdeeds of North Queensland's vanished quartz miners.

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Endnote: Points raised by one of the examiners

The problems raised by the examiner arise from the structure of the thesis which uses a series of themes to probe the history of Charters Towers. This concept makes it possible to span an extended period but results in some notable omissions on which the examiner has commented. As requested the five main points are discussed in the order posed.

1. Pastoralists in the Kennedy welcomed the advent of mining in the district. By the mid-1860s the industry was in a slump. Due probably to the lifting of the American Civil War blockade on cotton, wool prices had dropped sharply. The New South Wales wool price was 23/4d a pound in 1861, 18/3d in 1865 and fell to 13/8d by 1870. Many squatters had, therefore, turned to beef production in the first half of the decade. This did not solve their problems for the herds were stricken by pleuropneumonia and credit was squeezed after the London financial crisis of July 1866 - a year of drought. The most important problem, however, lay in the transport of stock to the centre of population. Pastoralists were forced, in the late 1860s, to resort to the boiling down works in Townsville. The discovery of gold and subsequent influx of population provided a local market for beef. Prices rose rapidly after the discovery of Cape River and the settlement of a permanent reefing field on Charters Towers confirmed the relative prosperity of the industry.

The squatters who reaped so much benefit from the field had, as the examiner suggested, cleared the way for its settlement by "dispersing" the Aboriginal population. The policy of dispersal was introduced into the district in 1861 when Dalrymple brought a team of Native Police into the Kennedy and a detachment was stationed in the upper Burdekin in 1863. In addition it was both condoned and expected (though illegal) that the pastoralists take a hand in "defence" matters. By 1864 Aboriginal counterattacks were at their height and the number of European deaths was not inconsiderable. A further detachment of Native Police was camped at Dalrymple in 1868 but, by that time, the conflict had waned markedly and "letting in" to the runs became the general policy. Archival sources revealed only one piece of evidence of conflict between miners and Aborigines.

This consisted of a request from a resident of Millchester for the dispersal of a nearby Aboriginal encampment on the grounds that the nakedness and "lewd practices" of its inhabitants might upset his wife and children.

As a postscript it might be mentioned that Hugh Mosman was married to an Aboriginal woman whom the ratebooks show living in a bark hut in the unsurveyed area of the town. It is my opinion that Jupiter was Hugh Mosman's son.

2. I agree that Charters Towers became the dominant centre because of its proximity to the richest mines. This, and Charters' action in reserving blocks there for public offices, had led to heavy investment in the area in 1872. Millchester was still not surveyed when, in 1877, Charters Towers became a municipality. Before the passing of the Local Government Act of 1878, the declaration of a municipality was on the initiative of its inhabitants. Perhaps due to its distance from Charters Towers and its unsurveyed state, the inclusion of Millchester was not considered. The survey was important because of its implications for land ownership and therefore rateable value and voting rights. When the Divisional Boards Act of 1879 extended local government to rural areas, the Dalrymple Divisional Board was formed. Millchester dominated local government in Dalrymple during the period under review. The first Board consisted of John Deane, Fred O'Donnell, T.B. Bearup, E.D. Miles and J.B. Whitehead, from the mining industry; and pastoralists William Hann, W. Chatfield and Walter Vannech. Deane took the Chair and the all-important Finance Committee consisted of three miners and a squatter. Within a year Miles and Chatfield had been replaced by Thomas Buckland, a miner, and Fred Hamilton, a pastoralist with strong business interests in the town. If anything this increased urban control of local government. Urban-rural rivalries surfaced during debates, but the reality of the situation was that the rural Division 3 often had difficulty finding someone to represent it.

In 1882 the railway station was built at Queenton, mid-way between the two local government centres. At the time there was some discussion about the possibility of building a branch line to Charters Towers,

but the proposal was rejected for financial reasons. I agree that the position of the railhead assisted the growth in importance of Gill Street, although its role as a connecting road between the main mining and milling areas had assured its importance from 1872.

When the Queenton Shire was set up under the Local Government Act of 1902, the urban representatives from Dalrymple were absorbed and Dalrymple became a rural shire. When, in 1916, Queenton was abolished and its area divided between the two older local authorities, mining was in decline and urban hegemony was not re-established in Dalrymple.

3. In early Charters Towers, as on other mining fields, the Warden exercised a great deal of power. He issued miners rights, collected revenue and collated statistics, presided over the Warden's Court, conciliated disputes over claims, arranged gold escorts, acted as police magistrate to regulate law and order, supervised all registrations and censuses and provided for the poor and sick. As the fields developed into towns, the Warden's importance fell off as his functions were gradually assumed by more normal authorities and support systems.

The role of the Warden in Charters Towers was particularly difficult due to the fields attenuated primary accumulation period which brought the authority patterns of western capitalism into being very quickly. I would go further and suggest that the assault on Hackett in Ravenswood in 1871 and the violence offered to Charters in Charters Towers the following year suggest that the legal powers of the warden, so useful on a temporary field, were not really appropriate to reefing districts. Miners began early to have recourse to courts of appeal, and company laws were soon to be as important to them as mining regulation. Socially the Wardens did not play prominent roles in Charters Towers. Indeed, they tended to avoid committees and social functions, attendance at which might lead, in the event of a dispute, to accusations of bias towards individuals or groups in the community. This is not to deny the importance of Charters and, after 1880, Philip Frederick Sellheim. They were particularly influential in that it was their

view of the mines which was relayed to the outside world.. The Warden report to the Undersecretary for Mines played a considerable part in influencing government policy towards the field, and its publication in local and southern newspapers influenced migration to and investment in the district.

The influence of newspaper editors is also undeniable. The following newspapers were published in Charters Towers in addition to specialized sporting and mining reviews:

Northern Miner (1872 to date); Northern Advocate (1873-77); Towers Herald and Mining Record (1877-99); Northern Mining Register (1891-92); North Queensland Register (1892 to date) Eagle and New Eagle (1893-1906); Charters Towers Times (1877 Australian Republican (1890-92); Evening News (1891-92); Charters Towers Mining Standard (1896-1904); Evening Telegraph (1901-21).

I certainly did not intend to underestimate the influence of the owner/editor (1872-90) of the Northern Miner, Thadeus O'Kane. His contribution both as a journalist and as an active participant in community affairs, was very considerable. O'Kane's vigorous campaign undoubtedly helped to achieve many of the town's amenities and drew attention to deficiencies in the others. He also provided early training for many of the next generation of politicians and writers, notably Andrew Dawson and F.C.B. Vosper, and indeed claimed to have produced more trained tradesmen than any other paper in the north. Less creditably, he contributed more than his share to the growth of racism and sectarianism in the community.

4. I agree with the examiner that the text gives the impression that Charters Towers became a non-Labor electorate after 1907 and will correct this impression when revising the text.

After Dunsford's seat was lost in the by-election of 1905 the electorate was redistributed. Country areas were added to the gold mining area of Charters Towers to such an extent that the electorate

more than doubled from 4,896 to 10,581 voters. Both Charters Towers and Kennedy were lost by Labor in the State elections of 1907. I believe, therefore, that there is good reason to end the history of the rise and fall of the old mining union / Labor seat of Charters Towers at that time. Another redistribution before the 1912 poll created the seat of Queenton which Labor won in that year, though Charters Towers still eluded the Party.

However in 1915 both seats were won by the ALP and this election marked the beginning of an extended period of Labor voting which, as in Queensland generally, did not end until the split of the 1950s (Queenton ceased to exist in 1932). Why this should be poses an interesting problem, particularly in light of the 1921 redistribution which made Charters Towers roughly equivalent to the old Kennedy electorate of the 1870s and 1880s. Since the post-1915 period is outside the time span of my thesis I can only speculate that the possible reasons for this are

- a) that this coincided with an era of a state-wide labor support and conservative disarray.
- b) that the candidates were predominantly AWU men and that the extended boundaries would have taken in a considerable number of AWU rural workers such as station hands, navvies and main roads camps.
- c) that the electorate's conservatism favoured the known - the sitting member. A major shift (redistribution, death of the sitting member, massive state-wide swing) was needed to unseat him.

5. Clearly I have expressed myself poorly on page 131. The intention of the paragraph in question, "Despite....vendors", was to suggest that "greed and chicanery" on the part of both local and overseas investors was a greater problem than inefficiency. I agree that later experiences, the Queen Cross is an example, do not suggest much improvement in this aspect of Charters Towers mining. The problem footnote 48 was intended to query also McCarty's statement on the use of custom mills.

I believe that two characteristics of local management were particularly important. The first of these is the lack of overall control of the whole process of mining, milling and cyaniding by a single manager. The second was the strong role played in management by company directors. These factors combined with the early Queensland mining regulations to produce piecemeal development which gave rise to many problems later in the life of the field. In milling the early method of recrushing meant that mill layout and machinery were geared to fine grinding, so that a reform of milling methods necessitated some major changes to the flowsheet. In the mines early practices gave rise to ventilation and drainage problems. These are evidenced by the Brilliant Central - Extended wrangle (Chapter 16) and the tragedy of the Brilliant PC.

Nevertheless, even the early managers were pace-setters for the rest of North Queensland and, despite the handicap of the early history, later development was comparable to that of the Victorian and South African fields. Certainly, in the twentieth century, managers were quick to adopt new technology (note the very early use of the filterpress in the Burdekin Mill). The handicap of its share-market conscious directors remained to the end of the life of the field. In this, however, Charters Towers was not unique.

- pp. 106-7. Though he frequently visited Charters Towers, J.P.M. Connolly was the parish priest at Townsville.
- p.111. I agree that the lodges retained important insurance and social functions at least to the end of the period under review. This is made clear by the oral evidence. Nevertheless their heyday was, I believe, in the 1880s before alternate organizations took over some of their activities.
- p.134. Dairy, pig, stockfeed and fruit farming were carried on in the immediate area. Labourers migrated also from coastal farming districts.
- p.202. A horse of mullock is an unproductive block of country rock cutting the reef. The use of the term "horse" to describe an obstruction in a vein was imported from Britain.

p.375.

Mafeking did indeed loom large in the consciousness of Charters Towers. Tapes recorded in the 1980s contain references to celebrations to end "The War" - meaning the Boer War rather than later conflicts. However since Joan Neal's recent work, Charters Towers and the Boer War, BA(Hons) thesis, JCUNQ, 1980, covered the event in detail, I felt that a summary was all that was required.