

This file is part of the following work:

**Doran, Christine Ray (1981) *North Queensland separatism in the nineteenth century*. PhD Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland.**

Access to this file is available from:

<https://doi.org/10.25903/h5e7%2Dg718>

Copyright © 1981 Christine Ray Doran

The author has certified to JCU that they have made a reasonable effort to gain permission and acknowledge the owners of any third party copyright material included in this document. If you believe that this is not the case, please email

[researchonline@jcu.edu.au](mailto:researchonline@jcu.edu.au)

NORTH QUEENSLAND SEPARATISM

in the

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Thesis submitted by

Christine Ray DORAN BEd-BA(Hons) (JCUNQ)

in October 1981

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

the Department of History at

James Cook University of North Queensland

I, the undersigned, the author of this thesis, understand that the James Cook University of North Queensland will make it available for use within the University Library and, by microfilm or other photographic means, allow access to users in other approved libraries. All users consulting this thesis will have to sign the following statement:

“In consulting this thesis I agree not to copy or closely paraphrase it in whole or in part without the written consent of the author; and to make proper written acknowledgement for any assistance which I have obtained from it.”

Beyond this, I do not wish to place any restriction on access to this thesis.

SIGNATURE

*19 October 1981*  
.....

DATE

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines various manifestations of separatism in north Queensland in the last century. Three separation movements are delineated, and analyzed in terms of aims; rationale; organization; degree and bases of support; motives of participants; strategies adopted; and reasons for failure. Other manifestations of separatism - such as proposals for provincial autonomy, "financial separation" and administrative decentralization on a regional basis - are also discussed. Chapter 1 emphasizes the similarity between northern movements and earlier separatist movements in Australia. Chapter 2 examines the problems associated with the beginnings of settlement in the north, which contributed to separatist sentiment during the 1860s and 1870s, and to some extent during the following two decades. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 deal respectively with the first northern movement of 1866-67, the movement for a Crown Colony in 1869-72, and proposals for "financial separation" in the 1870s. Chapters 6 to 11 trace the development of the north's best organized separation movement from 1882 to 1894. The final chapter deals with separatist agitation after 1894, examining the relationship between separatism and the federation movement, and briefly surveying separatist activity in north Queensland in this century.

## DECLARATION

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 is given.

C.R. Doran  
October 1981

## CONTENTS

	Abstract	iii
	Statement on Sources	iv
	Illustrations, Maps, Tables	vi
	Abbreviations	vii
	Introduction	viii
Chapter 1	Separatist Heritage	1
Chapter 2	Problems of the Frontier	21
Chapter 3	The First Movement	40
Chapter 4	A Crown Colony	70
Chapter 5	Financial Separation	103
Chapter 6	Organizing	140
Chapter 7	The Case for Separation	194
Chapter 8	Strategy	237
Chapter 9	The Colonial Office	268
Chapter 10	Reorganizing	286
Chapter 11	Griffith's Provincial Scheme	327
Chapter 12	Separation and Federation	373
	Conclusion	399
	Appendices	412
	Bibliography	426

## MAPS

No. 1	The Australian States	2
No. 2	North Queensland 1866	39
No. 3	North Queensland 1871	68
No. 4	North Queensland 1890	139
No. 5	Queensland Railways 1890 (from <i>QV&amp;P</i> , 1890, Vol.3, p.567)	309

## ILLUSTRATIONS

G.E. Dalrymple and T.H. Fitzgerald	69
Samuel Griffith and Thomas McIlwraith	141
A Separation Rally	150
T. Willmetts and W. Kirk	158
H.B. Hubert and A. Rutledge	163
John Macrossan, Robert Philp and Hume Black	259
Advertisements in <i>Separation Carnival Programme</i>	318
2 Leaflets published by Townsville Separation League in 1893	363,364

## TABLES

1. Capital City Population as a % of Colonial Population	xi
2. Kennedy Electoral Results 1869	89
3. Exports and Imports 1892	206
4. 1876 Customs Revenue	224
5. Divisional Accounts 1876-77	225
6. 1876 Land Revenue	226
7. 1871 Divisional Balances	226
8. 1872 Divisional Balances	226
9. 1873 Divisional Balances	227
10. Local Debt 1859-77	227

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJPH</i>	<i>Australian Journal of Politics and History</i>
<i>AQ</i>	<i>Australian Quarterly</i>
<i>BC</i>	<i>Brisbane Courier</i>
<i>BO</i>	<i>Bowen Observer</i>
<i>BPP</i>	<i>British Parliamentary Papers</i>
<i>CBE</i>	<i>Cleveland Bay Express</i>
<i>CC</i>	<i>Cooktown Courier</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Cooktown Herald</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Cairns Post</i>
<i>CPD</i>	<i>Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates</i>
<i>C.Q.S.L.</i>	<i>Central Queensland Separation League</i>
<i>HS</i>	<i>Historical Studies</i>
<i>JCU</i>	<i>James Cook University</i>
<i>J.O.L.</i>	<i>John Oxley Library</i>
<i>JRAHS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</i>
<i>JRHSQ</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland</i>
<i>K.P.A.</i>	<i>Kennedy Provincial Association</i>
<i>K.P.C.</i>	<i>Kennedy Provincial Committee</i>
<i>LCD</i>	<i>Legislative Council Debates</i>
<i>LCJ</i>	<i>Journals of Legislative Council</i>
<i>M.L.</i>	<i>Mitchell Library</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Mackay Mercury</i>
<i>NA</i>	<i>Northern Age</i>
<i>NM</i>	<i>Northern Miner</i>
<i>NQH</i>	<i>North Queensland Herald</i>
<i>NQSC</i>	<i>North Queensland Separation Council</i>
<i>NQTTS</i>	<i>North Queensland Telegraph and Territorial Separationist</i>



*NS&TA*      *Northern Standard and Townsville Argus*

*NSW V&P*    *Votes and Proceedings of New South Wales Legislative  
Assembly*

*PDT*        *Port Denison Times*

*QPD*        *Debates of Queensland Legislative Assembly*

*QSA*        *Queensland State Archives*

*QV&P*      *Votes and Proceedings of Queensland Legislative Assembly*

*RM*         *Ravenswood Miner*

*TES*        *Townsville Evening Star*

*TH*         *Townsville Herald*

*TT*         *Townsville Times*

*UNE*        *University of New England*

## INTRODUCTION

From the mid-1860s until Australian federation in 1901, separatism was endemic in north Queensland: even when it was not the object of active campaigning, separation was part of a future confidently awaited, and sometimes it was a threat used to extract concessions from the colonial government. Its manifestations were ubiquitous. There were formal separatist organizations and campaigns, with public meetings, lectures and demonstrations. Newspaper editors harped on the topic in and out of season, continually relating northern news to the need for a separate government. Northern parliamentarians used similar tactics: thoroughly aired in debates on separation motions, separatist arguments were also introduced into parliamentary discussion on most other topics in an effort to promote northern interests. The paraphernalia of the movements - their petitions, pamphlets, leaflets, banners and badges - became part of the material culture of northern colonists. The separation theme was co-opted into commercial advertising, presumably because of its popular appeal. Even in areas where public opinion was divided, separation at least excited public interest. The strong feelings aroused in contests between the movements' supporters and opponents showed the importance of the issue for participants; as G.C. Bolton has remarked, separation was north Queensland's first great controversy.<sup>1</sup>

In these years, when political discussion throughout the Australian colonies centred increasingly on the issues of colonial federation, Imperial federation, class conflict and the emergence of Labour as a new political force, in the far north the question of separating northern from southern Queensland occupied at least as prominent a place in political debate. Separatism impinged upon northern attitudes toward most issues of the day; but its significance was not merely indirect. Organized separation movements were the focus of considerable financial and emotional investment by the people of the north over a period of four decades. As such, and

---

1. G.C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920* (Canberra 1972), p.182.

as manifestations of a recurring theme of regional disaffection within Australian states, they are worthy of serious historical attention.

Similar movements occurred in many parts of Australia during the 19th century. Originally the colony of New South Wales encompassed all of eastern Australia, but over the years a series of successful separation movements led to the progressive subdivision of the original territory. In 1825 the penal establishments of Tasmania based their claim to separation on the difficulty of administration from distant Sydney. Within a few years their arguments were echoed by residents of Port Phillip district which had been settled by land-hungry squatters, and later by the people of Moreton Bay, like Tasmania first established to hold the more intractable convicts at a safe distance from Sydney. Thus the borders of the four colonies of eastern Australia were set, and so they have remained to this day. Nevertheless, regional groups within these colonies continued to demand self-government. In New South Wales the northern tablelands and rivers district, the Riverina, Monaro in the south-east, and the western districts have at different times spawned separatist movements. "Princeland", spanning the South Australia-Victorian border, was proposed as a new colony by another group of separationists. Queensland was beset by separatist movements not only in the north, but also in the central districts;<sup>2</sup> a new colony in the north-west, and even an east-west division were mooted. North Queensland separation movements conformed to a pattern of regional movements within Australian states.

Underlying these movements was a set of common factors, characteristic of Australian conditions. As G. Blainey has shown, distance was the basis of many historical developments in Australia;<sup>3</sup> clearly separatism should be counted among them. Distance made geographical diversity within states more pronounced, and communications more difficult, turning regional communities inward, promoting group consciousness and a feeling of separateness. Distance

- 
2. See V.R. de V. Voss, *Separatist Movements in Central Queensland in the Nineteenth Century* (B.A.Hons. Sydney University 1952).
  3. G. Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (Melbourne 1968).

was one of the main arguments of all Australian separation movements, the basis for complaints about inefficient administration, lack of access to government, and lack of sympathy between metropolitan and outlying areas.<sup>4</sup> In Queensland, these grievances were intensified by the position of the capital, Brisbane, in the extreme south-east corner of the state.

Metropolitan primacy and centralization of administration, which have always been features of Australian states, also led to dissatisfaction in outlying areas. These phenomena resulted from the pattern of colonial settlement whereby a single original settlement was formed and essential official functions were concentrated in it. In Australia capital cities were always sea ports, and generally land transport systems channelled trade towards the capital as well; having early reached the point of economic take-off, their growth then became self-perpetuating.<sup>5</sup> Although there were several sizeable provincial cities in Queensland, the general Australian primacy pattern holds.

- 
4. E.g., see L.O. Frappell, "The Riverina Separation Agitation, 1856-1866" *JRAHS*, Vol.63, part 1, 1977, p.9; K.K. O'Donoghue, "Princeland: The Colony That Might Have Been" *Twentieth Century*, Vol.6, No.1, 1951, pp.24-25; R.McL. Harris, "The 'Princeland' Secession Movement in Victoria and South Australia, 1861-1867" *AJPH*, Vol.17, No.3, 1971, p.365, p.370, p.374.
5. See S. Glynn, *Urbanisation in Australian History, 1788-1900* (Melbourne 1970), pp.13-60; F.J.B. Stilwell, "Economic Factors and the Growth of Cities" in I.H. Burnley (ed.), *Urbanization in Australia: The Post-War Experience* (London 1974), pp.34-41; K.W. Robinson, "Processes and Patterns of Urbanisation in Australia and New Zealand" *New Zealand Geographer*, Vol.18, No.1, 1962, pp.33-35; D.U. Cloher, "A Perspective on Australian Urbanization" in J.M. Powell & M. Williams (eds), *Australian Space-Australian Time* (Melbourne 1975), pp.107-108; A.J. Rose, "Dissent from Down Under: Metropolitan Primacy as the Normal State" *Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol.7, No.1, 1966, pp.4-9.

TABLE 1: Capital City Population as a % of Colonial Population<sup>6</sup>

	<u>Sydney</u>	<u>Brisbane</u>	<u>Melbourne</u>	<u>Adelaide</u>	<u>Perth</u>	<u>Hobart</u>
1851	28	—	38	28	—	—
1861	27	20	23	28	33	28
1871	27	13	26	27	—	25
1881	30	14	31	33	30	23
1891	35	24	41	37	32	22
1901	37	24	40	39	33	20
1911	47	23	45	41	38	21

Outlying settlers protested at metropolitan domination of state legislatures, the relatively sparse population in outside districts considering themselves politically under-represented and their interests ignored.<sup>7</sup> Centralization in Australia has had two effects: first to provoke protests from outlying districts; and second to deprive these districts of sufficient power to achieve a restructuring of the political framework. The outcome has been recurrent, but usually unsuccessful, separatist agitation.

In Queensland this pattern was slightly modified, for with its large area and diverse conditions, and its long coastline with numerous potential ports, Queensland had a greater natural tendency towards decentralization. Although Brisbane was still unquestionably a primate city, arousing resentment from outside areas, there was also a strong impetus to regional development. In 1871 the Governor, Lord Normanby, remarked upon the way geography and climate had divided the colony into three areas: a tropical north with a fairly wide and well-watered coastal plain suitable for tropical agriculture, a drier central district more suited to pastoralism, and a temperate south.<sup>8</sup> Partly as a result, Queensland's economic development

---

6. From J.W. McCarty, "Australian Capital Cities in the Nineteenth Century" *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol.10, No.2, 1970, p.121.

7. E.g., see Harris, "Princeland secession", p.365, pp.368-369, p.374; G. Harman, "New State Agitation in New South Wales, 1920-1929" *JRAHS*, Vol.63, part 1, 1977, p.26, p.28, p.30.

8. Normanby to Kimberley 19 October 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol.1, p.662.

occurred to a large extent within a regional framework.<sup>9</sup> Settled at a time when the sea provided the cheapest form of communication, northern Queensland developed a number of ports of access to serve the pastoral, mining, and sugar-producing hinterland; roads and tracks led from the interior to these individual ports. The construction of three trunk railways westwards from Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane confirmed the tri-partite regional division of Queensland,<sup>10</sup> as an official at the Colonial Office noted:

there are in fact three provinces in Queensland, a result due no doubt in large measure to the fact that there are three trunk railways starting from the seaboard at Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville, and that each of these towns therefore has come to regard itself as a capital. Brisbane in the extreme South East corner of the Colony, has no railway communication with the parts served by the lines...With such an enormous area as Queensland has - 640,000 sq mls. - it would no doubt have been waste to have made all the railways converge to the capital as is the case in the other Colonies.... 11

Regional groups had pressed for these railways, and acquiescence in their demands reinforced regional tendencies; perhaps, as the official suggested, the legislature had been "too generous".<sup>12</sup> It was not until 1924 that the coastal line from Brisbane finally reached Cairns. As a consequence of these distinctive features of Queensland's development, separation movements in Queensland did not have the same rural versus urban flavour as other movements in Australia; the importance of inter-city rivalry, notably between Townsville and Brisbane,<sup>13</sup> was correspondingly greater.

That north Queenslanders were not alone in their moves for separation influenced the conduct of the movements. Co-operation and communication with contemporaneous movements - including,

- 
9. G. Lewis, *A History of the Ports of Queensland: A Study in Economic Nationalism* (Brisbane 1973), especially Chapter 2.
  10. J.H. Holmes, "Population Concentration and Dispersion in Australian States: A Macrogeographic Analysis" *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol.11, No.2, 1973, p.170.
  11. Anderson, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No.105, CO 234/62. Cf., Mercer, minute 5 June 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO 234/51.
  12. Anderson, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No.105, CO 234/62.
  13. C. Doran, *Separatism in Townsville, 1884-1894* (B.Ed.-B.A.Hons. JCU 1978), pp.44-48.

surprisingly, even the central Queensland movement - was notably infrequent. Yet the influence of earlier movements was immense. The arguments, the terminology, the organization, the very wording of petitions bore the impress of former movements. The inspiration of John Dunmore Lang, the most outstanding figure in Australian separatist circles, was omnipresent. Converted to the principle of small states during a visit to America in the 1840s, Lang thereafter promoted separatist causes in Port Phillip, Moreton Bay, the Riverina, northern New South Wales and, finally, north Queensland.

The history of separatist activity in Australia had a profound effect on the way north Queenslanders perceived their quest for self-government. The existence of kindred movements, especially the successful ones of Port Phillip and Moreton Bay, lent respectability and justification to northern efforts. The successive partitioning of New South Wales encouraged the thought that the process would continue; the prosperity and progress which had attended these developments suggested that the process should continue. Separatism became associated with the very idea of progress and endowed with the reverence shown towards that most optimistic of Victorian shibboleths.

Northern separationists knew that in pressing for separation from southern Queensland they were following a tradition in colonies of recent settlement for regional communities to demand an independent political existence once they became solidly established. In Australia, first Tasmania and then Victoria and Queensland had broken away from New South Wales because of the difficulties of distant government. Moreover, nearly coinciding with the first northern movement in the mid-1860s, there were movements with similar aims in the Riverina district on the New South Wales-Victorian border and in northern New Zealand; further afield, there was civil war over secession in the United States and sectional conflict in Canada culminating in Confederation. Clearly no isolated phenomena, separation movements in north Queensland were manifestations of a general trend among regional communities to seek political autonomy.

As an attitude of mind, regionalism, like nationalism or racism, is not easy to define. In the most general sense, a region is a part of a whole. From the viewpoint of a political state, a region

is basically a geographical entity, and is usually characterized by areal contiguity. Regions may be delineated according to a variety of criteria including climate, land use, population density, language and trading relationships. The range of objective criteria which may define regions is virtually limitless; Odum and Moore, for instance, analyzed as many as 700 different bases upon which regional divisions might be drawn in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Clearly regional boundaries will vary according to the criteria selected, which in turn will vary with the purpose of the researcher.<sup>15</sup>

Many different conceptions of the region have been developed by scholars with a wide range of interests.<sup>16</sup> Geographers have variously defined the region as "any portion of the earth's surface whose physical conditions are similar"; as "distinguished by the use to which it is put"; and as defined by "an *ensemble de rapports* between man and the natural milieu". Sociologists have seen the region as comprising a "constellation of communities"; as characterized by "a homogeneity of economic and social structure"; as a culture area, "an area whose people are bound together by mutual dependencies arising from common interests"; as "an area of which the inhabitants instinctively feel themselves a part". A Hindu sociologist, R. Mukerjee characterizes the region as a psychological complex:

The region is a common and coordinate set of stimuli, eliciting a similarity of responses, habits and feelings which are reinforced by gregariousness and which are moulded and stabilized into a characteristic mental type and pattern of living.

To some the region is defined by one or more dominant characteristics spread evenly across its area that give it a distinct identity and delimit it from adjoining regions.<sup>17</sup> These dominant characteristics may be physical, demographic, cultural,

---

14. H.W. Odum & H.E. Moore, *American Regionalism: A Cultural-Historical Approach to National Integration* (New York 1938), p.448.

15. See R.B. Vance, "The Regional Concept as a Tool for Social Research" in M. Jensen (ed.), *Regionalism in America* (Madison 1951), pp.119-140.

16. This paragraph is based upon *ibid.*, p.123.

17. J.W. McCarty, "Australian Regional History" *HS*, Vol.18, No.70, 1978, p.91.



economic or administrative. Geographers have called this type a formal or homogeneous region. Another conception of a region rests upon interdependence: the component parts of the region are not necessarily similar but stand in a relationship of significant interdependence through, for example, trade or communications networks. More difficult to delimit from other regions, these sometimes have a dominant focal centre, when they are designated nodal regions by geographers.<sup>18</sup> A third conception of a region which has been called a configurative region is an area cut off by barriers, either natural, like mountains, deserts or rivers, or man-made, like national borders.<sup>19</sup>

Regionalism is a sense of the distinctiveness of a region among its inhabitants:

a clustering of geographic, economic, sociological, and governmental factors to such an extent that a distinct consciousness, the recognition of a separate identity within the whole and the desirability of autonomous planning, cultural peculiarities and administrative freedom are theoretically recognized and actually put into effect. 20

Indeed for the purposes of students of regionalism, a region may be defined as an area of a country the occupants of which have a sense of social unity, engendered by proximity and shared experiences and interests. Thus F.J. Turner based his regional interpretation of American history on Josiah Royce's definition of a section:

any one part of a national domain which is geographically and socially sufficiently unified to have a true consciousness of its own ideals and customs and to possess a sense of its distinction from other parts of the country. 21

- 
18. R. Symanski & J.L. Newman, "Formal, Functional, and Nodal Regions: Three Fallacies" *Professional Geographer*, Vol.25, No.4, 1973, p.350.
  19. B.B. Rodoman, "Principal Types of Geographical Regions" *Soviet Geography*, Vol.13, No.7, 1972, pp.448-454; L. Wirth, "The Limitations of Regionalism" in Jensen (ed.), *Regionalism in America*, pp.382-383.
  20. M.E. Dimock, quoted by Odum & Moore, *American Regionalism*, p.276.
  21. D.M. Potter & T.G. Manning (eds.), *Nationalism and Sectionalism in America 1775-1897: Select Problems in Historical Interpretation* (New York 1949), p.84.

Hence a region may be said to exist when its inhabitants believe that it exists. Certain objective distinguishing features of physiography, demography or economic relationships will usually be found at the basis of this belief, but regional factors are only in part measurable and predictable:

in part they are traditional, contrived and emotional. Whether regionalism results from the growth of a sense of community, in turn dependent upon common traditions, interests and aspirations, or whether it results from man's rational analysis of economic and governmental problems needing solution, it is none the less regionalism. 22

In this thesis "north Queensland" is taken to be the whole area north of the latitude of Sarina. This corresponds to the new colony proposed in the 1880s and 1890s, to the new state proposed in this century, and to the northern administrative district defined in the Local Registries Act of 1887. On the face of it, the area seems so large and so geographically diverse that its designation as a region is questionable. Yet this thesis presents evidence that regionalism was prevalent in north Queensland in the 19th century; it was, in part, to this sentiment that northern separationists directed their appeals. Several factors contributing to this sense of regional identity are identified: the belief that the tropical climate set north Queensland apart from temperate districts; distance and isolation from established centres in the south; the idea that a new colony would eventually be formed in the north, continuing the pattern of successive separations from the "mother colony"; development of regional transport networks; administrative decentralization on a regional basis; the growth of Townsville as regional centre for both official and commercial functions; the dominance of primary production in the north and the idea that the basic sources of wealth were concentrated in the north.

In the United States and Canada, both comparable to Australia in area, scholars have given much greater attention to regionalism as a theme in national history. F.J. Turner, who led a school of American historians emphasizing the modifying influence of frontier conditions on imported cultures to produce a distinctive American culture, also stressed that this influence varied according to the characteristics

---

22. Quoting Dimock, Odum & Moore, *op. cit.*, p.23.

of each successive "section" through which the frontier passed.<sup>23</sup> Each section, differing in soils, climate and topography, as well as in social characteristics such as pressure of population and economic and religious aspirations, evolved distinctive economic interests and ideals; as each sought to mould national policy according to its interests, the clashes between them and the alliances they formed explained much of the nation's political history.<sup>24</sup> A similar regional interpretation of Australian history as a whole has not been attempted, although J.W. McCarty has outlined such an approach.<sup>25</sup>

The political expression of regionalism depends on the relationship between regions and existing political boundaries. In the United States the great "sections" encompass groups of states with similar interests:

Politically defined, sectionalism in the United States is the tendency of groups of states, bound in physical contiguity and joined by social and economic ties, to think more or less in common and, upon occasion, to act in common. 26

Consequently regionalism has been a force operating mainly in the federal arena; the interrelationship between sectionalism and nationalism has therefore been a major concern of American writers. Up till the Civil War sectionalism frequently gave rise - and not only in the southern states - to threats of secession from the Union.<sup>27</sup> In Australia, by contrast, with its relatively large states, regionalism has been a divisive force within states, with the

- 
23. In the main the terms "region" and "section" are used interchangeably in American writing. However, one writer who distinguishes the two, H.W. Odum, gives sectionalism a pejorative meaning of selfish preoccupation with parochial interests and defines a region as an integral part of the nation. H.W. Odum, "The Promise of Regionalism" in Jensen (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.397. Odum & Moore, *American Regionalism*, pp.35-39.
24. R.A. Billington (ed.), *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner* (Englewood Cliffs 1961), pp.4-7.
25. McCarty, "Australian Regional History", pp.97-101.
26. D. Davidson, *The Attack on Leviathan: Regionalism and Nationalism in the United States* (Chapel Hill 1938), p.23.
27. G. Moore, *The Missouri Controversy 1819-1821* (Lexington 1966), pp.4-5, p.12.

exception of Western Australian secessionism;<sup>28</sup> since 1901 the new state movements have been strongly committed to the federal union.

In the United States the antagonism between north and south, which centred on the slavery question and which was most evident in the 30 years preceding the Civil War, was the most significant manifestation of sectionalism. Comparisons were frequently made between this conflict and separatism in northern Queensland, usually by opponents of separation. Certainly there were parallels: like the southern states in America, north Queensland was predominantly a primary-producing area; secondary industry was mainly confined to southern Queensland, as it was, though to a lesser degree, to the northern states in America. Consequently disagreement over tariffs was an important cause of friction in both cases. Manufacturing interests demanded protection, but primary producers protested at increased costs of equipment and supplies;<sup>29</sup> in Queensland protection of wheat interests in the south heightened northern dissatisfaction. The concepts of regional imperialism and of the south as a "colonial economy" have been applied to the American situation;<sup>30</sup> similar notions of the north as a dependency of the south or an economic colony were prevalent in north Queensland in the 19th century, although north Queensland was financially buoyant. Nevertheless the main implication of the comparison was that northern desires for Pacific Island or Indian coolie labour were of the same crucial importance in northern separatism as the slavery issue in American sectionalism and secession,<sup>31</sup> a suggestion which this thesis attempts to refute.

- 
28. D. Wright, "'The Tyranny of Distance': A Note on Western Australia and Federation, The First Decade" *University Studies*, Vol.5, No.3, 1969, pp.33-41. F.R. Beasley, "The Secession Movement in Western Australia" *AQ*, March 1930, pp.31-36. E.D. Watt, "Secession in Western Australia" *University Studies*, Vol.3, No.2, 1958, pp.43-86.
29. Moore, *op. cit.*, pp.320-327.
30. Davidson, *Attack on Leviathan*, p.27, p.48. Dependency theorists have developed a neo-Marxist interpretation of regional economic disparity, based on the analyses of imperialism of Marx and Lenin. See E. Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London 1975), pp.85-86. Idem, *Marxist Economic Thought* (New York 1968), Vol.2, Chapter 11. M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (London 1975).
31. B.J. Dalton, *Origins of the American Civil War* (Melbourne 1967), pp.3-32.

Regionalism has probably been even more important in Canada,<sup>32</sup> and "time has tended less to erode it than to develop it",<sup>33</sup> for many reasons: geographical barriers; the Anglo-French duality; the north-south orientation of many regional economic patterns and the difficulty of sustaining east-west connections; varying patterns of immigration in the 20th century and social values favouring diversity rather than assimilation, expressed symbolically by the concept of the mosaic instead of the American "melting-pot"; with industrialization and urbanization, the growth of metropolises as regional centres.<sup>34</sup>

The fertile areas in southern Canada, notably the St Lawrence valley and the maritime areas of the Atlantic coast, were the bases from which settlement spread to the more difficult northern wilderness. Because these fertile areas were separated by geographical barriers and expanses of intractable country, Canada developed in separate communities, usually called sections, which were strung out across the continent close to its southern border.<sup>35</sup> Linguistic and ethnic differences embittered relations between the English settlers of Upper Canada and the French-Canadians of Lower Canada; they were, in Lord Durham's famous words, "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state".<sup>36</sup> Temporarily quelled by the formation of the Province of Canada in 1841, these tensions caused its breakdown and the formation of the Confederation in 1867; they have persisted until the present, and were strongly expressed in Quebec separatism in the

- 
32. D.B. Knight, *A Capital for Canada: Conflict and Compromise in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago 1977), pp.304-314; D.E. Blake, "The Measurement of Regionalism in Canadian Voting Patterns" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.5, No.1, 1972, pp. 55-56, p.79.
33. J.M.S. Careless, "'Limited Identities' in Canada" *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.50, No.1, 1969, p.3.
34. *Ibid.*, pp.4-9. P. Marchak, "The Two Dimensions of Canadian Regionalism" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, pp.89-92. A. Smith, "Metaphor and Nationality in North America" *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.51, No.3, 1970, pp.247-249, pp.272-275.
35. J.M.S. Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (Cambridge 1959), p.5.
36. See H.G.J. Aitken, "Defensive Expansionism: The State and Economic Growth in Canada" in H.G.J. Aitken (ed.), *The State and Economic Growth* (New York 1959), pp.88-90.

1970s.<sup>37</sup> Despite the intentions of the framers of Confederation to establish a strong, centralized federal union, over the years greater power has gradually been extended to the provinces, reversing the trend of Australian federalism.<sup>38</sup> Today class discontent is still largely expressed in regional or provincial stances:<sup>39</sup> in the 1960s and 1970s there was discontent in Quebec and in the economically disadvantaged Maritime provinces. On the other hand, there is an increasing sense of alienation from the central government in the western provinces, which are experiencing rapid economic and population growth.<sup>40</sup> Whereas regional movements in both Canada and the United States have often reflected relative poverty and slow development, north Queensland separatism, like regionalism in western Canada, was associated with rapid growth, high expectations and optimism.

Like frontier protest movements in Canada, north Queensland separatism may be interpreted partly as a reaction to metropolitanism:

Frontier protest movements are a natural accompaniment of the extension of metropolitan power into new areas. The dynamic, organizing, hard-pressing forces of metropolitanism bring reaction on themselves. This may occur either at moments when the frontier as such is rapidly expanding, and full of problems of adjustment, or when it is actually declining; that is, becoming organized into a more mature and integrated region with a new metropolitan centre of its own, which hopes to wrest control of the local economy away from the older centre, and therefore gives voice and leadership to a regional protest movement. 41

Early north Queensland movements of the 1860s and 1870s may be identified to some extent with the first type, emphasizing frontier

---

37. B.W. Hodgins & D. Wright, "Canada and Australia: Continuing but Changing Federations" in B.W. Hodgins, D. Wright & W.H. Heick, *Federalism in Canada and Australia: The Early Years* (Canberra 1978), p.295, p.297.

38. *Ibid.*, pp.289-290.

39. Careless, "Limited Identities", p.9.

40. Hodgins & Wright, "Canada and Australia", pp.295-298. See also Marchak, "Two Dimensions of Canadian Regionalism", pp.90-91.

41. J.M.S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History" *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 35, 1954, p.19.

problems and a distinctive frontier ethos, although even in this early period the civic ambitions of Bowen were important. The north's most serious movement in the 1880s and early 1890s showed characteristics of the second type; Townsville's leadership, evident from the early 1880s, became crucial in the period 1889-94. Recent interpretations of Canadian regionalism, which have tended to de-emphasize ethnic and linguistic factors, have shown the basic similarity between regional movements in Canada and Australia.

Interpretive studies of north Queensland separatism have been few. The fact that the movements failed probably accounts for the relatively meagre attention paid them by historians. As has been noted:

While the birth of a new political unit is a real event, and usually occurs in a glare of publicity, the separatist movement that has not yet reached maturity, or has somehow become abortive, may not be widely noticed. 42

Their failure also influenced the approach of the few who have written on the subject. Northern movements, which failed, have often been judged parochial and narrow,<sup>43</sup> as reflecting a "deep-seated maladjustment within society in Queensland";<sup>44</sup> movements for the separation of Victoria and Queensland, which succeeded, are treated as progressive and as natural steps in Australia's political evolution. R.G. Neale, undoubtedly the most influential analyst of northern separatism, concluded that the movements were the outcome of difficulties encountered by a new society in its attempts to overcome a basic problem in government - the task of devising a political system in harmony with the economic structure and capable of adapting to rapid economic expansion and diversification.<sup>45</sup> Neale's perspective is that of Queensland attempting to retain its territorial integrity; it will be argued that the view of separationists who wished, among other things, to express a sense of regional identity

---

42. C.F.J. Whebell, "A Model of Territorial Separatism" *Proceedings of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol.5, 1973, p.295.

43. E.g., Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.211.

44. R.G. Neale, "The New State Movement in Queensland: An Interpretation" *HS*, Vol.4, No.15, 1951, p.198.

45. *Ibid.*, pp.200-201.

through self-government, was quite different. Neale concentrates on separationists' grievances, especially economic grievances, against the existing regime, and neglects their positive aspirations.

Of Australian separatist movements in general, Neale has observed:

The basic reason for these demands has been in the past the failure of the original state to satisfy demands for the adoption of those policies and for the extension of that political power considered necessary to ensure a more rapid exploitation of the economic resources of the region concerned. 46

However, less tangible factors were also involved. As E.J. Tapp has noted, writing of the New England movements, separatism can be traced in part to the nature of the settlers and their environment:

most [of the settlers] came hoping to enjoy, among other advantages, political freedom and power denied them in their homeland. What nurture and tradition had fostered, nature encouraged. Although elusive and imponderable, the effect of their new Australian environment must have been subtly and insidiously to quicken their political hopes, especially the right of self-determination. The trackless bush, the sense of limitless space and the shimmering, beckoning back-of-beyond begat a waywardness and independence in man, a spirit rebellious of formal and distant authority. The decisions of Sydney officialdom seemed...to reveal only too often no sympathetic understanding of the position and needs of the lonely bush-dweller...How unrealistic and restraining their decisions and decrees to those who pondered their condition and held hopes for the future! Out of irritation and frustration and a determination to shape their own political destiny emerged movements for separation.... 47

Similar sentiments certainly played a part in northern separatism.

With few exceptions, historians have emphasized economic motives, often of a disreputable kind, in their analyses of northern separatism; images of wealthy sugar planters, sordidly intent on maintaining their supply of coloured labour for the plantations, or of scheming real estate agents and owners of corner-allotments in

---

46. R.G. Neale, "New States Movement" *AQ*, September 1950, p.9.

47. E.J. Tapp, "The Colonial Origins of the New England New State Movement" *JRAHS*, Vol.49, part 3, 1963, pp.205-206.



northern towns have dominated historical discussion.<sup>48</sup> These interpretations receive support from contemporary opponents of the movements: to ascribe economic motives of a sectional, parochial or personal nature was an effective means of discrediting separationists in England, in the southern colonies, and among some sections of the northern community. Undoubtedly these allegations had some truth, but it will be argued that an understanding of the popularity and persistence of northern separatism and a comprehensive interpretation of the movements will be possible only when factors other than the narrowly economic are given due weight.

In this thesis several northern movements are identified, namely those of 1866-67, 1869-72 and 1882-94. Demarcating movements was not a simple task, for after 1864 there was always some campaigning for separation going on in the north. Some individuals actively advocated separation from this early period: F.T. Rayner, editor of the *Port Denison Times*, Thankfull Willmetts who in 1885 became president of the Separation Council, and J.A.J. Macleod originally of Bowen were among those who supported separation through the 1860s or 1870s to the 1890s. Furthermore each movement owed much to its forerunners - the experience of former movements was assimilated and the case for separation tended to be cumulative. Basically the criterion used to delineate movements was popularity. When the separation cause attracted a fair amount of popular support, leading to systematic attempts at organization, frequent public meetings and committee meetings, and production of statements of the separation case such as separation petitions, this was designated a movement. For example, the first separation movement lasted from about March 1866 to January 1867 when popular interest, diverted to a proposal for provincial councils, waned; the next movement began in 1869. Each movement also had different aims - slightly different areas were proposed for inclusion in the new colony, and different forms of government were suggested.

---

48. See E. Shann, *An Economic History of Australia* (London 1948), Chapter 14; B. Hart, *New State Movements in Queensland Since 1885* (Unpublished thesis University of Queensland 1950), pp.1-6; Neale, "New State Movement in Queensland", p.203, p.210; J. Sullivan, *Localism in North Queensland, 1865-1887* (B.A.Hons. JCU 1970), p.46, p.101, p.103, p.128.

In researching this thesis Colonial Office records, made available through the Australian Joint Copying Project and virtually untapped by historians dealing with this topic, have been used extensively, as have parliamentary papers and debates. The private papers of Samuel Griffith, Thomas McIlwraith and Lord Ripon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1892 to 1895, also proved useful. Unquestionably the most valuable source of material was local newspapers. Samuel Griffith, one of the movements' strongest opponents, referred in 1872 to "the violent leading articles about southern rapacity in northern newspapers" and remarked that he "did not think that the history of Queensland, when it should be compiled, would be drawn from flaming leaders in northern newspapers".<sup>49</sup> Certainly the bias of many northern papers in favour of separation, and of some against it, was reason for caution. Griffith's comment also draws attention to the danger that a study of separatism may exaggerate its importance. This is a danger inseparable from the selection of any topic for sustained historical study, but it is hoped that constant awareness of this pitfall has helped keep separatism in perspective.

---

49. *QPD*, Vol.14, 1872, p.623.

## CHAPTER 1

### SEPARATIST HERITAGE

The separation movements of northern Queensland were not isolated phenomena in Australian history. Separation movements occurred in many parts of the continent during the nineteenth century; the new state movements of the present century are their direct descendants. Although northern separationists had little contact with contemporary movements in other colonies, they inherited from southern forerunners a body of ideas, arguments, tactics and precedents. This legacy exerted a strong influence on the growth of northern separatism and the form which it took.

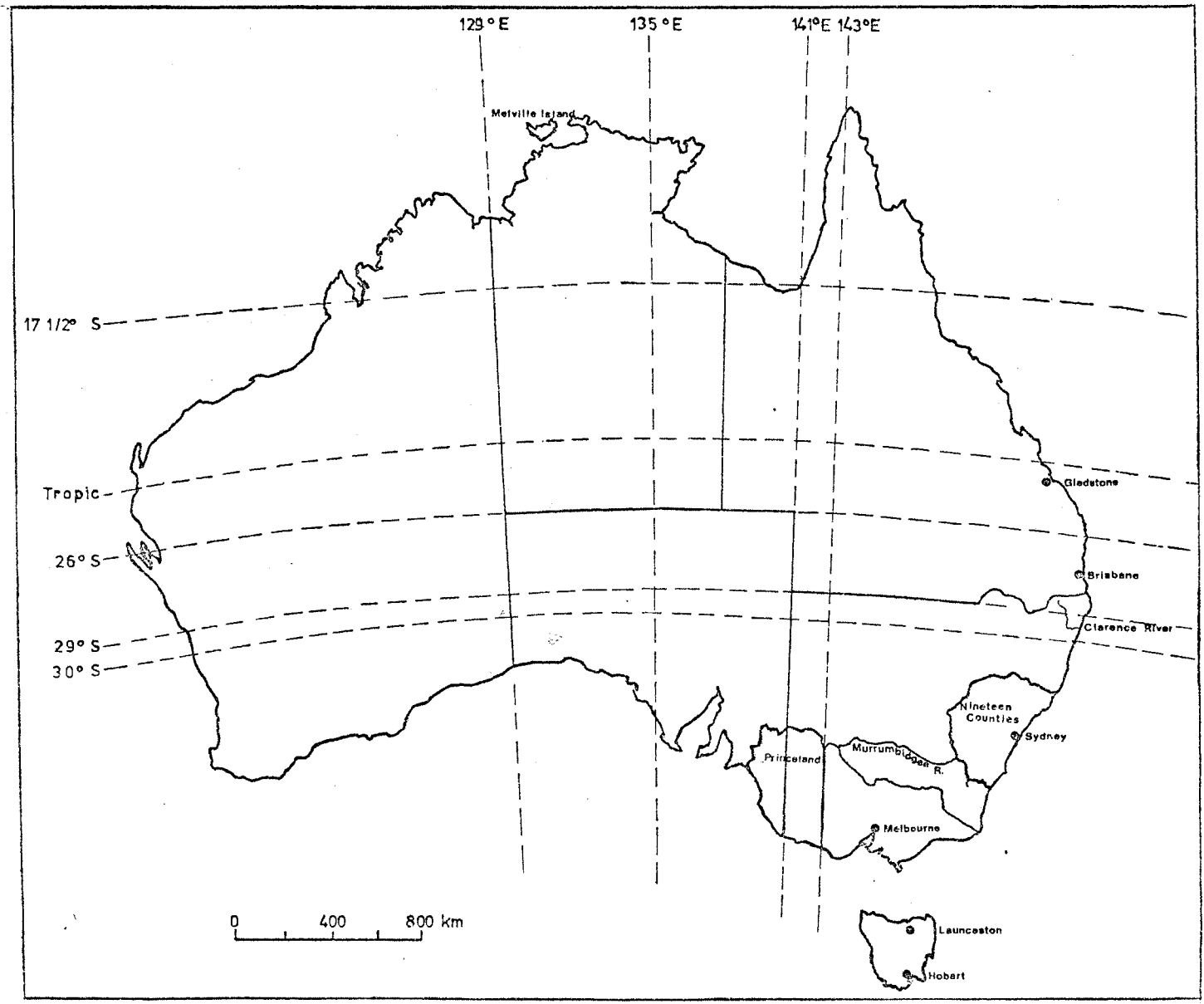
This introductory chapter reviews the separation movements - successful and unsuccessful - which preceded the first north Queensland movement in 1866, concentrating on the strategies adopted and the main arguments advanced. The responses of colonial governments and the treatment separationists received at the Colonial Office are examined. The development of Imperial legislation for territorial subdivision, which acted as the rather insecure foundation of the case for north Queensland separation, is traced. This account also explains the spatial arrangement of the Australian colonies in 1860; though few would have foretold it in 1860, this configuration has remained basically unchanged till the present day.

The original boundaries of New South Wales, fixed in April 1787 by the Commission of Arthur Phillip, the first Governor, comprised the whole east coast of Australia and all the territory inland to longitude 135 East.<sup>1</sup> There is no direct evidence why these boundaries were delineated; from their vast extent it seems that no thought of what would constitute appropriate boundaries for a self-governing dependency entered into the calculation. Probably it is significant that these boundaries included the entire coastline charted by Cook and annexed by him to the British Crown in 1770. The British government

---

1. Law Officers to Granville 26 June 1886, CO 234/47.

MAP NO.1 THE AUSTRALIAN STATES



may also have intended to establish authority over a large enough tract to avoid the complication of a settlement of free men, whether British or not, being established close to the penal settlement at "Botany Bay".<sup>2</sup>

The first step towards subdividing New South Wales was taken in 1823 when, following a recommendation in the Bigge Report, the Imperial Act passed to provide a legal foundation for government in New South Wales affirmed the power of the Crown to erect Van Diemen's Land into a separate colony.<sup>3</sup> At once settlers on the island petitioned the Crown for self-government, taking as their main argument the great distance to the seat of government at Sydney. Despite opposition from the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, William Sorrell, who took the separation petition to England, their prayer was granted in June 1825.<sup>4</sup>

In 1825 Major-General Ralph Darling's Commission extended the western boundary of New South Wales to longitude 129 East so as to include the settlement at Melville Island, which had been founded in the previous year as a new Singapore.<sup>5</sup> Although this trading fort was abandoned in 1828, 129 degrees East remained the western boundary of New South Wales; in 1830 it also became the eastern boundary of the Swan River settlement founded by Captain Stirling. Mainland Australia was therefore divided between two huge colonies, New South Wales and Western Australia.<sup>6</sup>

- 
2. M.B. Eldershaw, *Phillip of Australia: An Account of the Settlement at Sydney Cove* (London 1972), p. 23; D. Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857* (London 1957), p. 62.
  3. At the time when Phillip's Commission was issued Van Diemen's Land was assumed to be part of the mainland, but in 1798 Bass had demonstrated it to be a separate island.
  4. U.R. Ellis, *New Australian States* (Sydney 1933), pp. 19-20. C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia* (Melbourne 1968), Vol. 2, pp. 122-124. After separation regional diversity was an important influence in Tasmanian politics. H. Reynolds, "Regionalism in Nineteenth Century Tasmania" *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1969, pp.14-28. Rivalry between the north and the south of the island, led by Hobart and Launceston respectively, was at times intense.
  5. Blainey, *Tyranny of Distance*, pp. 84-85. In 1831 Norfolk Island was also added to New South Wales.
  6. Law Officers to Granville 26 June 1886, CO 234/47.

When the "systematic colonizers" were allocated territory in which to found a colony - South Australia<sup>7</sup> - it could only be at the expense of one or of both of the existing colonies. In the event, the entire area was excised from New South Wales, though no territory actually occupied by Europeans was lost. The 26th parallel of south latitude was taken as the northern boundary, and the 141st meridian as the eastern boundary of the new colony. As with the two existing colonies, no serious thought was given to utilizing natural boundaries or to delineating what might be a viable area.<sup>8</sup> One consideration which certainly weighed with the founders was the desirability of insulating the model colony by large distances from the contaminating convict influences of the two existing colonies.<sup>9</sup>

In 1840 Lord John Russell introduced into the British parliament a bill to give New South Wales a partly-elective Legislative Council. It also contained a clause enabling the Queen to carve new colonies out of New South Wales, provided that no part of the core "nineteen counties" proclaimed as the limits of settlement in 1829 was detached from the mother colony. The immediate purpose was to provide for the separation of New Zealand which, having become a British possession in 1840, had been attached to New South Wales as a temporary expedient. When the New South Wales Legislative Council objected to the sweeping terms of this provision it was modified to provide that any "islands adjacent" to New South Wales rather than "any territories" might be separated.<sup>10</sup> A charter of November 1840 issued under the authority of this Act provided for New Zealand to become a separate colony on 1 July 1841.<sup>11</sup>

- 
7. Pike, *Paradise of Dissent*, Chapters 3 and 4.
  8. A.G. Price, *Foundation and Settlement of South Australia* (Adelaide 1973), p. 23.
  9. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14. South Australian Association, *Outline of the Plan of a Proposed Colony* (Hampstead Gardens 1978), p. 17.
  10. 3 & 4 Vic., c.62, s.2 (1840). A.C.V. Melbourne, *Early Constitutional Development in Australia* (St Lucia 1963), pp. 255-259. See Map No. 1.
  11. E.J. Tapp, *Early New Zealand* (Melbourne 1958), pp. 145-147. Under the same legislation Norfolk Island was severed from New South Wales and attached to the colony of Van Diemen's Land in 1843.

The first occasion on which an Australian colony's boundary was changed in response to internal pressures arose from the rapid settlement of the Port Phillip district. In many respects the resulting movement was the prototype of all later separation movements of the nineteenth century. The Port Phillip district was settled from Tasmania in 1834-35; by 1840 the inhabitants were agitating for self-government. In reply to a petition to the Crown the Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, suggested decentralization of administration and representation in the New South Wales Legislative Council as remedies for their grievances instead of separation. The New South Wales government declined to act upon the advice to decentralize.<sup>12</sup>

Representation in the Legislative Council proved no more efficacious a solution. In 1840 the New South Wales Legislative Council was made partly elective; as one of its six members in the new Council,<sup>13</sup> the Port Phillip district returned Reverend John Dunmore Lang who contested the election as a separationist. Lang was to play a prominent part in this and in subsequent separation movements in Australia. In the Council Lang introduced a motion for separation of the Port Phillip district, asserting that to "allege that a community of upward of twenty-five thousand souls is incapable of self-government is in the highest degree absurd".<sup>14</sup> He listed Crown Colonies and American states with smaller populations; he compared Port Phillip to Van Diemen's Land, which at the time of its separation had a population of only 12,643, nearly half of whom were convicts. Lang alleged financial injustice, arguing that Sydney took Port Phillip's land revenue but denied the district a fair share of immigrants.<sup>15</sup> Finally he drew attention to the difficulty of securing satisfactory representation for the inhabitants of remote districts, pointing out that three of his colleagues representing Port Phillip had been forced to resign because of the inconvenience of attending Council in Sydney, nearly 1,000 kilometres from Melbourne by sea, the

---

12. Melbourne, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-324.

13. There were 24 elected, and 12 nominated, members in all.

14. A. Gilchrist (ed.), *John Dunmore Lang: Chiefly Autobiographical 1799-1878* (Melbourne 1951), p. 356, quoting Lang's speech.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

usual means of communication.<sup>16</sup>

Lang's motion was rejected, 19 votes to 6<sup>17</sup>; apart from the representatives of Port Phillip itself, only one member, Robert Lowe, voted in favour. Despairing of accomplishing his object through the colonial legislature, Lang drafted a separation petition to the Crown. Signed by the Port Phillip members and backed by a favourable report from the Governor of New South Wales, this induced the Secretary of State to take preliminary steps for separation of the Port Phillip district.<sup>18</sup>

When more than a year passed without further action the residents of Port Phillip, in order to underline their dissatisfaction with representation in Sydney, declined to nominate candidates for the 1848 elections. Pressed for nominations they defiantly named and subsequently returned Earl Grey, the new Secretary of State. This election having been declared void, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Palmerston, Lord Broughton, Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel were nominated.<sup>19</sup> In August 1850 assent was finally given to an Act for the Better Government of Her Majesty's Australian Colonies, which established Victoria as a separate colony.

The northern limit of the Port Phillip district was a matter of contention for many years prior to the separation of Victoria. Separationists claimed that the Murrumbidgee River was the northern boundary of the district and wanted it proclaimed the boundary of the new colony. However the government of New South Wales managed to have the border set at the Murray River, retaining for New South Wales the rich "Riverina", as the intervening territory became known. Victoria challenged this and the question continued to be disputed into the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> The boundary decision of 1850 led in due course to movements for the creation of a separate colony of Riverina.

---

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

18. Melbourne, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-344. *QV&P*, 1864, p. 1278.

19. Ellis, *New States*, pp. 35-36.

20. J.C.H. Ogier, "The Riverina" *Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Victoria) Journal*, Vol. 29, 1912, pp. 49-85.



The victory of the New South Wales Council in 1840 in limiting the Crown's power of separation to adjacent islands was short-lived, for in 1842 an Imperial Act empowered the Crown to separate from New South Wales districts north of the 26th degree of south latitude.<sup>21</sup> Unable to resume transportation to New South Wales because of popular opposition and faced with overcrowding of convicts in Tasmania, W.E. Gladstone decided to set up a new penal colony in the north. Accordingly, in 1846, a separate colony named North Australia was created, comprising all the territories of New South Wales lying to the north of the 26th parallel. Port Curtis, named Gladstone after the executor of the plan, was to be its head-quarters. The colony would receive British exiles, transportees who were allowed liberty on landing and absolute pardon after a certain period of good behaviour. The Governor of New South Wales, Sir Charles Fitzroy, was issued with a Commission as Governor of North Australia. The beginnings of a settlement were laid, but in December 1846 these provisions were revoked, the project abandoned by Gladstone's successor at the Colonial Office.<sup>22</sup>

In 1850, the Imperial Act which gave Victoria separate colonial status also extended the Crown's power of separation to districts of New South Wales between the 26th and 30th parallels of latitude. It provided that upon petition by their inhabitants, the Queen might constitute a separate colony or include these districts in any colony to be established under the previous Act of 1842.<sup>23</sup> Dr Lang, with characteristic egotism, claimed credit for the insertion of this clause in the Act, which he later dubbed the "Magna Charta of Queensland".<sup>24</sup> The Colonial Office certainly accepted Lang's recommendations as to the boundary line; but this clause was included in the Act to allow for an alternative receptacle for exiles, if needed and if New South Wales refused to take them - a scheme which Lang would have deplored.<sup>25</sup> Whereas Port Phillip had been separated in

---

21. 5 & 6 Vic., c.76, s.51 (1842).

22. Law Officers to Granville 26 June 1836, CO 234/47. J.F. Hogan, *The Gladstone Colony* (London 1898), pp. 22-28, p. 51.

23. 13 & 14 Vic., c.59, s.34 (1850): Law Officers to Granville 26 June 1836, CO 234/47.

24. Lang's lecture at Grafton 20 October 1865, *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 14 November 1865, in J.D. Lang, *Separation of Northern Districts: Press Contributions 1857-65*. Mitchell Library.

25. Melbourne, *op. cit.*, pp. 372-374.

response to local initiative, the widening of Imperial powers of separation in 1842 and 1850 was related to the British government's wish to continue transportation to Australia in spite of opposition from the New South Wales authorities.<sup>26</sup>

The New South Wales government did not accept the extension of Imperial powers in 1850 without a struggle. In 1853 a bill to confer a constitution on New South Wales was passed by the New South Wales legislature, and reserved by the Governor. It included a clause declaring that there should be no alteration of the boundaries of an existing Australian colony without the consent of its legislature. An Act of the Imperial parliament empowered the Crown to assent to the reserved bill with the exception of this clause, thereby preserving the separation powers of the Crown unimpaired.<sup>27</sup> Earl Grey, as Secretary of State, commented:

No Colonial Legislature can possess power to control the Imperial Parliament or to limit the authority to determine the boundaries of the several British colonies which belong to the Crown and to Parliament.<sup>28</sup>

In the northern, or Moreton Bay, district of New South Wales there was some support for separation as early as 1845, though it was not until 1850 that formal moves were made to obtain self-government. Until late 1852 northern separationists were split over the question of convict labour: squatters envisaged transportation to the proposed new colony to relieve the labour shortage, currently accentuated by the exodus to southern goldfields,<sup>29</sup> but their scheme was opposed by townspeople and farmers, whose views ultimately triumphed.<sup>30</sup> Separation was sought on grounds similar to those

- 
26. The reference to local opinion in the 1850 Act probably reflected the belief that graziers, dominant in the northern districts, were agreeable to continuing to receive convict shepherds. Thus Queensland alone received self-government without Imperial legislation having to be passed expressly for the purpose.
27. 18 & 19 Vic., c.54, s.1 (1855). Law Officers to Granville 26 June 1886, CO 234/47.
28. Quoted by Ellis, *New States*, p. 56.
29. Melbourne, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-411.
30. C.D. Rowley, "Clarence River Separatism in 1860. A Problem in Communications" *HS*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1941, p. 227. A.A. Morrison, "Colonial Society 1860-1890" *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 1966, p. 23. *QV&P*, 1860, p. 980.

previously advanced by Port Phillip separationists: remoteness from Sydney, and government neglect as a result of inadequate representation in the parliament of New South Wales. In 1851 Earl Grey replied to a northern petition, suggesting that increased representation in the New South Wales legislature be tried instead of separation.<sup>31</sup> After many more petitions and another five years of agitation the Secretary of State announced, in 1856, that the British government had decided to grant the Moreton Bay district separation, despite the objections of Sir Charles Fitzroy and Sir William Denison, Governors of New South Wales during the agitation.<sup>32</sup> There followed three years of delay before Queensland was finally inaugurated, the boundary question proving nearly as contentious as it had been in Victoria.

The Secretary of State's despatch of July 1856 announcing the decision to grant separation had anticipated a boundary a little to the south of the 30th parallel.<sup>33</sup> However, if northern separation was to be forced upon them over their remonstrances, the government of New South Wales determined at least to retain as much as possible of the area south of the 26th parallel.<sup>34</sup> In this resolve they were assisted by the trend of opinion in the New England and Clarence River districts: after an initial enthusiasm for Moreton Bay separation emanating mainly from pastoralists, residents of these districts grew averse to inclusion in the new colony, mainly because their commercial ties were predominantly with Sydney rather than Moreton Bay.<sup>35</sup>

Wishing to maintain good relations with New South Wales, the British government had only reluctantly entered into the separation debate at all, especially since New South Wales had recently been

---

31. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

32. Labouchere to Denison 21 July 1856, C.M.H. Clark (ed.), *Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900* (Sydney 1955), pp. 346-347.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

34. B.A. Knox, "'Care is more important than haste': Imperial Policy and the creation of Queensland, 1856-9" *HS*, Vol. 17, No. 66, 1976, p. 66. This line was about 190 kilometres north of Brisbane.

35. Rowley, "Clarence River Separatism", pp. 229-232. R.L. O'Hara, *The Influence of the Moreton Bay Separation Movement in New England and the Clarence 1850-1862* (B.A.Hons. UNE 1967), p. 16, p. 34.

given responsible government;<sup>36</sup> this reluctance was increased because of the presumed need to persuade New South Wales to co-operate by passing an Act for dividing the debt.<sup>37</sup> Therefore the Colonial Office was highly amenable to suggestions of the New South Wales government on the boundary question. Ultimately the wishes of the New South Wales Executive Council prevailed: the boundary was drawn from Point Danger, along the Macpherson Range, then along the 29th parallel to the border of South Australia.

This decision sparked off a movement in the Clarence-Richmond area for the separation of districts between the southern boundary of Queensland and the 30th parallel. Commercial interests hoped to strengthen their failing hold on the trade of the inland tablelands, upon which Sydney was encroaching; pastoral interests wished to escape radical political trends in New South Wales.<sup>38</sup> The squatters, however, attracted by Queensland land laws which were deliberately framed to encourage pastoral development, divided the movement by circulating a petition for annexation to Queensland. The New South Wales legislature argued that the Crown's power of separation had been exhausted by the creation of Queensland,<sup>39</sup> an argument which was to be repeated, though with more authority, by the Queensland government when confronted with north Queensland separatism. As agent for the Clarence-Richmond movement, J.D. Lang took the petitions to London in 1861, but the Secretary of State refused to receive them because they had not come through the proper channel, the Governor.<sup>40</sup> Rerouted through the Governor, the petitions were finally received, and rejected. The Duke of Newcastle advised separationists to seek redress through the New South Wales legis-

---

36. Knox, "Care is more important than haste", p.64. Responsible government came into force in New South Wales in November 1855.

37. *Ibid.*, p.65. In the event no such bill was ever passed. The objectionable alternative - Imperial legislation to divide the debt - was also found to be unnecessary. An Imperial Act of 1861 (24 & 25 Vic., c.44, s.6) provided machinery for apportioning the debt in the form of three Commissioners (one from each colony and one appointed by the British government). However, the machinery was never brought into operation, the debt was not divided, and no repayments passed between Queensland and New South Wales.

38. Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226.

39. O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

lature, declaring that separation was "a matter of which the Imperial Government (except in extreme cases) can no longer take cognizance".<sup>41</sup> The New England and northern rivers movement persisted through the 1860s into the early 1870s, experiencing revivals in the 1880s and, in this century, from 1916 to the early 1930s and in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>42</sup>

Even in the small colony of Victoria, settlers in districts more remote from Melbourne were not entirely satisfied with administration from the metropolis. In 1861-62 inhabitants of western Victoria joined with neighbours in south-eastern South Australia to campaign for a new colony of "Princeland".<sup>43</sup> However, their separation petition attracted only 1,500 signatures, an unimpressive proportion of the total population of the projected colony, estimated at 60,000. The impact of the separation petition was further reduced when several anti-separation petitions appeared. Moreover the Governors of Victoria and South Australia gave the movement no support. The Secretary of State, the Duke of Newcastle, decided that he could not recommend separation without the concurrence of the governments of Victoria and South Australia, unless there was proof of "an intolerable hardship amounting to political necessity for separation".<sup>44</sup> He recommended that separationists press for larger powers of local government and try other conventional means of redress. This reply and judicious concessions from the colonial governments in the form of public works undermined the Princeland movement of the early 1860s. There were no further separation movements as such, but discontent and regional feeling remained strong in the area.<sup>45</sup>

---

41. Newcastle to Young 26 September 1861, *NSW V&P*, 1861-62, Vol. 1, p. 755.

42. Ellis, *New States*, pp. 86-87. D.S. Drummond, "The New States Movement. Its Basis and Objective" *AQ*, June 1931, pp. 46-57. E.J. Tapp, "Colonial Origins of the New England New State Movement" *JRAHS*, Vol. 49, part 3, 1963, pp. 218-219.

43. Harris, "Princeland secession", pp. 365-376. O'Donoghue, "Princeland", pp. 22-31. See Map No. 1.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

45. In 1961, for example, the idea of a new state of Princeland attracted a degree of popular support. R.H. Leach, "The New State Movement in Australia" *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol. 3, 1965, p. 22.

Before Victoria was separated settlers in the area between the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers, anticipating severance from their accustomed seaport of Melbourne, protested to the government of New South Wales,<sup>46</sup> but their plea to be included in the new colony of Victoria was ignored. By the early 1860s discontent had developed into a movement for a new colony of "Riverina", a coinage of J.D. Lang's. However, annexation to Victoria and a proposal for a separate Riverine province within New South Wales also had supporters.<sup>47</sup> The conflicting interests of squatters, farmers and townsmen in the Riverina made a united front impossible: L.O. Frappell shows that "each group wanted separation from New South Wales, but at different times, of a different territory, and to a different end".<sup>48</sup> Annexation would have solved the border customs problem, but squatters were deterred by Victoria's radical land laws; opposed as well to moves towards free selection in New South Wales in the early 1860s, the squatters took up the cause of separation.

J.D. Lang involved himself in the movement until he fell out with the Riverine Council which directed the agitation. He spoke against the boundaries proposed in the separation motion of the movement's parliamentary representative, which incorporated large tracts of western New South Wales; in defiance of the Riverine Council Lang moved in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly that lower Riverina, comprising a smaller area than that sought by the Council, be erected into a separate colony. Lang's later public comments, embittered by personal antipathy towards squattocracy, lent weight to the charge that this was a squatter's movement with squatters' aims.<sup>49</sup>

The Secretary of State, Edward Cardwell, rejected the Riverina petition on the ground that separationists' grievances did not warrant further subdivision of New South Wales; he advised that redress of grievances was best sought through the parliament of New South Wales,

---

46. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

47. J.L. Whittaker, *The Riverina: Popular Political Movements of the Nineteenth Century* (M.A. UNE 1961), pp. 34-39, p. 75.

48. Frappell, "Riverina Separation", p. 1.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

not by appeal to Britain.<sup>50</sup> Although this movement disintegrated, Riverina's aspiration to autonomy subsequently found expression in new state movements in the 1920s, 1930s and 1950s.<sup>51</sup>

It is instructive to compare separatist developments in Australia with those in New Zealand where, by 1850, six coastal settlements had been separately founded, their only communication being by sea. This regionalist tradition was recognized in the constitution granted in 1852 which provided for six provincial governments in addition to the "general government". From the 1840s to the 1860s there were several strong movements by one or more provinces for independence from the general government;<sup>52</sup> these arose from the same conditions as movements in Australia and took the same form. There were also movements, successful in four instances, for the organization of new provinces in remote areas of the original provinces. A long struggle between those interested in provincialism on the one hand, and the general government on the other, ended in the abolition of the provinces in 1876 and the establishment of a clearly unitary constitution. Why was the New Zealand experience so different in this respect from that of Australia? A principal reason was the presence of a large, centrally-located, war-like native population which made a single native policy imperative, along with a strong central authority to administer that policy. This need made the Colonial Office strongly opposed to fissiparous tendencies. Another reason lay in the very large powers granted to the New Zealand General Assembly to amend the 1852 constitution. Both the creation of new provinces, which threatened the viability of the original provinces, and the abolition of the provincial system in 1876 were the result of action exclusively by the General Assembly, without recourse to Imperial powers. It is also relevant that the framers of the 1852 constitution intended that the powers of the provinces would progressively decline to municipal proportions as settlement grew and communications improved.<sup>53</sup>

---

50. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

51. J.A. Lorimer, "Riverina Movement" *AQ*, June 1931, pp. 58-63.

52. W.P. Morrell, *The Provincial System in New Zealand 1852-76* (Christchurch 1964), p. 30, p. 81, pp. 124-128, p. 133, pp. 154-158.

53. B.J. Dalton, *War and Politics in New Zealand 1855-1870* (Sydney 1967), pp. 9-12.

Interwoven with the history of the early separation movements was the story of John Dunmore Lang. A dogmatic Presbyterian minister who emigrated to Australia from Scotland in 1823, Lang was one of Australia's most vocal radical politicians advocating democratic institutions, Australian federation and independence from Britain, land law reform to break the squatters' hold on the land, and the abolition of transportation.<sup>54</sup> The literary reviewer of the *Melbourne Age* aptly summed up Lang's turbulent political career: "For half a century he was the storm centre of noisy controversy".<sup>55</sup>

Not the least cause of Lang's notoriety was his involvement in the separation movements which were, as a Colonial Office official remarked, his hobby.<sup>56</sup> In 1843 he entered parliament for the first time as a separationist representative of the Port Phillip district. During the electoral campaign his opponent, Sir Thomas Mitchell, extolling the greatness of the mother colony, likened New South Wales to a spread eagle with Sydney as its head and Port Phillip and Moreton Bay the two wings. Lang retorted that both wings should be lopped off for then "it would be much liker a real colonial bird than ever, as it would then resemble an emu".<sup>57</sup> Lang began agitating for separation of the Moreton Bay district at a time when there was little local support for the move.<sup>58</sup> In London from 1847 to 1849 he negotiated with the Colonial Office on the clause in the Constitution Act providing for separation of districts of New South Wales north of the 30th parallel.<sup>59</sup> Later he was active in the movement to put this provision into effect, representing Moreton Bay in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly during the years of agitation. Both Victoria and

---

54. R. Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia 1850-1910* (Carlton 1960), pp. 9-13.

55. Quoted by Gilchrist (ed.), *Lang*, Synopsis.

56. Herbert, minute 8 March 1871, on despatch No. 217, CO 201/559. Robert Herbert, the assistant under-secretary, had been Queensland's first Premier.

57. Quoted by Gilchrist (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 334.

58. W.S. McPheat, *John Dunmore Lang: With Special Reference to his Activities in Queensland* (M.A. University of Queensland 1953), p. 128. J.D. Lang, *Cooksland in North-Eastern Australia: the future Cotton Field of Great Britain* (London 1847), pp. vii-viii.

59. Lang's lecture at Grafton 20 October 1865, in Lang, *Separation of Northern Districts. QV&P*, 1864, p. 1279.



Queensland later acknowledged Lang's assistance in obtaining their autonomy.<sup>60</sup>

Lang pressed for the inclusion of the northern rivers district in the new colony of Queensland. Unsuccessful, he assisted in the campaign to form a separate colony of these districts. He was involved, though with unfortunate results, in the Riverina movement and he gave moral support to separationists in the south of New Zealand.<sup>61</sup> Subsequently he encouraged the early separation movements in northern Queensland. An ardent advocate of separation, Lang was courted by several separation movements whose organizers later acknowledged his aid with gratitude. Nevertheless his advocacy was not always an unmixed blessing: at the Colonial Office, for instance, he had acquired a reputation as "a tiresome old demagogue", which would not have helped any cause with which he was associated.<sup>62</sup>

Lang's interest in separation dated from the 1840s when, touring the United States of America, he was impressed by the working of American democracy, and determined to apply American political models in Australia.<sup>63</sup> Attracted especially by the idea of a federation of small states, Lang adopted as his mission subdivision of the Australian colonies into smaller, more manageable units.

From 1852 Lang emphasized in his many books and pamphlets the need for seven colonies in eastern Australia. Delineated in accordance with Lang's notions of natural boundaries, each of his colonies had approximately 800 kilometres of coastline, with a capital in the middle of the coast. There were to be three colonies north of the 30th parallel: Cooksland, extending from the Clarence River to the Tropic of Capricorn; Leichhardtsland from the Tropic to 17½ degrees

---

60. Gilchrist (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 549-550.

61. Lang's letter to *Otago Daily Times*, 23 June 1862, quoted by Gilchrist (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 547. Lang claimed credit for Britain's acquisition of New Zealand in 1840. *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

62. Rogers, minute 9 March 1871, on despatch No. 217, CO 201/559. Knox, "Care is more important than haste", p. 67.

63. J.D. Lang, *Queensland, Australia* (London 1861), pp. xv-xviii. Lang to Secretary, Northern Separation League 20 August 1866, *PDT*, 15 September 1866. K. Elford, "A Prophet Without Honour: The Political Ideals of John Dunmore Lang" *JRAHS*, Vol. 54, part 2, 1968, p. 164, p. 166. *QV&P*, 1864, p. 1277.

south latitude; and Flindersland encompassing Cape York Peninsula. Hence, according to Lang, the positioning of the New South Wales-Queensland border in 1859 deranged the whole system as far as Cape York:<sup>64</sup>

With the 30th. parallel for the Southern boundary and the 25th. for her Northern, Queensland would be a compact Colony, and the Northern portion of her territory would be well balanced by the Southern, while the people of Rockhampton, whose River - the Fitzroy - drains an extent of country as large as all England, would be entitled to demand separation and a Government of their own as Capital of the more Northern Colony.<sup>65</sup>

Lang's separatist activity was intended to realize this scheme; as late as 1870 he continued to push for a redrawing of the boundaries in accordance with his original plan.<sup>66</sup>

The early separation movements in the southern colonies set the basic pattern for later movements in north Queensland. This pattern may be labelled, without too much simplification, the Lang technique. It involved organizing press campaigns and public meetings; forming separation leagues; enlisting the support of parliamentary representatives of disaffected areas; stimulating parliamentary activity, mainly to show that appeal to the colonial legislature was futile; and keeping up a ceaseless flow of petitions, letters and deputations to the Colonial Office. These tactics ignored the crucial change that came over colonial politics with the establishment of responsible government in the mid-1850s: thereafter, the natural reluctance of the British authorities to interfere with internal matters on the other side of the world was heightened by the reflection that it had now

---

64. Gilchrist (ed.), *Lang*, p. 549.

65. Lang's speech at Grafton 20 October 1865, in Lang, *Separation of Northern Districts*.

66. Lang to Kimberley 29 December 1870, enclosed with despatch No. 217, CO 201/559.

transferred power and responsibility to the colonists themselves.<sup>67</sup> The main arguments for separation, which had induced the British government to grant separation to Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland and to some extent New Zealand, were distance, financial injustice, inadequate parliamentary representation and the difficulty experienced by representatives from remote areas in attending parliament.

A salient feature of these movements was the emphasis given to legal provisions for separation in the Imperial statutes; separationists placed great reliance on the power of the Crown to grant separation. In a way this was inevitable, since the opposition of colonial governments left separationists no option but to appeal to another authority. On no occasion did an Australian colonial government support or even remain neutral towards a separation movement within its borders: invariably these movements met strong resistance. No new colony (or state) was ever formed in Australia by the action, or with the full consent, of an existing colony or state; with one possible exception this is also true of the United States.<sup>68</sup> In Australia new colonies were formed only when the British authorities intervened to override local opposition. Dr Lang succinctly explained the colonial governments' resistance to separation: "Power is always

---

67. By the New South Wales Constitution Act the Crown surrendered to the legislature of New South Wales full power to legislate "in all cases whatsoever", control of all waste lands, the right to appropriate land revenues, and full powers of constitutional amendment. However, the right of the Crown to issue instructions to the Governor about giving and withholding assent to bills was also maintained: "responsible government was to be made effective on the basis of understanding and convention, for the legal instruments, upon which executive authority was to be established, imposed few limitations on the Governor". Melbourne, *Early Constitutional Development*, p. 430. See *ibid.*, pp. 427-432.

68. Maine, previously part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, became a separate state in 1820, apparently without opposition from Massachusetts; but it had no common land boundary with Massachusetts, and its creation assisted in the settlement of a major national crisis. The only other new state carved out of an existing state was West Virginia: this occurred during, indeed as part of, the Civil War; it would not have been possible at any other time. S.E. Morison, H.S. Commager & W.E. Leuchtenburg, *The Growth of the American Republic* (New York 1969), Vol. 1, p. 398, p. 620.

the last thing that those who have it will give up."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, colonial governments feared that the colony would be dismembered into uneconomic fragments or that the threat of separation would be used to blackmail the government. These were also the main reasons for New South Wales' opposition to legislation extending the separation powers of the Crown and threatening to reduce the colonial domain; nevertheless this legislation became in due time the cornerstone of the case for north Queensland separation.

The same attachment to power probably explains the continual refusal of Australian colonial governments to decentralize administration. Repeatedly the Colonial Office gave governments a chance to appease discontented colonists and avoid separation by enlarging the powers of local government; as often colonial governments neglected to avail themselves of the opportunity.<sup>70</sup> In 1843 Sir George Gipps, the Governor of New South Wales, gave his view of this aversion to decentralization:

I am disposed to think that the objections entertained to District Councils by the Legislative Council may, in their origin, be traced to a disinclination on the part of that body to see called into existence other bodies which may in any way render less extensive their own powers.<sup>71</sup>

Gipps' explanation may well have a validity extending beyond the particular case he observed.

The colonial governments' opposition to separation and their unwillingness to allay discontent by other means placed the British authorities in an uncomfortable position. Their discomfort was magnified when responsible government was granted to the Australian colonies in the mid-1850s. Even before then the British government, conscious of the lack of detailed, up to date, unprejudiced information about local conditions, was reluctant to interfere in the internal affairs of colonies. After responsible government, it could and did argue that it had surrendered both power and responsibility

69. Lang's speech for Port Phillip separation, quoted by Gilchrist (ed.), *Lang*, p. 358.

70. This scenario was later acted out in Queensland in the 1880s and 1890s.

71. Quoted by Ellis, *New States*, p. 32.

in all purely internal matters, and that the remedy for local discontent lay in the hands of the people themselves, who directly bore the consequences and themselves enjoyed the benefits of their actions. Moreover, the British parliament always contained members ready to denounce interference in the internal affairs of the colony, both on general principle and because of their special connections with some colonial interest.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, the Colonial Office recognized the right of all British subjects to appeal, in cases of oppression and in the last resort, to the Imperial government. Not one of the unfavourable replies to separation petitions denied this right. The problem was always to identify genuine cases of oppression and to ensure that every other avenue of redress had been tried. Thus decentralization and increased representation were often suggested as alternatives to separation. In addition, the movements in Port Phillip and Moreton Bay were put to the test of time before separation was granted: in each case approximately ten years elapsed from the initiation of the movement to its culmination. Internal weaknesses rather than a firm British policy against separation accounted for the failure of the Clarence-Richmond, Princeland and Riverina movements of the 1860s.

From 1825 to 1859 a pattern in which the growth of an outpost of settlement was followed by its separation from the mother colony was established as a normal sequence of political development in Australia. Often represented in terms of a parent-child metaphor, this process was hailed as progressive. It was thought to benefit both parties - the mother colony by relieving it of the burden of administering distant, relatively primitive settlements; the offspring by the spur of independence.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, it was linked to certain commen-

---

72. That the power of separation had previously been reserved to the Crown was influential in overcoming this reluctance in the case of Queensland's separation: "[The British government] feel also the more bound to entertain this question from the circumstance that the Legislative Council of New South Wales, by virtue of the proviso contained in the 46th Section of the New South Wales Government Act, have given their sanction to the principle, that the period at which the separation is to take place is to be left to the decision of the Crown." Labouchere to Denison 21 July 1856, Clark, *Select Documents*, p. 346.

73. W. Westgarth, *The Colony of Victoria* (London 1864), pp. 111-112.

dable political traits of colonial origin:

This interminable seceding at the extremities arises simply from the inherent interest in public affairs and attachment to institutions of self-government that distinguishes our colonial countrymen.<sup>74</sup>

Hence separation was evaluated positively.

It was generally expected that this desirable process would go on as settlement spread to the far reaches of the continent. For instance, at the time of Queensland's separation the Secretary of State, the Duke of Newcastle, clearly expected subdivision of the new colony in the future; he also expected that constitutional authority would be given the Crown for this purpose.<sup>75</sup> The publications of J.D. Lang and others, envisaging future colonies in northern Queensland, encouraged this expectation of further separation. Each successful separation provided an example for movements which followed, and indeed comparison was a common form of argument in separatist polemics. Furthermore separatist propaganda, though directed against particular central governments, stirred up popular hostility to centralized administration as such.<sup>76</sup> These factors contributed to an inchoate separatism which colonists took with them as settlement spread to the northern areas of Queensland.

---

74. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

75. Newcastle to Denison 18 August 1859, *NSW V&P*, 1859-60, Vol. 4, p. 963. "It will be desirable that the Crown should possess the power of subdividing further the Territory now erected into the Colony of Queensland ... I presume, (but without having, as yet, taken legal opinions on the subject,) that the Crown having now exercised the power of division conferred on it by the New South Wales Constitutional Act, any such further division can only be effected under further authority from Parliament".

76. R.G. Neale, "The New State Movement in Queensland", p. 202.

## CHAPTER 2

### PROBLEMS OF THE FRONTIER

The settlement of northern Queensland began with the opening of the Kennedy District to pastoral occupation in 1861. The Kennedy project was government planned and sponsored, supervised from its inception by George Elphinstone Dalrymple whose appointment as Commissioner for Crown Lands was the reward for his contribution to the exploration of the area.<sup>1</sup> On 10 April 1861 Dalrymple and a settlement party of prospective squatters and settlers, policemen and officials arrived at Port Denison Bay. Here they hastily erected a township of tents, dominated by the Commissioner's marquee which for some months was to serve as administrative head-quarters of the district.

The early 1860s were years of work and considerable hardship for the Kennedy settlers as pastoral runs were taken up and made productive, while at Port Denison the township of Bowen was established as the district's port of entry and commercial centre. These were also years of buoyant optimism, sustained by solid wool prices, the ready availability of investment capital, notably from Victoria, and the apparent liberality of the land laws. This optimism, however, was to a large extent misplaced: exaggerated reports from explorers, the variability and deceptiveness of the northern climate, and pastoralists' own wishful thinking had combined to produce illusions about the quality of the country.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless optimism inspired a frantic land-rush and settlement spread with amazing, and injudicious, rapidity. In mid-1862 Dalrymple reported that the Lands Office had received as many as 454 applications for land, representing claims to an

- 
1. J. Farnfield, *Frontiersman: A Biography of George Elphinstone Dalrymple* (Melbourne 1968), pp.22-36. For the boundaries of the Kennedy District, see A. Allingham, "*Taming the Wilderness*"; *The First Decade of Pastoral Settlement in the Kennedy District* (Townsville 1977), pp.1-2.
  2. R. Sumner, "Some Early Illusions Concerning North Queensland", *LINQ*, Vol. 3, Nos. 3 and 4, 1974, pp.74-87. F.H. Bauer, "Significant Factors in the White Settlement of Northern Australia", *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1963, pp.45-46.

area of 81,595 square kilometres;<sup>3</sup> by 1863 the pastoral frontier had almost reached the limits of the Kennedy District. By 1863 the progress of the settlement at Port Denison was visible in permanent buildings of timber and brick, Bowen's role as regional centre apparently confirmed.

Progress was hard-won, for the frontiersmen encountered many obstacles. Distance showed its most tyrannical aspect in the Kennedy, harassing squatters and townsmen alike.<sup>4</sup> It made the stocking of pastoral runs within the required period of nine months an arduous and expensive task, prompting squatters' pleas for a relaxation of the land laws; frontier pastoralists also faced marketing problems, high costs of labour and transport and many other difficulties as a result of their remoteness.<sup>5</sup> Distance was also at the root of townsmen's cries for better communications with the south. The people of Bowen keenly felt their remoteness from the established centres of trade and culture. They pressed for improved steamship communications with Brisbane, a jetty, regular mail deliveries and telegraphic links in an attempt to overcome their isolation. The large geographical extent of the Kennedy itself created communications problems, leading to demands for roads, bridges and railways to ease travel and trade within the district.

A hazard faced by both squatters and townspeople was the frequency of violent crime. Settlers felt that inadequate police protection left them at the mercy of hostile aborigines, thieves, murderers, and occasionally even bushrangers; neither property nor persons were safe. So common did bloodshed become that when a week passed without a murder, the fact was considered worthy of notice in the local newspaper, the *Port Denison Times*. Northerners blamed the government for the high incidence of crime: they claimed that the problem was "solely

- 
3. *LCJ*, Vol. 4, 1862, Minutes of Evidence taken before Select Commission on Crown Lands Act.
  4. For a general discussion of the influence of distance on Australian history, see Blainey, *Tyranny of Distance*.
  5. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, p.42, pp.109ff. The Pastoral Occupation Act of 1862 extended the nine-month provisional period to one year.



attributable to government neglect to provide us with adequate police protection".<sup>6</sup> In 1861-62 Dalrymple vainly requested urgent reinforcement of the police force, and years later anxious settlers continued to appeal to the government for more thorough policing of the district.<sup>7</sup>

For the solution of their multifarious problems northern settlers almost invariably looked to the colonial government. This was a common attitude in the Australian colonies last century. The prevailing political-economic system, designated "colonial socialism" by Noel Butlin, allowed the government a considerable economic role, notably the provision of "social capital not operated for profit".<sup>8</sup> In northern Queensland distance and sparsity of settlement limited the scope for profitable private investment, so the government was expected to provide a wide range of social capital and essential services. The large-scale investment required to establish communications systems was probably its most crucial economic task. Governor Bowen explained to the Secretary of State, the Duke of Newcastle, that the Queensland government took over this field of economic activity by default:

In a new country where capital is scarce, and can be invested at a high profit in sheep farming, and other rapidly remunerative operations, where, indeed, money lent out on perfectly safe Mortgages gives an interest of at least ten per cent, capitalists will not rest content with the comparatively small and slow returns to be derived from investments in Railway stock. 9

In many cases the government accepted responsibility for providing public money for capital formation and essential services. At times, however, what northern colonists considered legitimate demands on their government did not coincide with the government's view of its obligations.

---

6. Letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 17 December 1864.

7. Dalrymple to Colonial Secretary, 22 February 1862, QSA COL/A26, No. 817.  
Dalrymple to Colonial Secretary, 22 February 1862, QSA COL/A26, No. 821.  
Dalrymple to Colonial Secretary, 14 May 1862, QSA COL/A29, No. 1428, enclosing a petition from Kennedy settlers.

8. N. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1900* (Cambridge 1964), p.49. Idem, "Colonial Socialism in Australia, 1860-1900", in H.G.J. Aitken (ed.), *The State and Economic Growth* (New York 1959), pp.37-41.

9. Quoted by B. Knox (ed.), *The Queensland Years of Robert Herbert, Premier: Letters and Papers* (Brisbane 1977), p.32.

The pioneers of north Queensland saw themselves as the *avant-couriers* of European civilization. Having courageously taken up the burdens of civilization, extending the frontiers of settlement, making virgin lands productive, they felt entitled to compensation for their sacrifices. "The man who leaves the comforts of civilized life for the wilderness; who risks his capital and his health; who undergoes willingly the hardship and privation and danger incident to the settlement of a new country"<sup>10</sup> demanded assistance from the government to enable him to share the amenities enjoyed by those less intrepid souls who dared not leave the settled south.<sup>11</sup>

The government, hoping to boost the colony's meagre revenue, encouraged the spread of settlement.<sup>12</sup> They were willing to provide the economic infrastructure necessary to exploit the resources of the northern districts, but the risks of pioneering they regarded as the responsibility of those who undertook, of their own volition, to try their fortunes in the distant north. These contrasting attitudes underlay many of the conflicts over public expenditure during the 1860s. They were candidly expressed in 1865, when northern squatters and Arthur Macalister, the Minister for Works and Lands, clashed over the pastoral laws.

A petition of the northern squatters, presented to the Governor in August 1865, showed the lengths to which northerners expected the government to go to protect them from the risks of pioneering. The squatters, initial optimism fading as they experienced the rigours of the tropical environment,<sup>13</sup> complained of the high price of stock, which they attributed to the government's quarantine regulations; the high costs of labour and transport in the remote north; and the heavy rates of interest which bankers charged on advances to northern pastoralists, allegedly because of their insecure tenure. They urged the government to reduce land rents and extend leases on the grounds of the many "disadvantages and difficulties"

---

10. *PDT*, 19 November 1864. C f., *ibid.*, 30 May 1866.

11. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.* *Ibid.*, 15 October 1864.

12. Allingham, *op.cit.*, pp.12-13. J. Farnfield, George Elphinstone Dalrymple - His Life and Times in Queensland 1859-1874 (Ph.D. University of Queensland 1968), p.52.

13. Allingham, *op.cit.*, Chapter V.

they suffered as a result of "an unprecedented succession of bad seasons", the ravages of the poison plant which had contributed to heavy stock losses, and "many other drawbacks best known by those who have been the means of developing the resources of the whole northern portion of the colony".<sup>14</sup> The petitioners claimed special compensation in view of the exceptional difficulties of pioneering the north. Southerners did not appreciate these problems, they declared, since "the first occupancy of new country is fraught with charges, hazards, and losses, largely in excess of what is at all supposed to exist by those who have not practically made the experiment in that line of colonial life, or than were experienced by the pioneers of Southern Queensland".<sup>15</sup>

The government denied any obligation to protect the squatters from the inexorable forces of the market. Macalister, Minister for Works and Lands, maintained that labour and cartage costs, and banks' rates of interest were outside the proper scope of government concern. He pointed out that quarantine regulations were instituted in 1863 for the benefit of the pastoral industry, and suggested that the high rates were related to profit levels in the pastoral industry, which had first attracted the memorialists to north Queensland. Of the squatters' request for a change in the land laws, Macalister observed that "the memorialists do not allege that either the rent fixed by law is too high, or the leases held by them too limited in point of time. The reduction of these rents and the extension of the leases are asked for simply as a set-off against other difficulties which, as squatters, they labor under". He rejected the suggestion that the land laws should be adjusted merely to suit the northern squatters, notwithstanding their current hardships: "the Government might just as well be asked to make good a reduction in the price of wool as to contribute by a reduction of rent for the price of labor and carriage of goods". "The rent of a run is chargeable, by virtue of the occupation of the run by stock": the squatters' representations did not affect that basic

---

14. *QV&P*, 1865, Vol. 1, p.1117.

15. *Ibid.*

principle.<sup>16</sup> Clearly much of the philosophy of Victorian *laissez-faire* remained intact despite the necessity for "colonial socialism" in Australian conditions.

Nevertheless northerners' requests were not always unreasonable, nor were their accusations of neglect always unfounded. Parliament was dominated by representatives of southern Queensland; regional affiliations were strong, producing the only discernible pattern in parliamentarians' voting behaviour, other than that dictated by personal political ambition.<sup>17</sup> Members of parliament took little interest in the needs of districts other than their own, begrudging public expenditure on projects from which their constituents could expect no direct advantage. The newly-settled areas of northern Queensland, unrepresented before 1865, found southern members unwilling to champion their causes and disinclined to attend to their requests. Political representation lagged behind the spread of settlement. In 1864 the government admitted that "towns and districts which have since [separation] risen in importance are practically unrepresented";<sup>18</sup> the Additional Members Bill introduced in that year finally extended parliamentary representation to the Kennedy. Nevertheless, the population supremacy of the south ensured its continued domination of the political affairs of the colony. So long as seats were apportioned on the basis of population it would be many years before the north could hope to challenge southern dominance.

Even with the best of intentions, the government would have found it difficult to be fair. In 1859 when Queensland was granted full

---

16. *QPD*, Vol. 2, 1865, pp.422-423.

17. Morrison, "Colonial Society", pp.23-25. Farnfield, George Elphinstone Dalrymple, pp.177-180. In the session of 1865 there were four identifiable groups: Brisbane men (7 members); Darling Downs squatters (6); representatives of northern and central districts (4); intermediate districts (3). 19 out of 32 members represented southern districts, 13 of these seats controlled by Brisbane and Ipswich. Before the redistribution of 1864, 13 out of 26 seats were controlled by these two towns.

18. *QPD*, Vol. 1, 1864, p.2.

responsible government only the south-eastern portion of her vast territory was occupied, a situation unprecedented in British colonial history as Governor Bowen was fond of pointing out.<sup>19</sup> The northern districts were largely unexplored and totally undeveloped. It was inevitable that the progress of settlement would create difficulties for the government, faced with the task of providing appropriate, adequate and equitable legislation for situations which the legislators often but poorly understood. Confronted with these complexities legislators naturally took refuge in their own experience, which was, more often than not, based upon conditions in the south. The administrative problem was exacerbated by several other factors: the inexperience of the first parliamentarians, whom A.A. Morrison aptly described as "a band of enthusiastic amateurs";<sup>20</sup> the enormous distances between the frontier of settlement and the seat of government; and the rapidity with which the frontiers were pushed back in Queensland.<sup>21</sup> Another facet of the government's dilemma was the limited sources of government revenue at a time when income tax was a revolutionary notion:

While the resources of private capital enabled settlement to spread rapidly over the major part of Queensland, the resources of government were insufficient to permit concentration on more than a small area at any one time, and the concentration of political and administrative authority in Brisbane meant that most of that money would be spent in the South. 22

In the circumstances northern settlers, with their continual demands for public expenditure, were bound to be disappointed. Given the inherent difficulties of the situation, the powerful influence of vested

---

19. Bowen to Newcastle No. 24, 15 June 1863, QSA GOV/23, p.378. Bowen's speech at ceremony to begin construction of Queensland's first railway, *PDT*, 19 March 1864. Bowen to Gladstone, 18 November 1865, quoted by S. Lane-Poole (ed.), *Thirty Years of Colonial Government. A Selection from the Despatches and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir George Ferguson Bowen, G.C.M.G.*, (London 1889), Vol.1, p.244.

20. Morrison, "Colonial Society", p.21.

21. See Bowen's prorogation speech, *QPD*, Vol. 2, 1865, p.694.

22. Neale, "The New State Movement in Queensland", p.201.

metropolitan and southern interests which refused to relinquish their privileges when settlement spread and the economy was diversified, and the northerners' high, sometimes inordinate, expectations of the government, northern discontent followed inevitably.

When the government failed to meet their expectations the people of Kennedy considered themselves the victims of wilful neglect. In its first issue the *Port Denison Times* lamented that "repeated demands upon the Government for assistance to enable us to develop the natural advantages which we possess have hitherto been unheard or unheeded".<sup>23</sup> The frequency of public indignation meetings to protest against government indifference showed the depth of popular discontent.

A meeting in March 1864 complained of poor roads and demanded a jetty. A memorial to the government pressed these claims in view of "the revenue we contribute, and the very limited expenditure hitherto in this district".<sup>24</sup> The meeting complained that money placed on the estimates for the improvement of roads in the district had not been spent, a slight doubly felt, for it was expected that it would be spent around Brisbane. Several public meetings complained about the inadequate and inefficient police force in the district:<sup>25</sup> one constable and one officer in Bowen, "without a horse between them", and a Native Police camp a short distance from the town.<sup>26</sup> According to the *Times*, this was "a 'force' totally inadequate to keep order in the town, much less in the large district around Bowen".<sup>27</sup> The concerns expressed at public meetings were repeated in letters to the newspaper demanding, among other claims on government revenues, a jetty, a regular water supply, increased police protection, a northern Titles Office, and a fair share of the colony's immigrants.<sup>28</sup> An especially sensitive issue

23. *PDT*, 5 March 1864.

24. *Ibid.*, 26 March 1864. cf., *ibid.*, 30 April 1864.

25. *Ibid.*, 2 April 1864.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, 26 March 1864.

28. *Ibid.*, 2 April, 9 April, 16 April, 23 April, 30 July 1864; 11 February, 21 January, 25 November 1865. E.B. Kennedy, *Four Years in Queensland* (London 1870), p.3.

was the absence of regular mail deliveries; in 1865 several public meetings considered this problem, resolving to request the government to establish or subsidize a regular service.<sup>29</sup> The grievances of the people of Bowen were legion, and before May 1865 lack of representation left them impotent to press their claims in parliament.

The government's tardiness in meeting northern demands provoked the first outbursts of separatist sentiment, feeding an undercurrent of separatism that ran in the Kennedy virtually from the time of settlement. Many of the pioneers had brought with them a conscious expectation, often based on experience of the pattern of political evolution in southern colonies, that the newly-opened districts would one day attain independence as a separate colony. The enthusiastic founders of Bowen in particular anticipated that the infant settlement would ultimately be the capital of a northern colony.<sup>30</sup>

These expectations were echoed in, and sustained by, the statements of British officialdom. Sir George Bowen, though anxious that no complaints of neglect from the northern districts mar his record as Queensland's first Governor,<sup>31</sup> nevertheless assumed that these districts would "at no distant period" constitute a separate colony, or perhaps colonies.<sup>32</sup> At various times the Governor envisaged Bowen, Cardwell, and even Somerset at the tip of Cape York as possible capitals of new northern colonies.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, no less an authority than the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Newcastle, had tacitly

---

29. *PDT*, 8 July, 19 August 1865.

30. Farnfield, George Elphinstone Dalrymple, p.214. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, p.121. *PDT*, 5 March, 19 March 1864. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 22 October 1864.

31. Bowen to Newcastle No. 90, 4 December 1860, QSA GOV/22.

32. Bowen to Newcastle No. 15, 5 April 1864, QSA GOV/24.

33. *Ibid.* Bowen to Newcastle No. 73, 9 December 1861, QSA GOV/23. Bowen to Cardwell, 7 April 1865, quoted by Lane-Poole (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.230.

endorsed the assumption that further division of Queensland's huge territory was probable.<sup>34</sup>

The writings of John Dunmore Lang and others strengthened the popular belief that northern separation was inevitable. As early as 1861 Lang predicted that Rockhampton, established in 1858, would be the nucleus of a new colony:

It will be evident to the reader from the vast extent both of the pastoral and of agricultural country drained by the Fitzroy River and its affluents, that, in the rapid march of Australian colonization to the northward, that country cannot long remain a portion of Queensland, but will eventually, at no distant period, form a separate colony still further north.... 35

Lang thought it "quite preposterous to suppose that any considerable community of Britons in such a locality would submit to be governed from so great a distance as Moreton Bay".<sup>36</sup> In July 1864 the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote of the Kennedy district "which, ere long, we trust to see assume that position to which it is geographically and otherwise physically entitled, viz. 'the independent colony of North Eastern Australia'".<sup>37</sup> Many people thought, with Sir Roderick Murchison the president of the Royal Geographical Society, that the enormous area of Queensland was obviously too large to be effectively governed from its south-eastern corner.<sup>38</sup> These ideas deeply influenced the thinking of early northern colonists, so that when problems arose in the administration of government separation immediately occurred to them as a possible solution.

---

34. Newcastle to Bowen No. 39, 14 December 1861, QSA GOV/2. Newcastle to Denison, 18 August 1859, *NSW V&P*, 1859-60, Vol. 4, p.963.

35. Lang, *Queensland, Australia*, pp.159-160.

36. *Ibid.*, p.1. A squatter in the Broadsound district had already expressed the hope that Lang would assist in the coming agitation for separation from Queensland. *Ibid.*, p.160.

37. Quoted by J. Manion, *Townsville Yesterday* (Townsville 1978), p.17.

38. Quoted by Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.142.



However northern discontent took a variety of forms, and a number of remedies were advanced for the unsatisfactory relationship with the central government. Some favoured decentralization of administration. By 1864 repeated complaints from the Wide Bay-Burnett and Rockhampton districts as well as more northerly areas forced the government to acknowledge that "the question of local self-government is of peculiar importance to this Colony, in consequence of the remoteness of many of its districts from the seat of Government".<sup>39</sup> In 1864 the Queensland parliament first passed comprehensive local government legislation. The Municipal Institutions Act of 1864 was based on the New South Wales Municipalities Act of 1858, with minor amendments relating to land valuation. Under this Act any city or town, alone or combined with an adjacent district, could be constituted a municipality; this legislation permitted, but did not compel, the incorporation of municipalities.<sup>40</sup>

The Municipal Institutions Act of 1864 dealt only with local government in areas of urban development. In the same year an attempt was made to provide local government for more sparsely-settled areas; a bill was passed to "enable local affairs to be administered and local expenditure to be controlled by provincial councils".<sup>41</sup> A provincial council could be formed when the government received an unopposed petition from at least fifty electors in a district. Selection of members of the council was left to the Governor-in-Council. Provincial councils, which Governor Bowen aptly described as "simply large country municipalities",<sup>42</sup> were to keep separate accounts of revenue raised in the provinces. This revenue would be made available for expenditure within

---

39. *QPD*, Vol. 1, 1864, p.2.

40. C.P. Harris, *Local Government and Regionalism in Queensland 1859 to 1977* (Canberra 1978), pp.13-14. A.A. Morrison, *Local Government in Queensland* (Brisbane n.d.), p.10.

41. *QPD*, Vol. 1, 1864, p.2. Also in 1864 John Douglas brought forward a plan for a provincial federation in Queensland. The government objected to a private member's taking the initiative on a matter mentioned in the Vice-Regal speech, and Douglas was induced to withdraw the proposal.

42. Bowen to Newcastle No. 19, 3 May 1864, QSA GOV/24.

the district in accordance with local requirements. The basic idea derived from New Zealand, where provincial councils had been in operation since 1852. However the powers of the Queensland counterparts were deliberately restricted in order "to avoid the inconveniences arising from the excess to which a system so excellent in principle has been carried in New Zealand...."<sup>43</sup>

Three years after its passage the Provincial Councils Act was considered a dead letter. Local communities were wary of this seemingly ameliorative legislation. For the purposes of the Act local revenue was limited to tolls and rents; the main sources of revenue, including customs duties which accounted for the largest slice of local revenue contributions, were excluded. Under these conditions, northerners calculated, the drawbacks of a provincial council outweighed the advantages. They feared that the central government would try to shift the responsibility for local works on to its poor relation, the provincial council.<sup>44</sup> If it succeeded the north with its sparse population and meagre facilities would be the loser, some form of additional local taxation probably being necessary. Other defects hindered the Act's implementation. Local communities resented the government's control over the composition of the council. On one of the rare occasions when a provincial council was established - in Clermont in 1865 - local residents disapproved of the exclusive character of the nominated council. Lacking popular support it enjoyed but a short and undistinguished career.<sup>45</sup>

From time to time Kennedy men called for the establishment of a provincial council, or advocated reform of the Act to provide a more

---

43. *Ibid.* For an examination of the faults of the provincial system in New Zealand, see Morrell, *Provincial System*.

44. Report of public meeting, *PDT*, 8 April 1865. Cf., J.B. Hirst, *Adelaide and the Country 1870-1917: Their Social and Political Relationship* (Melbourne 1973), pp.143-152. Hirst found that country people in South Australia had similar financial objections to local government schemes.

45. *PDT*, 17 February 1866. Extract from *Peak Downs Telegram*, *ibid.*, 13 April 1867. *QPD*, Vol. 4, 1867, p.299.

acceptable form of local self-government.<sup>46</sup> In 1866 the residents of Townsville petitioned the government for a provincial council. After a long delay, notification finally appeared in the *Government Gazette*, but the boundaries were completely different from those suggested by the petitioners. Insulted, local residents complained in the *Cleveland Bay Express* of the "discourteous treatment the petitioners of the district have received from the Government in placing the opinion of the Surveyor-General in opposition to the numerous subscribers to the memorial".<sup>47</sup> As a result no further steps were taken to establish the council. The Provincial Councils Act of 1864 proved no solution to the problem of regional disaffection.

Some malcontents favoured the formation of a regional pressure group to lobby in Brisbane. A contributor to the *Port Denison Times* urged the formation of a Northern Queensland Association along the lines of a similar organization in Rockhampton. This suggestion had undertones of inter-town rivalry, for it was emphasized that the interests of Bowen and Rockhampton were quite distinct. Although the Rockhampton-based Central and Northern Queensland Association professed to represent northern interests, a separate body to promote the interests of north Queensland, as distinct from central Queensland, was insisted upon.<sup>48</sup>

Other, more radical solutions to the problem of metropolitan dominance were occasionally put forward. As in New Zealand in 1863-1864, removal of the capital was considered. At a public meeting in 1865 James Hall-Scott, one of Bowen's leading citizens, supported by the equally prominent Alderman E. Read, suggested that in view of "the much greater advantages of this port", the capital of Queensland should

---

46. E.g., *PDT*, 17 December 1864 - editorial and report of public meeting. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1865. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 14 February 1866.

47. Extract from *CBE*, *ibid.*, 16 January 1867. Cf., extracts from *CBE*, *ibid.*, 6 October, 22 December 1866.

48. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 9 April 1864.

be shifted from Brisbane to Bowen. Hall-Scott argued that "if this alteration were to take place, the capital would be in a more suitable and central position".<sup>49</sup>

By 1864 dissatisfaction with the government's record in north Queensland produced a demand, in some quarters, for territorial separation.<sup>50</sup> The cry of separation was raised, occasionally, at public meetings protesting at some instance of government neglect, and in angry letters to the local newspaper. One of the first and most persistent advocates of separation was a squatter who contributed to the *Port Denison Times* under the pen-name "Teila". After many petitions and many months, he complained, the government continued to neglect northern wants. Requests for a jetty, for regular steamship communications and mail deliveries, better roads and increased police protection had been ignored. Decentralization might remedy some grievances, but the only real solution was separation. Echoing Dr. Lang, Teila found it "preposterous to suppose that the governing of these immense districts is to be kept by Brisbane, 800 miles away". He urged the people of Kennedy to join the incipient separation movement which was gathering force in Rockhampton; since distance was the cause of all the difficulties, Teila argued, Rockhampton as a capital would at least be preferable to Brisbane.<sup>51</sup>

The response of the editor of the *Port Denison Times* to this suggestion indicated one important constraint on northern attitudes to separation in these early years. The Kennedy was still in the very early stages of development. Separation therefore seemed feasible only on the basis of a territory including the central district, and Rockhampton would almost certainly be selected as the capital of the new colony - a prospect repellent to the inhabitants of Kennedy. Thus the *Port Denison Times*, while generally endorsing Teila's remarks, took

---

49. *Ibid.*, 18 February 1865. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.* The capital of New Zealand had been shifted from Auckland to the more central Wellington in 1864.

50. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1864.

51. Letters to the Editor, *ibid.*, 23 April, 16 July 1864.

exception to his proposal to join the Rockhampton movement, adding significantly that "there are better things in store for Port Denison than to be governed by any colonial town, near or remote".<sup>52</sup>

Before 1866 Teila's was decidedly the minority view. The majority was convinced that Bowen would ultimately be the capital of a new colony in the north; but this was regarded as a thing of the future, when north Queensland was fully settled and firmly established. Given Bowen's "natural superiority", its distance from Brisbane, and "the certainty of separation from Queensland, which must eventually take place", it seemed obvious that the future would "see Bowen occupying the proud position of the metropolis of a separate colony".<sup>53</sup> One sanguine correspondent rhapsodized on Bowen's natural advantages which, he believed, guaranteed a glorious future:

Bowen, with its splendid bay, second to nothing the wide world can show, has taken a position which it ever must maintain as the first port of northern Australia, and it requires no very great prophet to foretell that ere many years have passed we must see another separation and a Government House overlooking that picturesque bay....Bowen will inevitably be the honoured residence of our Queen's representative and the seat of government.... 54

This was also the view of the influential editor of the *Port Denison Times*, F.W. Rayner, who cherished hopes of glory for the Kennedy district, when it would "occupy a position of high consideration, not only through the colonies of the southern Hemisphere, but also among the nations of the world".<sup>55</sup> Within the splendid vision Bowen had a central place, Rayner forcefully asserting Bowen's right to capital city rank:

---

52. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1864.

53. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 22 October 1864.

54. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 5 August 1865.

55. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1864.

when [separation does come] - as come it must - we say confidently and fearlessly that Bowen is the only place north of Brisbane suitable for a capital - our beautiful safe and commodious bay, central position, extensive back country (the largest in Queensland) and natural resources of timber, mineral wealth, &c., warrant us in making this statement. 56

Nevertheless although northern settlers had grievances against the government, separation was considered impracticable as yet. As Rayner averred, "the time for such a movement has not arrived".<sup>57</sup>

Rayner's views were shared by G.E. Dalrymple who finally, in May 1865, took his seat in the Assembly as the Kennedy's first member. Outlining his position on separation prior to the election, Dalrymple expressed the conventional optimistic view of the prospects of the district, which he saw advancing "from a state of uncultivated nature, and struggling into the position of the nucleus of a flourishing colony", which would soon "assert its independence and rival in prosperity the older colonies of Australia...."<sup>58</sup> Like many others, however, Dalrymple relegated separation to the future. For the present he saw no need to antagonize the government, pledging himself to support the ministry so long as it fostered northern interests.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, the election campaign showed the strength of local loyalty and anti-Brisbane feeling in the district. The appearance of William Pettigrew, a Brisbane timber merchant, as a rival to Dalrymple irritated people in Bowen.<sup>60</sup> The *Times* contrasted the candidates' contributions to the development of the district: Dalrymple, its explorer and founding father shone beside the ambitious interloper, Pettigrew.<sup>61</sup> "A Kennedy man we must have",<sup>62</sup> declared Bowen's Mayor,

---

56. *Ibid.*, 19 March 1864.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Statement to the Electors of Kennedy, *ibid.*, 29 October 1864.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Report of election meeting, *ibid.*, 25 February 1865.

61. *Ibid.*, 18 February 1865.

62. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 25 February 1865.

and Bowen people felt that they would do better with "a local man of any description than a stranger who neither knows us nor cares for us".<sup>63</sup> Dalrymple did his best to exploit the xenophobia of this frontier community. He also took advantage of its antipathy to the southern metropolis, emphasizing that his opponent was not only a stranger but, even worse, a prominent Brisbanite:

I trust the constituency will think twice  
before they support an out and out central-  
izing Brisbanite, and even a member of the  
Brisbane Municipal Council! 64

Dalrymple's appeals were well-aimed for he was easily returned.<sup>65</sup> Clearly northern settlers had an attitude of mind predisposing them to separatism, even if that sentiment was as yet undeveloped.

During 1865 a multitude of complaints continued to be aired in the *Port Denison Times*, the district's needs increasing as it progressed. Nevertheless people were generally satisfied with the development of the district and with the progress of Bowen in particular.<sup>66</sup> The Kennedy pastoral district having been fully taken up by the end of 1863, the government opened the districts of Burke and Cook in January 1864, stimulating a new squatting rush; spurred on by glowing reports of the country from recent explorers, settlers rapidly occupied western areas from the boundary of the Kennedy to the Gulf of Carpentaria.<sup>67</sup> The base for this pastoral expansion, Bowen, its population grown to over a thousand,<sup>68</sup> dominated the region:

Bowen at this time was "par excellence" the town  
of the north, and was doing a most flourishing  
trade, its appearance being bustling and busy  
in the extreme.... 69

---

63. James Hall-Scott to the Editor, *ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*, 4 March 1865. Cf., *ibid.*, 18 March 1865.

65. The results were Dalrymple 98; Pettigrew 11; Seaward 1. *Ibid.*, 1 April 1865.

66. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 8 April 1865.

67. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, pp.68-70.

68. *Ibid.*, p.67.

69. C.H. Eden, *My Wife and I in Queensland* (London 1872), pp.180-181.

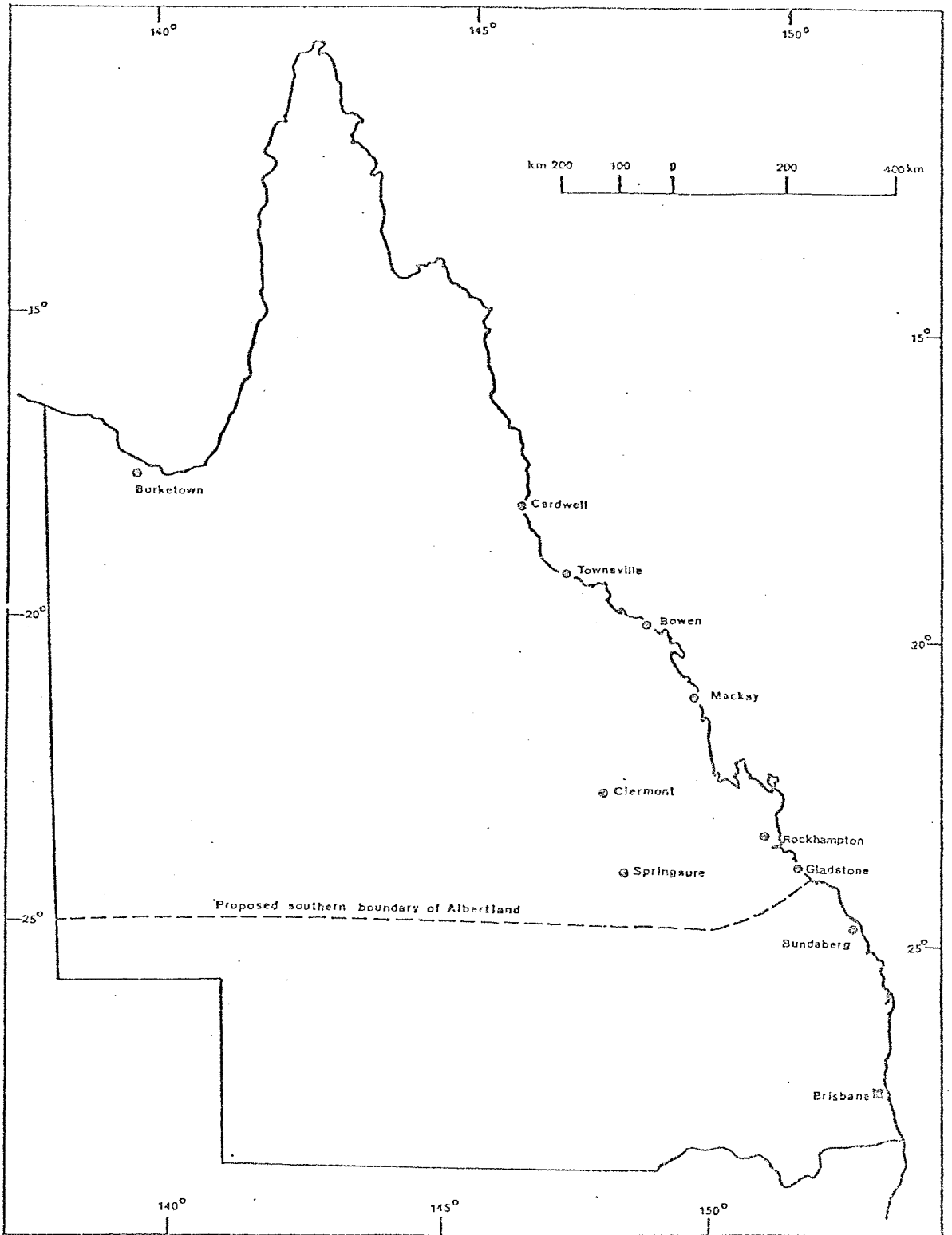
Dalrymple's moderate stance in the Assembly reflected the prevailing sense of complacency. His maiden speech was a model of appeasement: in reply to the accusations of W.H. Walsh of Maryborough that the south monopolized public expenditure, Dalrymple defended the government. He disapproved of Walsh's tirade against the government, fearing it might "rake up the bad feeling that existed some time ago between the northern and southern portions of the colony" which had shown gratifying signs of "rapidly dying away".<sup>70</sup>

In 1865 the optimism which had accompanied the settlement of the Kennedy, though not unqualified, was still virtually intact. While this optimism prevailed and northerners confidently awaited the approaching aggrandizement of their district, serious hostility to the south did not arise. When these expectations were not fulfilled, however, grievances which had accumulated during the pioneering years became the basis of a demand for separation. Similar grievances remained the basic source of separatist discontent for the whole period of the 1860s.

---

70. *QPD*, Vol. 2, 1865, p.284.





MAP NO.2 NORTH QUEENSLAND 1866

## CHAPTER 3

### THE FIRST MOVEMENT

From separation to 1866 Queensland enjoyed a high level of prosperity, and rapid expansion of population and settlement, as well as a political stability envied in the southern colonies. 1866 marked a sharp break in continuity, bringing political and economic crisis for the whole of the colony.

In mid-1866 the ministry which had governed Queensland unbroken since separation<sup>1</sup> was threatened by a parliamentary crisis. Long debate on land policy during the session of 1866 had culminated in the defeat of the government on a vital clause of its Crown Lands Sale Bill<sup>2</sup>. Before the opposition could consolidate its victory however, the government was confronted with financial crisis, through failure of a bank with which it had contracted to provide interim finance. The government's attempt to meet the crisis precipitated constitutional differences with the Governor: when Bowen announced that he would not sanction the government's plan to increase the money supply by issuing inconvertible notes as legal tender, the ministry resigned, protesting that the Governor should not have influenced the deliberations of parliament by making his intentions known<sup>3</sup>.

- 
1. In early 1866 the leadership of the ministry had passed from Robert Herbert to Arthur Macalister when, for personal reasons, Herbert decided to return to England. Knox (ed.), *Herbert*, p. 23.
  2. The government's proposal to fix the auction price of "country" land at £1 an acre was defeated, and an amendment was carried to allow the price of land to be automatically reduced on a sliding scale from £1 to 5/- an acre when it failed to command the higher price at auction. Farnfield, George Elphinstone Dalrymple, pp. 217-218.
  3. A.C.V. Melbourne, "The Financial Crisis of 1866" *Daily Mail*, 1, 15, 29 January, 18 February 1927. M. Powell, *The Rise, Courses, and Consequences of the Crisis of 1866 in Queensland* (B.Econ.Hons. University of Queensland 1969), pp. 71-129. P.D. Wilson, *The Political Career of the Honourable Arthur Macalister, C.M.G.* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1969), pp. 86-100. Since Bowen was forbidden by his Commission and Royal Instructions to give the Royal assent to bills making paper currency legal tender, and these were public documents, it seems probable that the Premier, Arthur Macalister, used this as a pretext for resigning in order to avoid dealing with the financial crisis, which may have entailed unpopular measures of retrenchment.

Robert Herbert then returned temporarily to Queensland politics at the head of a provisional government which by more orthodox financial measures, such as Treasury Bills, retrenchment and increased taxes, resolved the immediate situation. Nevertheless, because the wool market had collapsed and was slow to recover, the financial crisis was succeeded by a prolonged depression throughout the colony, bringing to an end the years of exuberant confidence based on rapid pastoral expansion.

Even before the July financial crisis the omens of pastoral depression were manifest in the Kennedy District, where drought had prevailed since 1865. The initial rapid expansion of pastoral settlement in the north had been based upon easy credit, high prices and a stable market for wool, and optimistic assumptions about the suitability of the area for sheep grazing. Grave doubts about the latter were emerging by 1866, when the bottom fell out of the wool market<sup>4</sup>. The years of exuberant expansion gave way to a period of grim struggle for survival; many graziers' runs and whole districts in the Gulf country were abandoned. Recovery was gradual, assisted by the replacement of sheep by cattle and by the development of new mining markets after 1868, but the easy confidence of the early 1860s was gone forever.

On top of all this, Bowen had its own special problems as its district supremacy came under challenge from rival townships in the Kennedy; by 1866 there were other lights in the district whose brilliance promised to outshine even that of Bowen. The people of Bowen were in the beginning ambivalent towards the founding of new towns. On the one hand, new settlements were expected to become satellites of Bowen, enhancing her prestige and enriching her district. "The formation of new towns", the *Port Denison Times* reassured its readers, "is as but the forming new rounds in a ladder to arrive at a greater height"<sup>5</sup>. The main grounds for confidence that Bowen's pre-eminence was unshakeable were the supposed excellence of the harbour<sup>6</sup>, and the conviction that Bowen was chosen by the government and established with government backing as the future northern capital.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, there were always doubts<sup>8</sup>. The

---

4. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, pp. 99-120.

5. *PDT*, 5 August 1864. C f., *ibid.*, 15 November 1864.

6. *Ibid.*, 12 August 1864. C f., *ibid.*, 20 August 1864.

7. E.g., *ibid.*, 7 July 1866.

8. Remarks at public meeting, *ibid.*, 9 August 1865.

residents of Bowen must early have begun to realize its drawbacks: the long distance from the greater part of the pastoral district it was founded to serve; the difficult country that had to be crossed on many routes; and the need on all the important routes leading from Bowen for the Burdekin River to be crossed in its lower reaches where the wet season run-off created a major obstacle for several months of most years. Consequently when new towns were formed Bowen worried that they would draw off her trade and undermine her prestige.

The foundation of Wickham in the Burdekin delta and of Port Mackay in 1862<sup>9</sup> were two of the earliest examples of such threats, though in each case Bowen's fears proved groundless: Wickham's insalubrious situation retarded its development and when destroyed by floods in 1864, the township was not rebuilt; Mackay survived, merely a small outlet for local pastoral stations until, after 1865, sugar growing accelerated its growth.<sup>10</sup>

Special concern was reserved for Cardwell on Rockingham Bay which in 1864 was established as a supply centre and outlet for the Valley of Lagoons station and the Upper Burdekin generally. Dalrymple as Commissioner for Crown Lands had dummied a large tract in the upper reaches of the Burdekin. Lacking capital for its development, he interested Robert Herbert, Queensland's Premier, in the venture, and in partnership with two other English gentlemen they set out to become pastoralists on a grand scale. Herbert conceived the idea of a port on Rockingham Bay as an outlet more convenient than distant Bowen; he also arranged for parliament to vote his partners £2,292 as reimbursement for opening the port.<sup>11</sup> The Governor, Sir George Bowen, was also involved in the founding of Cardwell. When, aboard H.M.S. *Pioneer*, he personally examined Rockingham Bay as a potential port in 1862,<sup>12</sup> Bowen was impressed by the secure anchorage in

- 
9. See H. Ling Roth, *The Discovery and Settlement of Port Mackay Queensland* (Halifax 1908), pp.32-50.
  10. Report of public meeting, *PDT*, 19 August 1865. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, p.62.
  11. G.C. Bolton, "Valley of Lagoons: A Study in Exile" *Business Archives and History*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1964, pp. 100-101.
  12. Bowen to Newcastle No. 57, 3 November 1862, QSA GOV/23.

the bay, authorizing a further survey to pinpoint the best site for a township.<sup>13</sup> He maintained his interest in the settlement, enthusiastically reporting its progress to the Secretary of State, Edward Cardwell, for whom the town was named.

With official patronage apparently supporting Cardwell, the people of Bowen became apprehensive. A keen rivalry soon developed between the two towns,<sup>14</sup> which was reflected in the campaigning prior to the Kennedy's first election in early 1865. Bowen electors insisted that G.E. Dalrymple, who had been instrumental in founding both Bowen and Cardwell, choose between them and declare where his true sympathies lay. Bowen's suspicions were not allayed by promises of impartiality: Dalrymple was asked to disavow all association with Rockingham Bay and reassure electors that Bowen would not be "in any way made to play second fiddle" to Cardwell.<sup>15</sup> He replied to the satisfaction of the electorate that he had recently sold out his interest in the Valley of Lagoons, broken his connection with Cardwell and returned to Bowen, his "first love".<sup>16</sup>

Bowen's fears that Cardwell would usurp its position were heightened by indications that some saw Cardwell as the future capital of a northern colony. Speculators in land, for instance, were willing to pay high prices at Cardwell's first land auction in that belief.<sup>17</sup> During his northern excursion in late 1865 Governor Bowen was enraptured by Cardwell's picturesque setting, as he told the Secretary of State:

I was more than ever struck with the beauty of the situation of your town. The mountain range behind it, and the chain of hills which forms the backbone of Hinchinbrook Island in front of it, average from 2,500, to 4,000 feet in height, and are clothed with magnificent forests almost up to their peaks. 18

- 
13. D. Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story* (Brisbane 1961), pp.67-69.
  14. E.g., editorial and letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 20 August 1864. *Ibid.*, 15 October 1864.
  15. *Ibid.*, 5 November 1864.
  16. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1865.
  17. Bowen to Cardwell 17 April 1865, quoted by Lane-Poole (ed.), *Thirty Years of Colonial Government*, p.230. C f., Bowen to Newcastle No. 15, 5 April 1864, QSA GOV/24.
  18. Bowen to Cardwell 18 November 1865, quoted by Lane-Poole (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.232.

Unfortunately the imposing mountain wall so admired by the Governor was the bane of Cardwell's development. Sequestered behind the precipitous Cardwell and Seaview Ranges, lacking ready access to the interior, Cardwell failed to develop the trade links needed to fulfil early expectations.<sup>19</sup>

No such problems hindered the progress of Townsville which was established on Cleveland Bay, also in 1864. Cleveland Bay was no match for the harbours of Port Denison and Rockingham Bay, the main disadvantage being its shallowness. Its overwhelming advantage, however, was proximity to a gap in the coastal ranges which allowed easy access to the interior. Townsville, like Cardwell, had powerful backers. In 1864 J.M. Black, manager of Robert Towns' Woodstock properties, felt the need for a port closer than Bowen; if also north of the Burdekin it would have the additional advantage of allowing teamsters to avoid the floods which sometimes held up all traffic for months.<sup>20</sup> After an exploration party returned with good reports of Cleveland Bay, Black succeeded in interesting Towns in the project<sup>21</sup> and in late 1864 a settlement party arrived at "The Bay". Under Black's dynamic supervision the settlement progressed rapidly. After the first land auction in July 1865 it became a hive of activity: "buildings are going up in every direction . . . the noise of the hammer and saw is heard from morn till night", reported one resident.<sup>22</sup> Towns, applying his influence in Brisbane, prevailed upon the Colonial Treasurer to proclaim the port of Townsville in October 1865.<sup>23</sup>

This progress was regarded jealously by residents of Bowen, who feared that upstart Townsville would soon outstrip the original northern settlement.

---

19. The desperate, unsuccessful search for a "gateway to the west" was a major theme of Cardwell's history for the next 75 years. See Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story*, especially Chapter XI.

20. Black had previously used the landing place at Wickham in the Burdekin delta, but in 1864 floods destroyed Wickham and also isolated Bowen.

21. J.F. Stevens, *Townsvale and Townsville: The Activities of the Hon. Robert Towns, M.L.C., in Queensland, 1848-1873*. Mitchell Library.

22. *PDT*, 5 August 1865. C f., *BC*, 21 September 1865.

23. J.M. Black to Towns 11 July 1865, Black MSS. Mitchell Library.

Townsville drew off a considerable portion of Bowen's population<sup>24</sup> and, more alarmingly, began to make inroads into her trade. Many of the pastoralists and settlers of the north Kennedy turned from Bowen to the more convenient port at Cleveland Bay,<sup>25</sup> for as Korah Wills of the Haughton River Hotel explained, they were relieved to find "a place to land their goods safe from flood, and where the teams will not be detained for weeks as they were last year by the Annabranh [*sic*] of the Burdekin".<sup>26</sup> Squatters who had previously negotiated the difficult track over the range to Cardwell rather than make the long haul to Bowen, also supported Townsville.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore even before the impact of the 1866 financial collapse there was serious alarm in Bowen. One solution proposed was to stimulate private enterprise in Bowen. The *Port Denison Times* exhorted local businessmen to redouble efforts to promote trade;<sup>28</sup> in the same vein a patriotic correspondent pointed to "several circumstances that make it more urgent than ever that we should make some effort to *create* trade in our locality". He went on to identify the reasons for urgency: "the first is the active energy that is being made to attract trade and population to Cleveland Bay". He stressed the need for immediate effort, warning that "unless we are likewise active and energetic, their success will, for the present, as it now is doing, interfere with our trade".<sup>29</sup>

In the prevailing climate of "colonial socialism" it was not surprising that another means of meeting the Cleveland Bay challenge should occur to the residents of Bowen: increased public expenditure. For instance, Rayner, editor of the *Port Denison Times*, emphasized the need for better communications between Bowen and the interior, essential for the survival of the port:

- 
24. R. Gray, *Reminiscences of India and North Queensland 1857-1912* (London 1913), p.102.
25. Black to Towns 27 July 1865, Black MSS.
26. Letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 25 June 1864.
27. Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story*, p.87. As a result Cardwell's population, like Bowen's, was gradually drawn to Townsville. See Eden, *My Wife and I in Queensland*, p.300.
28. Editorial, *PDT*, 1 August 1866.
29. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 24 March 1866.

With our energetic neighbours at Mackay to the south, and Cleveland Bay to the north, these two ports will inevitably divide between them the greater portion of our trade unless we have sufficient energy to set about at once to make such roads as will render the back country at least as accessible from Bowen as from them. 30

The establishment of new ports along the coast was whittling away the extensive back-country of which Bowen had boasted in former times, and which had seemed to guarantee its supremacy. As Rayner pointed out, without adequate communications with the hinterland all the "splendid endowments" which nature had conferred on Bowen were worthless. He underlined the need for urgency, since "commerce when it has once cut itself a channel is not easily diverted from it".<sup>31</sup>

Colonial politics notoriously revolved round the provision of public works. To the demands normal in any town Bowen had commonly added extra ones based on its pretensions to becoming a capital;<sup>32</sup> renewed and heightened demands for public expenditure came in early 1866 with appreciation of the threat presented by Townsville. When the government failed to respond satisfactorily to these demands, the people of Bowen were bitterly resentful, and the separation movement had its genesis.

In March 1866 the *Port Denison Times* for the first time committed itself to territorial separation of northern Queensland, urging immediate agitation;<sup>33</sup> once committed, the *Times* did not waver for over two decades. Rayner argued that in view of the "principle of local self-government" which was generally recognized as "one of the fundamentals of all real freedom", the people of Kennedy could not "long submit to be governed from Brisbane, by people who know little about them, and care less." Enumerating the practical advantages of separation, he pointed out that it would obviate the problem of distance from the seat of government. Moreover the north's immigration policy could be adapted to its tropical climate which, according to Rayner, was "in no part fit for European field labour"; instead of

---

30. *Ibid.*, 3 February 1866.

31. *Ibid.*

32. E.g., *ibid.*, 15 April 1865; *ibid.*, 7 July 1866.

33. *Ibid.*, 4 March 1866.



contributing to the cost of importing "hosts of European labourers whom we do not want", the north could introduce legislation for supplying "what we so much require - coolie labour."<sup>34</sup> On the security of the lands of north Queensland, the new colony "would have no difficulty in borrowing sufficient money for the public works necessary for opening up the country." Perhaps the greatest advantage of separation would be that the north's revenue could be applied to its own needs, rather than used to develop the resources of southern Queensland which

no doubt is a very desirable object for the inhabitants of Moreton Bay, and to a certain extent to those of Australia generally; and they are perfectly right in spending THEIR money and pledging THEIR credit to accomplish it. But to us, inhabitants of the Northern Districts, it is of as little advantage as to the inhabitants of New South Wales or Victoria, and therefore it is not right that *our* money should be spent and *our* credit pledged for the advantage of the inhabitants of Moreton Bay and the Darling Downs. 35

The immediate provocation for this outburst of separatism in the formerly hesitant *Port Denison Times* was the non-arrival of the steamer *Souchays* on the day appointed by the government. The long-awaited Torres Strait Mail Service, so near to the hearts of the people of Bowen, had finally begun in the first weeks of 1866, linking Queensland via Torres Strait and Batavia with the P&O line at Singapore.<sup>36</sup> The *Souchays* completed its first voyage to Batavia but failed to appear for its expected second call at Bowen, disrupting the plans of many townspeople.<sup>37</sup> The non-arrival of the steamer (or rather, delay, for it arrived a couple of days later) produced a popular reaction out of all proportion to the event itself or the inconvenience it caused. To local residents it seemed to epitomize the government's indifference to the vital concerns of distant communities, keenly reminding Bowen people of their isolation.<sup>38</sup> Thus distance and the frustration it produced contributed to the first outbreak

---

34. *Ibid.* C f., E. Marjoribanks, *Queensland: A Wide Field for the Safe and Profitable Investment of British Capital, more particularly in the Growth of Cotton* (Edinburgh 1865), pp.6-8.

35. *PDT*, 4 March 1866.

36. Bowen people wanted Port Denison to be the port of call in Queensland, as part of their grand plan to make Bowen the emporium of south-east Asia. *Ibid.*, 19 August 1865.

37. *Ibid.*, 14 March 1866.

38. *Ibid.*

of separatism in the north. The underlying cause was cumulative dissatisfaction with the government's record in the north, intensified by fear that government "neglect" would force Bowen to relinquish its title to regional supremacy.

In succeeding weeks separation was espoused by many of the leading men of Bowen. Alderman E. Read, for instance, advised fellow councillors to commit themselves "heart and soul" to separation, arguing that the inconveniences caused by distance from Brisbane were intolerable, while Bowen was obviously "the natural capital for the whole of Northern and North-eastern parts of Queensland".<sup>39</sup> Letters to the paper endorsed the views of the editor, urging the commencement of agitation.<sup>40</sup>

Matters came to a head in May at an angry public meeting called to discuss the "requirements" of the town, with a view to memorializing the government. Condemning the southern government, leading Bowen businessmen such as William Keith, R.H. Smith and Sinclair advocated separation, suggesting that a formal organization be started. A memorial listing Bowen's immediate wants was drawn up.<sup>41</sup> The Mayor, J.A.J. Macleod, and W.F. Lloyd, a local stock and station agent, were chosen as envoys to take the petition to Brisbane.<sup>42</sup>

While the deputation was in Brisbane the *Port Denison Times* stepped up its campaign to promote a separation movement, advocating the formation of a Northern Separation League in Bowen. The aims of the movement would be to have "the money arising from the sale and rental of our lands, and the duties paid on goods imported into our district, spent wholly within the Northern districts", and "our government administered locally by people who

---

39. *Ibid.*, 11 April 1866.

40. E.g., *ibid.*, 17 March 1866.

41. These included telegraphic links between Bowen and the south, steam communication with Brisbane, a court house, a gaol, waterworks, roads to the interior, a railway from Bowen to the Bowen River, coolie labour, an agricultural reserve, and a parliamentary member for the town of Bowen. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1866.

42. *Ibid.*, 5 May 1866.

live in and are interested in the place".<sup>43</sup>

At a well-attended public meeting on the last day of June the delegates reported on the outcome of their representations in Brisbane. Working with Dalrymple they had achieved good results, eliciting from the government promises of a Brisbane-Bowen mail ship, extension of the telegraph to Bowen, a new court house and extensions to the gaol; in addition an agent was to be appointed in Madras to seek coolie labour for the colony.<sup>44</sup> However public opinion was now thoroughly inflamed. The government's concessions were disparaged as merely "temporary sops". W.F. Lloyd himself asserted that "it is no use whatever for us to expect more from the Government than promises; we must insist on Separation, and help ourselves to what we want".<sup>45</sup>

Macleod reported that in Brisbane the delegation, including G.E. Dalrymple, had put the case for northern separation to the Governor, with the suggestion that the new colony should encompass the Leichhardt pastoral district to the south of the Kennedy, including the town of Rockhampton. It was argued that "the probable annexation of the Clarence and Richmond District, a district rich in both agricultural and mineral wealth, would amply compensate Queensland for the loss of the Leichhardt", following Lang's scheme for the subdivision of eastern Australia in which "Cooksland" included the northern rivers district of New South Wales.<sup>46</sup> The Governor, in accordance with previous affirmations of the probability of northern separation, reportedly "expressed himself strongly and clearly of opinion that self-government was or soon would be an absolute necessity for so far outlying a district . . . ."<sup>47</sup>

---

43. *Ibid.*, 27 June 1866.

44. *Ibid.*, 4 July 1866. This appointment came to nothing. See I.N. Moles, "The Indian Coolie Labour Issue in Queensland" *JRHSQ*, Vol. 5, No. 5, 1957, pp.1349-1350.

45. *PDT*, 4 July 1866.

46. At this time the movement for the annexation of the northern rivers district to Queensland was active, though the proposal for independence of these districts was gaining ground.

47. *PDT*, 4 July 1866.

Resolving to form a separation league, the meeting elected a committee of forty-four and appointed a time for its first meeting. Arrangements were also made for financing the movement.<sup>48</sup> The first formal separatist organization in north Queensland was ready to begin work.

The newly-appointed committee met at the beginning of July to elect officers and settle certain preliminary matters. The association adopted the title "Northern Separation League"; G.E. Dalrymple was elected president, Bowen's mayor, J.A.J. Macleod vice-president.<sup>49</sup> Dr Lang was appointed an honorary member of the league and the secretary wrote to the veteran agitator soliciting his advice and assistance; in reply Lang approved the movement and its programme.<sup>50</sup> The league invited residents of Burketown, Rockingham Bay, Cleveland Bay and Mackay to form sub-committees to collaborate with the Bowen group. The important matter of finance was discussed, subscription lists were drawn up and arrangements made for canvassing the town. It was decided that payment of an annual subscription fee of £1 would obtain membership of the league.<sup>51</sup>

A few days prior to the election of the Bowen committee, a public meeting in Rockhampton had launched the so-called "Northern Queensland Separation League",<sup>52</sup> which immediately requested all northern towns to send delegates to Rockhampton to confer on the possibility of a general movement. In Rockhampton separatist activity had begun several years earlier. In 1855 a petition from the central districts had deprecated the prospect of Queensland separation, protesting against being included in the new colony and stressing northern settlers' commercial independence of "Moreton Bay".<sup>53</sup> When separation was granted, Rockhampton, along with Ipswich,

---

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.* The working committee of the league consisted of W.F. Lloyd (secretary), J.H. Gamack (treasurer), F. Clarke, K.H. Wills, J.F. Kelsey, W. Seaward jun., F.T. Rayner, J.P. Macdonald, A. Perceval, J. Hall-Scott, J.F. Morton, C.B. Grimaldi, J.G. Macdonald, Felix Lannoy, James Cock, W.H. Palmer and R.H. Smith.

50. Lang to Secretary of Northern Separation League 20 August 1866, *ibid.*, 15 September 1866.

51. See subscription list, *ibid.*, 14 July 1866.

52. *Queensland Daily Guardian*, 2 July 1866.

53. Voss, *Separatist Movements in Central Queensland*, pp.17-18.

Gayndah, Maryborough and Gladstone, vied with Brisbane to be the capital of Queensland and, with them, bitterly resented Brisbane's ultimate triumph. Continuing hostility to Brisbane encouraged the growth of separatism. Mooted in 1861 and 1862, separation gained popular support in 1863 when the government announced plans for Queensland's first railway, the Southern and Western line from Ipswich to Toowoomba, Warwick and Dalby, which was to be built with loan funds raised on the credit of the whole colony. A public meeting in Rockhampton in May 1863 drew up a petition protesting that outlying districts would be forced to accept the burdens of the loan while receiving none of the benefits; the petitioners further claimed that, without adequate representation in the Queensland Assembly, they had no real part in the decision to borrow.<sup>54</sup> To appease Rockhampton the government sanctioned 33 miles of railway from Rockhampton to Westwood along with the southern lines; opened in 1867 the central line, as Anthony Trollope put it, only paid for the grease used on it, since it did not pay teamsters to unload at Westwood in order to save 33 miles.<sup>55</sup>

In 1865 pastoral depression in central Queensland prompted requests to ease the squatters' plight by reforming the land laws to allow freehold, instead of merely leasehold, tenure. As Minister for Lands and later as Premier, Arthur Macalister consistently refused to change the land laws as pastoralists demanded. This, together with cumulative urban grievances over delay in the provision of public utilities, led to the initiation of a separation movement in mid-1866. The movement was an amalgam of Rockhampton business interests and of squatters in the Rockhampton vicinity, the alliance symbolized by the slogan "Freehold Tenure and Separation".<sup>56</sup>

- 
54. *Queensland Daily Guardian*, 2 July 1866. A.E. Cole, "Early History of the Queensland Railways" *JRHSQ*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1945, p. 291. Although Rockhampton was represented in the Assembly by John Douglas as member for the Port Curtis electorate, many residents considered this inadequate, believing that parliamentary seats should be allocated on the basis of revenue contributed rather than population. See petition on representation of northern districts, *QV&P*, 1864, p.375.
55. A. Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand* (Melbourne 1876), Vol. 1, pp.30-32. C f., Eden, *My Wife and I in Queensland*, pp.234-236.
56. *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 1 May 1866, quoted by Farnfield, *Frontiersman*, p.103. See also Committee of Queensland Land League, *Land League Papers* (Rockhampton 1866). Rockhampton Municipal Library.

Therefore one of the first duties of Bowen separationists was to appoint delegates to attend a Northern Queensland Separation League meeting in Rockhampton. Clarke and Lloyd were chosen, given plenary powers, and enjoined to "watch over and protect the best interests of the North".<sup>57</sup> Apprised on arrival in Rockhampton of the fact that there were two distinct separatist organizations in the field, the Bowen delegates, anxious to avoid a diffusion of energies that might retard the movement, were persuaded to recognize the primacy of the Rockhampton body. The "Northern Separation League" was absorbed, the Bowen organization reduced to a branch league of the Northern Queensland Separation League. Justifying their capitulation, Clarke later explained to a public meeting in Bowen that it had seemed only "right that, as Rockhampton was the first to start the movement, and also was by far the largest and most populous place, our League should merge into theirs, rather than theirs into ours"; waggishly he added that they had it on the "Highest Authority" that "a house divided against itself cannot stand".<sup>58</sup>

The need for co-operation with Rockhampton was generally conceded. If Rockhampton and its hinterland were excluded, the meagre population and revenue of the proposed new colony would hardly warrant the serious attention of the Colonial Office, which was commonly believed to regard 20,000 inhabitants as the minimum population of a new colony.<sup>59</sup> In 1866 the Kennedy together with the newly-opened Burke and Cook districts had nothing approaching that figure and no immediate prospect of it.<sup>60</sup> A line commencing on the seaboard at Dawes Range, south of Gladstone, and following the 25th parallel westward was taken as a suitable boundary,<sup>61</sup> showing the influence of J.D. Lang who had continually written of Dawes Range as

---

57. *PDT*, 4 July 1866.

58. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1866.

59. *Ibid.*, 15 September 1866.

60. *Ibid.* The total population of north Queensland in 1865 was 1,086. *Pugh's Almanac*, 1865, p.163.

61. It was generally believed that Governor Bowen would have preferred Cape Palmerston, south of Mackay, as the boundary line. *PDT*, 18 July 1866. Dalrymple to Bowen league, *ibid.*, 15 August 1866. *Ibid.*, 1 September 1866. Lang to Secretary of Northern Separation League, *ibid.*, 15 September 1866.

a natural boundary line.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, although circumstances compelled alliance with Rockhampton, the relationship was always strained, rivalries never far from the surface.

The strategy outlined in Rockhampton and endorsed by the Bowen branch involved establishing throughout the north branch leagues, each of which would communicate its views to the head-quarters in Rockhampton, where a tentative programme would be formulated and submitted to branch committees for approval. After public discussion in each locality, branches would appoint delegates to meet in Rockhampton in September. This conference would frame a petition to the Queen, copies of which would then be distributed for signature.<sup>63</sup> Such was the plan, and in succeeding months it was closely followed. In northern Queensland, however, expectations were not fully realized, branch leagues being established only in Bowen and Mackay.

Nevertheless, by mid-July Rayner for one was pleased with the progress of the movement, relating its progress to the now "rising prospects of Bowen". Separation was to be the means of lifting Bowen out of the doldrums, of regaining its former prestige, and of securing the magnificent future which, it was always assumed, awaited it. Six months before, the *Port Denison Times* recalled:

all looks were directed backwards; forwards was to be seen nothing but a dim murkiness, no prospect of anything better arising to lift us out of the slough of despond into which we had fallen. Hope itself had almost withdrawn from our vision.

Several developments had improved Bowen's outlook - the mail route to Batavia, and the establishment of the Bowen Sugar Company, for example. "Most important of all, however, is the great movement which has been got up, and, as it appears to us, is likely to proceed with vast strides...."<sup>64</sup> The separationists of Bowen were confident that their town would be the capital of the new colony, separation saving Bowen from the ignoble fate

---

62. E.g., Lang, *Queensland, Australia*, p.2, p.160. Lang's lecture at Grafton 20 October 1865, in Lang, *Separation of Northern Districts*.

63. *PDT*, 18 July 1866.

64. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1866.

of remaining "as it is at present, and as it will without Separation, a mere port of supply for a certain number of sheep and cattle stations".<sup>65</sup>

The squatter unrest which contributed to the Rockhampton movement had resulted in the formation in late 1865 of the Northern Land League in central Queensland to agitate for freehold tenure, the right of pre-emptive purchase, and a substantial reduction in the upset price of land.<sup>66</sup> An alliance of squatters' representatives from southern and northern Queensland, led by Ratcliffe Pring and Dalrymple, pressed these demands in parliament during the session of 1866. They wanted land to be sold outright, not leased, and, still more controversial, they wanted it sold cheaply. The government on the other hand upheld the principle of leasehold tenure. As in New South Wales and Victoria during the turbulent era of land law reform and "free selection",<sup>67</sup> the debates produced great animosity; class stereotypes were used indiscriminately and emotion ran high. Urban radicals depicted the squatters as "land sharks" who wanted to keep a stranglehold on huge tracts, in contrast to the worthy agriculturist who wished for only a small farm which he would by his own toil make more productive than ever possible under pastoralism. The government appealed to the populace with a utopian vision of peopling the colony with "yeoman farmers", arousing antagonism to the "squattocracy" who, it was claimed, plotted "a return to the old feudal system".<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless in parliament the opposition steadily gained support, finally in July defeating the government in committee on a central clause of its Crown Lands Sale Bill.<sup>69</sup>

Parliamentary consideration of the land question was then interrupted by news that a flurry on the London money market had brought down the Agra and Masterman's Bank of London. It was Queensland's misfortune that in May

---

65. *Ibid.*, 7 July 1866.

66. *Land League Papers*, pp.2-3.

67. M. Clark, *A Short History of Australia* (Sydney 1969), Chapter 8.  
B. Kingston, "The Search for an Alternative to Free Selection in Queensland; 1859-66" *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 1966, p.7.

68. *QPD*, Vol. 3, 1866, p.353.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 496.



the government had contracted with the Sydney branch of that bank to provide interim finance to the Queensland government, pending the negotiation of a large new loan in London. The failure of the bank embarrassed the government and threatened to produce more serious consequences: owing to a large influx of immigrants, the unemployment problem in Brisbane was already serious and the cessation of public works threw many more out of work.

As a solution the Treasurer, J.P. Bell, proposed to issue inconvertible notes as legal tender in order to meet the immediate emergency, revive government construction projects and put men back to work.<sup>70</sup> When concern was expressed in Brisbane financial circles that the plan would jeopardize Queensland's credit, the Governor intervened, intimating that he would refuse to sanction any bill authorizing such a scheme, reserving it instead for the signature of the Queen.<sup>71</sup> Macalister's ministry resigned, professedly in the name of constitutional government,<sup>72</sup> and Bowen called upon Herbert to form an interim ministry. Despite popular opposition this provisional government tackled the financial problem by issuing Treasury Bills which, when coupled with retrenchment and additional taxation, were expected to extricate the colony from its difficulties.<sup>73</sup>

Interpreted as a result of financial mismanagement and extravagant borrowing for the selfish purposes of the south, the 1866 crisis was grist to the separatist mill. When the effects of the crisis reached north Queensland, where Bowen was particularly hard hit,<sup>74</sup> popular resentment was vented on the southern government, for the government's financial difficulty was regarded as indisputable evidence of the incompetence of Brisbane rulers.<sup>75</sup> "The reckless mismanagement of the pecuniary affairs of the Colony, and the necessary entanglement of the affairs of the North with those of the South is quite reason enough to justify our demanding

---

70. Wilson, *Political Career of Macalister*, pp.96-100.

71. See Bowen to Cardwell 20 July 1867, quoted by Lane-Poole (ed.), *Thirty Years of Colonial Government*, pp.253-254.

72. *QPD*, Vol. 3, 1866, p.526.

73. Melbourne, "The Financial Crisis of 1866" *Daily Mail*, 1, 15, 29 January, 18 February 1927. Powell, *Crisis of 1866*, pp.71-129.

74. Eden, *My Wife and I in Queensland*, p.182.

75. *MM*, 15 May 1867.

Separation....", asserted the *Port Denison Times*.<sup>76</sup> "This state of insolvency has not been caused by an over expenditure fairly divided amongst all parts of the colony, but by a selfish expenditure, calculated for the benefit of the South alone".<sup>77</sup>

Therefore the subsequent retrenchment, implemented to assist financial recovery, was most unwelcome in the north. One of the first items to be cut was expenditure on Native Police, which northerners already considered inadequate.<sup>78</sup> Little money could be expected from the Treasury for some time and, Lloyd put it to a public meeting, "that of itself is a sufficient reason for cutting the painter".<sup>79</sup> The money of which they had been defrauded, Dalrymple stressed, was gone, never to be regained.<sup>80</sup>

Resentment was aggravated when, to augment its failing revenues, the government raised tariff and stamp duties, doubling most of the old duty rates and imposing additional duties on several commodities previously untaxed. Northerners denounced "this obnoxious and undesired tariff" as a "tyrannical impost", which would permanently retard northern enterprise.<sup>81</sup> Richard Daintree, geologist and part-time pastoralist, expressed no more than the general feeling of indignation when he asked rhetorically:

is this fine country to [be] strangled at its birth by a bankrupt government, a thousand miles from its most Southern Port, its energies crippled by Stamp Acts advalorem duties, heavy pastoral rents &c ere yet it has had time to start fairly a single one of its resources. 82

---

76. *PDT*, 4 August 1866.

77. Lloyd at public meeting, *ibid.*, 15 August 1866.

78. N.A. Loos, *Aboriginal-European Relations in North Queensland, 1861-1897* (Ph.D. JCU 1976), p.149.

79. *PDT*, 15 August 1866.

80. Dalrymple's address to electors, *ibid.*, 29 August 1866. C f., editorial, *ibid.*

81. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 3 October 1866. C f., extract from *CBE*, *ibid.*, 16 January 1867.

82. Daintree to W. Clarke 9 September 1867, Clarke MSS. Mitchell Library.

He sympathized with "the strong antagonistic feeling generating between N & S States of America by the same line of policy".<sup>83</sup> The *Mackay Mercury* complained that the "fruits of southern rule and responsibility for southern railways are now maturing in the shape of financial embarrassment and our increased Customs Tariff".<sup>84</sup>

One of the most vehement exponents of the separatist view of the financial crisis was G.E. Dalrymple, who accepted office as Colonial Secretary in Herbert's interim ministry. He attributed the colony's financial difficulties to "reckless expenditure, to which [the Macalister ministry] were driven by their supporters, the Representatives of Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Warwick, and other Southern Constituencies".<sup>85</sup> "The self-interest of the majority of the representatives of the people centred in the far South amounts to tyranny of their Northern brethren", he wrote to the Bowen separation committee in mid-July.<sup>86</sup> Dalrymple's biographer has explained his support for the movement in terms of political expedience,<sup>87</sup> but there is evidence that his interest in separation went beyond merely exploiting it as a means of catching votes. Dalrymple had long been among those who regarded northern separation as inevitable.<sup>88</sup> As early as 1860 he wrote of the northern districts, "waiting but the onward march of Anglo-Saxon energy and enterprise, to spring into vigorous life - the embryo of the richest colony of future Australia."<sup>89</sup> Hence in 1866 he proudly claimed to be "the prognosticator and initiator of the separation movement."<sup>90</sup>

Certainly his support for separation in 1866 was politically expedient. Separatism in Bowen had reached a high pitch; it was undoubtedly the principal

---

83. *Ibid.* The American Civil War had ended the previous year, and objections by the Southern states to a protective tariff were regarded at the time as important reasons for the tensions that produced it.

84. Quoted by *PDT*, 5 October 1866. C f., *ibid.*, 24 October 1866.

85. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1866.

86. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1866.

87. Farnfield, *Frontiersman*, p.105. "To win the votes of the electors Dalrymple had to beat the separation drum as loudly as possible".

88. See above p. 36.

89. G.E. Dalrymple, *Proposals for the Establishment of a New Pastoral Settlement in North Australia*, quoted by Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, p.21.

90. *PDT*, 14 November 1866.

theme in the election campaign of that year.<sup>91</sup> However, when Dalrymple was told of his election as president of the short-lived "Northern Separation League", he had accepted the position, approved the movement, and gone on to condemn the government for its "reckless extravagance" and "wholesale injustice" to the north.<sup>92</sup> This was before the crisis which precipitated Macalister's resignation and Dalrymple's promotion, before he could have foreseen the need to seek re-election. Furthermore, Dalrymple was not in general one to toady to the electors; on the contrary, he was often criticized for snobbish indifference to the concerns of his constituents.<sup>93</sup> In 1866 moreover Dalrymple had good reason to feel confident of re-election, with no need for special efforts on his part.<sup>94</sup>

The virulence with which Dalrymple abused the government was unusual even in separationist Bowen; certainly it went beyond what mere expedience would have required. Dalrymple's early experiences as Commissioner for Crown Lands had alienated him from southern officialdom, as Farnfield points out: "Dalrymple had had a bitter experience of Government service which bred in him the abiding conviction that most Brisbane officials cared little about the development of the North and had no conception of the difficulties which faced its pioneers."<sup>95</sup> Dalrymple's later experiences in parliament were not such as would enamour him of the government: the rancour of the debates on the land; southerners' unconcern for the plight of the "pioneer squatters" with whose cause Dalrymple closely identified;<sup>96</sup> his own frustrated ambition as he realized that it "was a severe political handicap to represent the north."<sup>97</sup> Dalrymple believed that his personal experiences

- 
91. *Ibid.*, 25 August 1866. Dalrymple needed to seek re-election to confirm his ministerial position.
92. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1866. Like Dalrymple, the central Queensland representatives - Davis, Fitzsimmons, Palmer and Sandeman - supported separation, joining the Northern Queensland Separation League.
93. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1866. Report of public meeting and letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 5 September 1866.
94. The results were Dalrymple 95, Wills 58. *Ibid.*, 20 October 1866.
95. Farnfield, *op.cit.*, p.53.
96. *PDT*, 29 August 1866.
97. Farnfield, *op.cit.*, p.107. It is notable that Dalrymple was spoken of as a probable Premier of the new colony. R. Towns to J.M. Black 15 August 1866, R. Towns & Co. Letter Book August 1866-January 1867. Mitchell Library.

made him more alive than most to the injustices perpetrated against the north:

Although the people of the North are having the fact forced upon them that their general interests are ignored, and their revenue, which should be expended amongst them in local improvements, applied to the payment of interest on loans for Southern Public Works, it is only one who on the spot, like myself, is acquainted with the intricacies of politics, and the conflicting interests within and without the House, who can thoroughly comprehend the necessarily disastrous consequences to the whole colony of a continuance of the present centralizing policy of the present Government. 98

Dalrymple had been willing to support the government if it dealt fairly with the north. He turned against it, he explained, when he found "that they were only putting me off with smooth promises and honeyed words - with one hand, with affectation of liberality, giving us a few thousands of *our own revenue*, while they robbed us of the larger proportion of it for their own purposes with the other".<sup>99</sup> Clearly embittered, Dalrymple wrote these words before the change of ministry, and before the need arose for him to confront the electors.

After his re-election when his enthusiasm for the cause might have waned, its *raison d'être* removed, Dalrymple offered on his own initiative to convey the petition to London, there to enlist support for the movement in influential quarters, set up a working committee and organize deputations to the Secretary of State;<sup>100</sup> this was not the suggestion of a man feigning adherence to the cause. Far from thinking the proposed northern colony impracticable,<sup>101</sup> Dalrymple in an excess of zeal had pushed for a boundary at Cape Palmerston, only reluctantly accepting the need to include the central districts.<sup>102</sup>

In October the Bowen branch of the Northern Queensland Separation League again despatched Clarke and Lloyd to Rockhampton where, in

---

98. *PDT*, 15 August 1866.

99. *Ibid.*

100. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1866.

101. C f., Farnfield, *op.cit.*, p.104.

102. *PDT*, 15 September 1866.

conference with two delegates from Rockhampton and one from Clermont, they drafted a petition to the Queen. The petitioners requested territorial separation, pointing to the vast area of Queensland, which presented "insuperable difficulties to the effective governing of the whole from Brisbane", the "remote and inconveniently situated capital". Among points raised in favour of separation were the paucity of communications; the rapid growth of the northern districts whose population and revenue had already surpassed those of Moreton Bay at the time of its separation from New South Wales; and the inevitable political dominance of the south. The petitioners complained that the overwhelming numbers of southern representatives sanctioned an "unjust expenditure of the general revenue of the colony for the sole benefit of the Southern districts". Northern liability for loans expended in the south, and the difficulty of finding northerners willing to sacrifice private interests to attend parliament in Brisbane were also among the arguments presented.

The petition recommended the Dawes Range line as the southern boundary of the new colony,<sup>103</sup> and requested a responsible government, with a constitution similar to Queensland's but incorporating a system of provincial councils on the New Zealand model. "Albertland" was suggested as a suitable name for the proposed colony, "as a lasting memorial in honour of one whose name is enshrined in the hearts of all British subjects as the 'Good Prince'".<sup>104</sup> As regards the site of the capital, the petitioners refrained from recommending any locality, prudently leaving the decision to the Imperial authorities, as no proposal could have failed to alienate a large proportion of the supporters of the movement.<sup>105</sup> Copies of the separation petition were distributed throughout the northern districts for signature.

---

103. The petition delineated the proposed colony as follows - "on the south a little north of the 25th parallel of latitude, the Dawes range of mountains running from the S.E. coast to its intersection of that parallel; thence along the same parallel to the present western boundary of Queensland (138 degrees of east longitude); thence by that meridian to the Gulf of Carpentaria; thence by the north-eastern and eastern seaboard to the point of commencement." *Ibid.*, 17 October 1866. See Map No. 2.

104. *Ibid.*

105. Similarly in Canada the strength of localism forced Canadians to refer to the Queen the question of a national capital in the new confederation in 1867, as it had the choice of a capital for the Province of Canada ten years earlier. D.B. Knight, *A Capital for Canada: Conflict and Compromise in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago 1977), pp.151-200.

Bowen was the undisputed centre of separatism in north Queensland. Returning from their first sortie to Rockhampton, Clarke and Lloyd stopped over in Mackay to organize a meeting, when resolutions in favour of separation and the establishment of a branch league were carried overwhelmingly.<sup>106</sup> The *Mackay Mercury* pronounced in favour of the movement, regarding the advantages of separation as self-evident to all northerners:

To those who have languished so long under the present state of affairs, and have seen every possible shilling wrung from them without one iota of return, no argument can be needed to convince that change must be improvement, and that the improvement to be anticipated from a form of Government starting on the basis of an equitable distribution of the public expenditure coupled with Provincial Councils must be immense.... 107

Urging Mackay to join unstintingly in the movement, the *Mercury* was especially anxious that local representatives participate in any negotiations on the site of the new capital.

Nor did the citizens of Townsville intend to relinquish its claims to be the capital. Many influential residents including J.M. Black, now Townsville's first mayor, envisaged the embryonic settlement on Cleveland Bay as a future capital city.<sup>108</sup> The *Cleveland Bay Express* argued that although Bowen was undoubtedly the most suitable place if separation was achieved immediately, "as population increases so rapidly in these young settlements, in two or three years time, Townsville, Cardwell, or even Burke Town, may be in a position to put forward claims to the seat of honour".<sup>109</sup> The *Express* gave precedents, notably those of New Zealand and Canada, for shifting the capital as circumstances changed. Although the *Express* reluctantly acknowledged the qualities of Bowen's harbour, it countered with Townsville's extensive back country.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless Townsville

---

106. *PDT*, 15 August 1866.

107. Extract from *MM*, quoted *ibid.*, 15 September 1866.

108. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 11 August 1866.

109. Extract from *CBE*, quoted *ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*

played no active part in the agitation; the reports of the *Cleveland Bay Express* on the movement revealed a rather detached attitude.<sup>111</sup>

The attitude of the people of Rockingham Bay went beyond indifference to outright opposition. The Cardwell correspondent of the *Port Denison Times*, remarking that Cardwell would not have voted for Dalrymple in the previous election if his separationist views had been known, reported: "We may be very slow folks and far behind our energetic friends in Bowen and Rockhampton, but for the 'life of us' we cannot see what necessity there is for Separation."<sup>112</sup>

The north was not united in support for the separation movement, while in the central districts Gladstone opposed the movement, primarily because of jealousy of Rockhampton.<sup>113</sup> Within the movement itself, there were internal conflicts from the first. There was always rivalry between Bowen and Rockhampton, especially over the capital question. Bowen based its claims, predictably, on the vaunted excellence of its harbour, and secondly on its central position on the settled coastline of the proposed colony. As the *Port Denison Times* reasoned:

the firmest ground on which we base our claims for separation would be cut from under our feet, did we advocate as the seat of Government any place that occupied the same relative position with regard to the proposed new colony as Brisbane does with regard to the present Queensland. 114

Of course this immediately ruled out Rockhampton. When the Bowen delegates asked the Rockhampton committee point-blank whether Bowen was to be recommended for the capital the replies were very guarded, but managed to convey an impression of favouring Bowen.<sup>115</sup> Bowen was therefore disappointed in October when the Rockhampton and Clermont delegates refused to make a specific recommendation in the petition. Nevertheless the *Port Denison Times*, confident of Bowen's natural superiority, was certain that the

111. E.g., *ibid.*, 11 August, 22 September, 20 October 1866.

112. *Ibid.*, 15 September 1866.

113. Report of public meeting in Gladstone, *ibid.*, 4 August 1866.

114. *Ibid.*, 7 July 1866. C f., report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 4 July 1866.

115. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1866.



Imperial authorities would choose it, "provided always that no backstairs influence" was allowed to bias the decision.<sup>116</sup> The "backstairs influence" particularly feared was that of Sir Charles Nicholson, an eminent colonist, first President of the Queensland Legislative Council, then living in London, who had agreed to represent separationists at the Colonial Office.<sup>117</sup> In 1861 Nicholson had acquired extensive land holdings in Rockhampton;<sup>118</sup> in Bowen he was therefore regarded as a special advocate for Rockhampton.<sup>119</sup> The question of the capital was a constant source of tension between Bowen and Rockhampton.

Friction between townsmen and squatters also weakened the movement; although the Northern Queensland Separation League had originated in an alliance of urban business interests and pastoralists in the immediate vicinity of Rockhampton, outlying squatters, both in the central and northern districts, proved more reluctant to support the movement. In 1865-66 the land question aroused acrimony throughout the colony. Stereotypes of a wealthy squatter elite, familiar from the mid-century wrangling over "free selection" in New South Wales, were imported into Queensland. Although the stereotype scarcely fitted the hard-pressed pioneer squatters of the north, the people of Bowen and other coastal towns imbibed these anti-squatter attitudes; though the conflict was not severe in the Kennedy, probably because of the preponderance of the pastoral interest in the district, it was sufficient to deter graziers from co-operating with the separationists of the towns.

Leading articles in the *Port Denison Times* reflected the prevailing anti-squatter attitude.<sup>120</sup> Feeling maligned, their economic contribution unappreciated, squatters were not slow to retaliate. One pastoralist corresponded with the *Cleveland Bay Express*, complaining of Rayner's attitude:

---

116. *Ibid.*, 17 October 1866.

117. See J.W.D. Milne to his father 26 June 1866. Mitchell Library.

118. For details of Nicholson's connection with Rockhampton, see J.T.S. Bird, *The Early History of Rockhampton* (Rockhampton 1904), pp.20-21.

119. *PDT*, 19 September 1866.

120. E.g., *ibid.*, 26, 30 May 1865, 16, 19 May, 15, 26 September 1866..

The *P.D. Times*, from the remarks which have from time to time appeared in its columns for some weeks past, has quite abjured the squatting interests, and revels rather in Bowen becoming capital of a new colony, the squatters being bankrupt, and giving place to the sugar, coffee and maize growers. 121

"A Squatter" advised his colleagues to cancel their subscriptions to the hostile *Times*, confident that the *Express* would take a more sympathetic view. However the *Express* was also critical of the squatters, though less caustic than the *Port Denison Times*.<sup>122</sup> As a result of this antagonism, the isolation of the squatters, and their preoccupation with their own troubles as the pastoral depression deepened in the wake of the July crisis, the squatter voice in the separation movement was weak indeed. Engrossed in the tasks of settlement, and in some parts even exploration, the outback settlers had little opportunity to participate in the movement even when sympathetic, as some pastoralists were. "Teila", for instance, wrote a lengthy contribution to the *Port Denison Times* giving reasons why squatters should support separation, mentioning such diverse grievances as delays in surveying northern runs, high rents, lack of police protection, delays in mail deliveries, poor roads, and insecurity of tenure.<sup>123</sup> However even this letter referred to the unsympathetic attitude of urban dwellers. Some squatters in the immediate vicinity of Bowen took an active part in the movement; several were on the committee of the Bowen branch of the league.<sup>124</sup> Outlying pastoralists were more reserved. Of the large number of appeals for assistance to squatters in the district, only six brought replies, three of them refusing to have anything to do with the movement.<sup>125</sup>

Events in the central districts suggest that perhaps squatters were not merely indifferent. Centred in Springsure, an anti-separation movement was organized in August 1866 and a counter petition circulated, purportedly signed by many of the squatters and managers of central Queensland.<sup>126</sup> The

---

121. Letter from "A Squatter" of Lynd River, extract from *CBE*, quoted *ibid.*, 15 September 1866.

122. Extract from *CBE*, *ibid.*

123. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 18 July 1866.

124. E.g., J.G. Macdonald, J. Hall-Scott, J.P. Macdonald, and W.H. Palmer.

125. *PDT*, 17 November 1866. 130 circulars appealing for co-operation were sent to northern squatters and certain merchants in Sydney. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1866.

126. Extract from *Rockhampton Bulletin*, *ibid.*, 22 August 1866.

petition reflected the conflict between town and squatting interests, which was admittedly more intense in the Fitzroy district,<sup>127</sup> charging that the separation movement was got up for the aggrandizement of the town by Rockhampton businessmen whose interests differed from those of the outback squatters. Since commerce depended on the produce of the squatters and since the pastoral interest was dominant in the proposed new colony, the petitioners demanded that squatter opinion be heard.<sup>128</sup> Though admitting that northern grievances were real, the squatters argued that separation was not the best solution:

your petitioners, while fully conscious of the injustice with which the Northern Districts of Queensland have been treated by the Brisbane Government, humbly conceive that a stir for Separation is not the proper means of rectifying the evil, and that it is only got up by self-interested men who have not the ability to form a government, and who, if they should be in power, would rather perpetuate than otherwise the grievances complained of. 129

The presence of such a vigorous anti-separation organization among the outback squatters of central Queensland suggests that the squatters of north Queensland would also have raised objections to the movement, had it persisted.

The separation movement of 1866 lasted all of ten months: as quickly as it burst into activity, it sank into decline. By January 1867 agitation was at an end; committees ceased to meet; even the *Port Denison Times* turned to other news. The separation petition still lay at public places, banks and business houses in all the main towns, but it was never to reach its intended destination in London.

---

127. E.g., *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 25, 30 July 1867.

128. Anti-Separation Petition, *PDT*, 26 September 1866. See also letter to the Editor, *Rockhampton Bulletin*, quoted *ibid.*, 22 August 1866.

129. *Ibid.*, 26 September 1866. Rayner could not resist a gibe at the squatters, describing the petition as "a display of that overweening conceit and arrogance to which we referred a short time ago as a regrettable characteristic of a portion of our squattocracy". The petition was reputedly organized and framed by A.B. Buchanan of Cardbeign, J. Gregson of Rainworth, J.N. Griffiths of Nardoo, and Patton of Albinia Downs. *Rockhampton Bulletin*, quoted *ibid.*, 22 August 1866.

In 1866 local loyalties strongly influenced attitudes to separation. As in the Richmond-Clarence district and "Princeland" in the early 1860s, the movement grew out of a frustrated attempt to preserve existing patterns of trade and settlement in the face of economic change; for Bowen, as for Grafton and Portland, separation was to serve local ends.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, as Mackay's adherence to the movement showed, general grievances, especially financial grievances, were also important, the construction of railways in the south causing most resentment. Opponents of the movement did not deny these grievances, but thought they could be remedied within the existing political framework.

In organization and strategy the movement followed patterns set by southern predecessors. Influenced by precedent, northern separationists simply assumed that petitioning the Crown was the appropriate method of achieving their aim; the League paid little attention to advancing its case in the Queensland parliament. As in previous separation movements, newspapers, especially the *Port Denison Times* and in central Queensland the *Rockhampton Bulletin*, played a leading role in promoting the movement, often influencing the strategy adopted.

Internecine conflicts of interest - intertown rivalries, jealousy over the location of the future capital, and town-country antipathies - contributed to the collapse of the movement, as they were to plague its successors. Financial depression compounded these difficulties; at first financial problems, attributed to government mismanagement, stimulated separatism, but when the initial crisis settled into a prolonged depression

---

130. Grafton had lost its grip on the New England trade when improvements in communications techniques made its geographical drawbacks more apparent, the process accelerated by the growth consequent on discoveries of gold. Rowley, "Clarence River Separatism", pp.232-243. Portland had suffered a diminution of importance when the discovery of gold in Victoria altered the distribution of population. O'Donoghue, "Princeland", p.29.

the debilitating effect on the movement was overwhelming, as the *Port Denison Times* emphasized:

Unfortunately - owing mainly to the hard pressure of the times - the movement for Separation has lost most, if not all of the energy by which it was first characterised. 131

Similarly the *Rockhampton Bulletin*, looking back in April 1867, attributed both the rise and fall of the movement to economic conditions:

The desperate measures of the government goaded the northern districts to seek in Separation the only possible outlet of escape from misfortune. This policy of despair elicited a temporary energy, which while it lasted, did some good by forcing the people to combine for their mutual protection and address a petition to the throne for relief. But the Government taxation came down too crushingly, and all political energy has been paralysed by the weight. 132

Certainly financial problems restricted the activities of the Bowen League throughout its brief career - in December it was still about £50 in the red.<sup>133</sup>

F.T. Rayner nevertheless remained "as firmly convinced as ever of the justice of the bases on which our claims for Separation were founded".<sup>134</sup> The *Mackay Mercury* also continued to advocate separation, regretting the collapse of the movement.<sup>135</sup> But since the "means then tried for redressing those grievances have proved, *for the present*, inoperative", the onus was on northerners to change their tactics and "inquire for some other means of helping ourselves that may be more immediately effective".<sup>136</sup>

131. *PDT*, 4 May 1867.

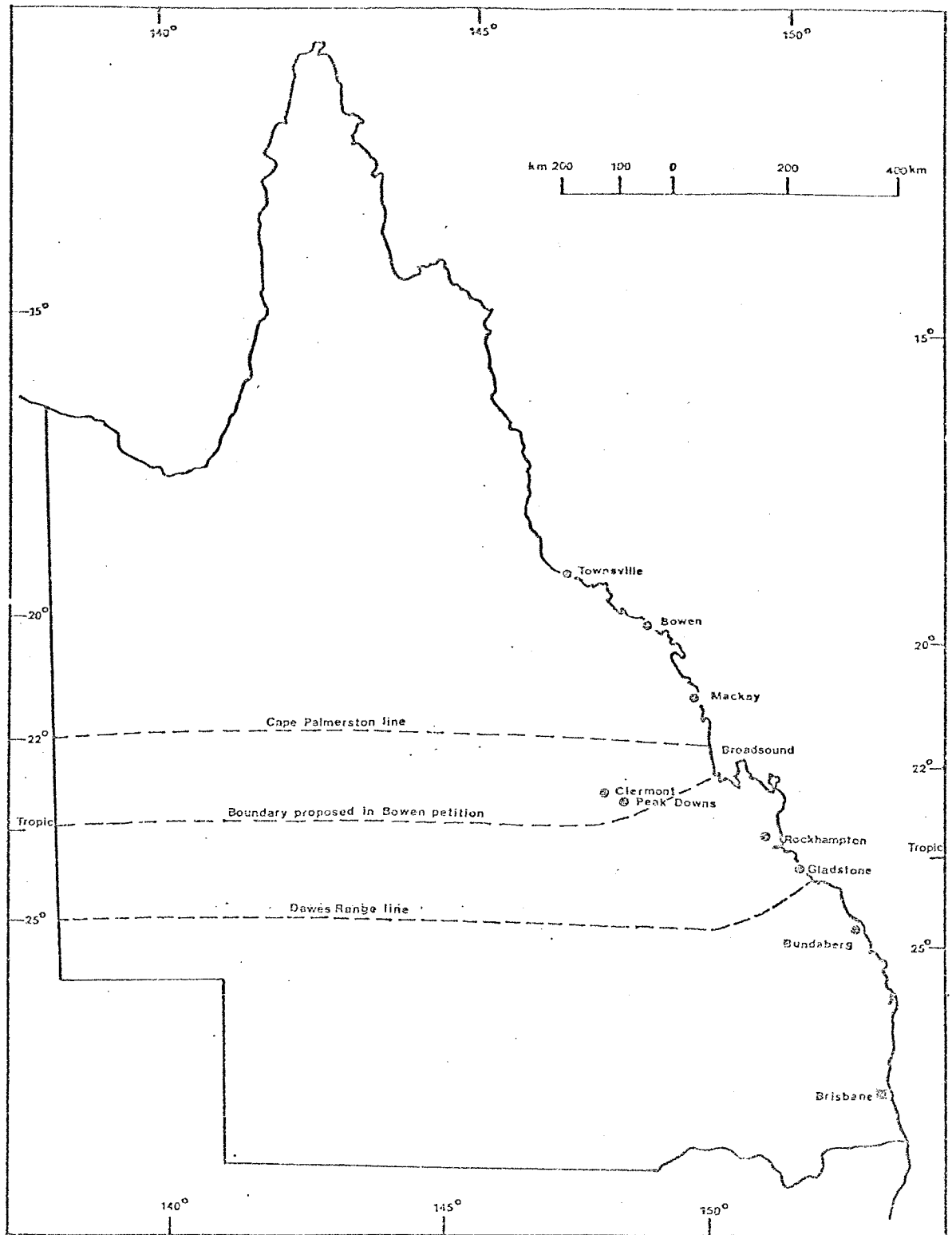
132. *Bulletin*, 4 April 1867.

133. *PDT*, 17 November 1866.

134. *Ibid.*

135. *MM*, 24 April, 15 May, 12 June, 13 July, 14 September 1867.

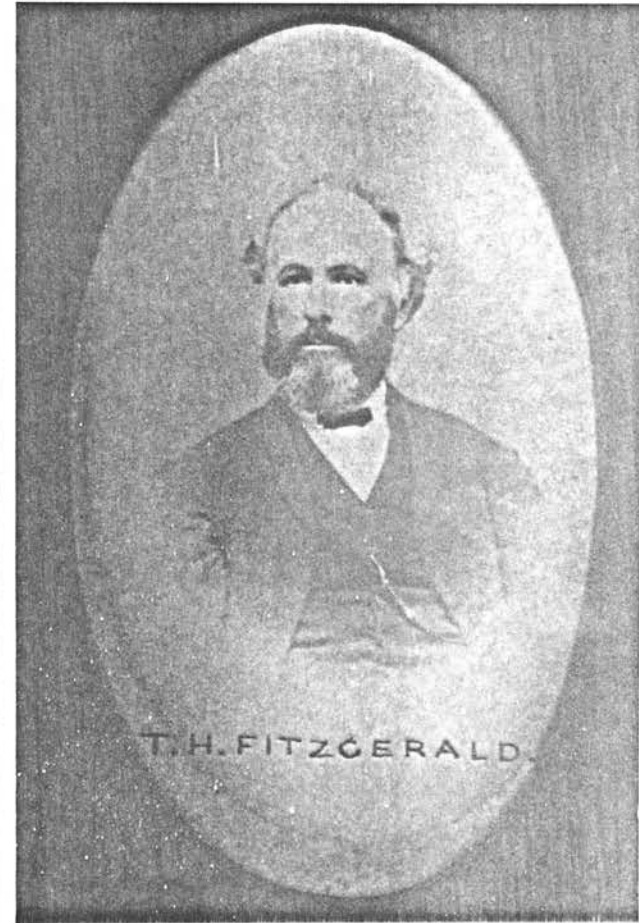
136. *PDT*, 4 May 1867.



MAP NO.3 NORTH QUEENSLAND 1871



G.E. DALRYMPLE



T.H. FITZGERALD

## CHAPTER 4

### A CROWN COLONY

When the movement lost impetus in early 1867, an apparently workable alternative to separation presented itself almost at once. Separation had been shown to be impracticable as a remedy for northern grievances, at least for the time being; but the campaign of 1866-67 had heightened public awareness of these grievances, making them seem the more pressing. With the decline of the separation movement, the northern community was receptive to, indeed started to seek out, an alternative solution.

The idea of administrative decentralization seemed to meet northern requirements.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the inherent appeal of local self-government and greater control of their own finances, the people of the north were swayed by the notion that some system of local government was needed before separation, if the new capital was not to dominate the new colony as Brisbane had Queensland.<sup>2</sup> Thus embracing decentralization did not necessarily mean abandoning separation as the ultimate goal.<sup>3</sup>

Decentralization was already a topic of earnest, though as yet rather vague, discussion when T.H. Fitzgerald took it up and elaborated it. The right man in the right place at an opportune moment, Fitzgerald offered a simple formula to remedy northern problems. The climate of opinion was certainly receptive: separation had been discredited by failure, at least temporarily, while Fitzgerald's scheme promised speedy attainment of many of the goals for which separationists had aimed. Nevertheless it was Fitzgerald's personal influence that was responsible, in large measure, for re-directing northern energies from "separation" to "local self-government". He presented his scheme persuasively, not least because he spoke with practical experience of a similar system.

Before coming to Queensland Thomas Henry Fitzgerald had served in New Zealand as Superintendent of Hawkes Bay, a new province carved out of

- 
1. *PDT*, 1, 15 June 1867.
  2. *Ibid.*, 26 October 1867.
  3. *Ibid.*, 25 April 1868.



Wellington province to solve the problem of distance from the capital city.<sup>4</sup> He had also represented Hawkes Bay in the General Assembly. Now resident in Mackay, owning property there and in Bowen, Fitzgerald combined the advantages of local residence with political experience of a peculiarly relevant kind.<sup>5</sup>

In mid-1867 Fitzgerald appealed to the electors of Kennedy on a platform of "local self-government and an equal distribution of the revenue raised in the colony".<sup>6</sup> Depicting northern Queenslanders as an "oppressed community", he proposed a system of local self-government as an answer to the "neglect" and "spoilation" [sic] they had endured in the past. Such a system would prevent the funding of southern public works at the expense of the north; of equal importance it would allow political expression for "a community of free and independent men".<sup>7</sup> Fitzgerald proclaimed that residents of each of the large natural divisions of the colony had a right to manage their local affairs; the central parliament of the colony ought not to meddle with them, but should confine itself to matters of general interest, such as postal services, police, harbours, coastal lights, and so on. To achieve this, Fitzgerald urged the establishment of a system of provincial institutions, to be elected on the same franchise as the Legislative Assembly. He envisaged that these provincial councils would be given an assured revenue including a fixed proportion of customs revenue and part of the land fund, with the fullest powers of local taxation in addition.<sup>8</sup>

- 
4. D.B. Waterson, *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament, 1860-1929* (Canberra 1972), p.57. The Superintendent was the directly-elected executive head of the provincial government. Perhaps the influence of gold miners who came from the southern fields of New Zealand when gold was discovered in north Queensland contributed to the popularity of Fitzgerald's scheme. See Gray, *Reminiscences of India and North Queensland 1857-1912*, p.135.
5. *PDT*, 15 June 1867. For biographical details, see Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.74n.
6. *MM*, 22 June 1867.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.* Provinces were to correspond to nodal regions, including major ports with their hinterlands. Fitzgerald, *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, p.803.

Fitzgerald's second major strategy for redress of northern grievances was to seek a declaration from the Queensland legislature on the "political rights which all inherit from being subjects of the British empire". Such a declaration of equal political rights for inhabitants of the northern and southern portions of the colony would embody "a distinct enunciation of the great principle of British legislation, that no one amongst us should be called on to pay taxes or contribute in any way to expenditure in which he was not in some degree interested". Under the prevailing system, according to Fitzgerald, northerners had been reduced to "mere tributaries", filling southern coffers and paying for southern works projects. In Fitzgerald's view the most glaring instance of this system of "piracy" was the use of moneys collected from northern land sales to pay for public works in the south.<sup>9</sup> This land revenue, he claimed, belonged to the district in which it was collected, was indeed the district's natural means of self support, and ought to be spent on local requirements.<sup>10</sup> If parliament refused its assent to the desired declaration Fitzgerald promised he would adopt separation as the only remaining option.<sup>11</sup>

Fitzgerald was elected to parliament on 19 September through the combined efforts of voters in Mackay and Townsville.<sup>12</sup> Identified as the Mackay candidate, he attracted the loyal support of local residents who felt that the "people of Bowen have had the lion's share of governmental patronage, and it is high time that Mackay should reap some benefit by being represented by a member who would not devote the whole of his attention upon one town, and forget the wants of another".<sup>13</sup> The electors of Townsville evidently preferred a Mackay candidate to a man fielded by their arch-rival, Bowen. Despite local loyalties, Fitzgerald also received more than one-third of the votes recorded in Bowen. Fitzgerald's decentralization scheme had captured the imagination of the electors of Kennedy. His

---

9. *MM*, 13 July 1867.

10. *Ibid.*, 22 June 1867. Clearly Fitzgerald's financial proposals, and in particular his emphasis on the land fund as local revenue, were based on the New Zealand system. See Morrell, *Provincial System*, pp.97-99.

11. *MM*, 22 June, 13 July 1867. *PDT*, 2 July 1867.

12. *PDT*, 20 July 1867.

13. *MM*, 29 June 1867.

popularity, of person and of programme, is further demonstrated by the fact that in June, through a misunderstanding, he had also been nominated and subsequently returned in the Rockhampton electorate.<sup>14</sup>

In September, at Fitzgerald's instigation, the parliamentary representatives of the northern constituencies - Archibald Archer, Charles Fitzsimmons, Gordon Sandeman, Edmund M. Royds and Fitzgerald - conferred to draft a manifesto setting out in detail northern grievances and requirements.<sup>15</sup> Addressed to southern Queenslanders and their representatives, this lengthy, well-researched statement sought to justify an electoral redistribution to increase northern representation in parliament. Comparing northern customs revenue with that derived from the south, the members argued that "representation ought to be in proportion to taxation", tacitly rejecting population as an equitable basis for allocating seats. The familiar complaint of unequal distribution of public expenditure was expressed. Extravagant southern railway expenditure was cited as a notable example; it was stated that government expenditure on immigration also favoured the south over the north by 8 to 1.

In addition to greater parliamentary influence, a number of other remedies were suggested. Northern members requested an investigation of the public accounts with a view to apportioning the public debt to the particular districts where borrowed money had been spent. The merits of a system of provincial councils were extolled: local management would result not only in greater efficiency, by taking advantage of local knowledge, but would serve also to allay the destructive feeling of antagonism against the south in northern areas. Furthermore, by relieving the central government of responsibility for local affairs, it would allow the government to concentrate on matters of general concern, perhaps even eliminating

---

14. *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 2 July 1867. Fitzgerald was nominated in Rockhampton at the last minute because his prospects in the Kennedy, as indicated by the show of hands at the nomination meeting in Bowen, appeared slight. When news of his success in Rockhampton reached Bowen, a meeting determined not to allow Fitzgerald to slip from them. Fitzgerald then resigned the Rockhampton seat and went on to contest the Kennedy election.

15. *Queensland Daily Guardian*, 24 September 1867.

the need for protracted parliamentary sessions and so encouraging northerners, who could spare neither time nor money for lengthy residence in Brisbane, to present themselves as parliamentary candidates. The manifesto concluded on a note of determination. Having pledged themselves to obtain justice for the north, the northern members promised that failure to achieve local government would lead them to "more heartily enter on that agitation which must lead to Separation":

We do not use that word as a threat, but simply as the alternative that would be forced on us, should the resources of the whole country in future be used merely to aggrandise that corner of the colony in which the capital is placed. 16

In October Fitzgerald, fulfilling the first of his election promises, introduced into the House a series of motions embodying what were described as the "principles of government".<sup>17</sup> In colonial Queensland parliament was seldom a venue for philosophical discussion of the theory of government; Queensland's early legislators were practical men, preoccupied with public works programmes and utilitarian legislation, little given to abstract speculation. On this occasion, however, Fitzgerald tried to lift the whole tone of parliamentary debate - from mundane matters of roads, bridges and railways to the realm of political ideals. Setting aside their accustomed pragmatism, successive speakers endeavoured to do justice to the sublimity of the subject, and after lengthy discussion the resolutions, with some minor amendments, were endorsed by the House with an air of "great solemnity".<sup>18</sup>

The first of Fitzgerald's motions indicated the general tenor of the resolutions, proclaiming that "the inhabitants of every part of Queensland are fully entitled to claim and enjoy equal political rights and advantages".<sup>19</sup> The following motions clarified the intent of the first: they dealt with the need for elective local authorities to supervise local affairs; demanded "fair taxation" and suggested that each district should bear the cost of its own public works; they argued the justice of spending

16. *Ibid.*

17. *QPD*, Vol. 5, 1867, p.286.

18. C.A. Bernays, *Queensland Politics During Sixty Years, 1859-1919* (Brisbane n.d.), p.45.

19. *QPD*, Vol. 5, 1867, p.286.

local revenue in accordance with the needs and wishes of those who produced that revenue. In total the resolutions purported to offer a solution to the basic problem of finding a just and proper relationship between central government and local communities. Fitzgerald himself made this point more vividly, asserting that "the real question at issue was whether the colony was to remain united as a whole, or whether separation would be forced upon the people of the north".<sup>20</sup> Totally divorced from political reality, however, the pious declarations extracted from parliament on this singular occasion had no noticeable effect on its subsequent deliberations.

Archibald Archer, the member for Leichhardt, had prepared a bill to repeal the abortive Provincial Councils Act of 1864, and to provide for the establishment of provincial councils on an elective basis. The colony would be divided into six provinces - Brisbane, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Bowen, Cleveland and Carpentaria - each with a council empowered to legislate on local matters but debarred from making laws regarding duties or customs, currency, weights and measures, post offices and telegraphs, bankruptcy and insolvency, shipping, marriages, waste lands and criminal law.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to the separation movement of 1866 which grew spontaneously in the constituencies, this move for provincial councils began in the Assembly, in a caucus of northern members, and only attracted organized support at constituency level after a bill had been produced. The efforts of the northern representatives, and of Fitzgerald in particular, were warmly commended at public gatherings in Bowen, Mackay and Townsville in early 1868.<sup>22</sup> In Bowen the Kennedy Provincial Committee was formed to promote local interests in general and specifically to co-operate with the parliamentary representatives to secure provincial councils.<sup>23</sup> A similar body was established at Townsville. A petition, embodying resolutions in

---

20. *Ibid.*, p.287.

21. The bill was published in *PDT*, 16 November 1867. It was based on the New Zealand Constitution Act. *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, p.801.

22. *MM*, 28 March, 29 July 1868. *PDT*, 25 April 1868.

23. *Ibid.*

favour of provincial councils carried at these meetings throughout the north, was sent to the Governor.<sup>24</sup>

Parliament discussed the provincial councils bill in December-January. From the outset it was clear to all concerned that its prospects were not bright. Introducing his bill Archer himself admitted that he did not intend to press it to a second reading, or to divide the House upon it.<sup>25</sup> This did not encourage members to take the question seriously, imparting a speculative tone to the debate and giving rise to a tendency, observed by Edward Lamb, the Secretary for Public Lands, for "coquetting with the measure".<sup>26</sup> Immediately the bill was introduced the Premier, Robert Mackenzie, objected that Archer had usurped the government's prerogative by bringing forward a private member's bill on a matter in which the government had intended to take the initiative.<sup>27</sup> Dissenting from the principles of Archer's bill Mackenzie promised that the government would, in the next session, introduce a bill providing more effectually for local government in the various districts of the colony.<sup>28</sup>

In debate the Premier expressed the opinion, shared by many of his southern colleagues,<sup>29</sup> that Archer's bill was far too drastic. Mackenzie found especially objectionable the clause empowering provincial councils to enact legislation on all residual matters, those not explicitly

---

24. *Ibid.*, 20 June, 8 August 1868. *MM*, 29 July, 12 August 1868. According to the petition, northerners would have preferred a three-province system to Archer's six.

25. *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, p.792.

26. *Ibid.*, p.816. See also Palmer, *ibid.*, p.804; Ramsay, *ibid.*, p.805; Fitzsimmons, *ibid.*, p.807; Walsh, *ibid.*, p.807-8; Fitzgerald, *ibid.*, p.814.

27. *Ibid.*, p.795. In his Ministerial Statement in September 1867 Mackenzie had announced the government's intention to introduce a bill for the formation of District or Provincial Councils, probably in the following session. *Ibid.*, p.117. It would appear that this measure was adopted by the government through the influence of A.H. Palmer, member for Port Curtis, and Colonial Secretary and Secretary for Public Works in Mackenzie's ministry. J.X. Jobson, *A Biography of Sir Arthur Hunter Palmer* (BA Hons. University of Queensland 1960), p.33.

28. *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, p.796.

29. E.g., Palmer, *ibid.*, pp.804-5; Walsh, *ibid.*, p.809; Clark, *ibid.*, p.811; Lamb, *ibid.*, p.813. C f., *BC*, 4 January 1870, 25 July 1868.

conferred on the central government. His own concept of provincial councils, in contrast, he likened to "district municipalities", local boards entrusted with the expenditure of local revenue, whose functions would be restricted to financial management and would not involve legislative powers or local self-government.<sup>30</sup> He asserted that complete northern separation, which he deprecated, would be preferable to allowing Archer's bill to pass in its entirety, thereby giving virtual self-government to the several districts of the colony.<sup>31</sup>

Unimpressed by the Premier's proposals, T.H. Fitzgerald predicted that the government's bill would prove unsatisfactory, being too narrow to remedy northern grievances.<sup>32</sup> Indeed scepticism about the efficacy of a government decentralization measure had already been voiced in the northern press.<sup>33</sup> Such conflicts of outlook were to find repeated expression in discussions of decentralization measures in succeeding decades: legislation which southerners thought too far-reaching, northerners usually regarded as inadequate. Fitzgerald declared separation the only alternative if the government maintained its unsympathetic attitude.<sup>34</sup>

During the debate provincial councils were repeatedly spoken of as an alternative to separation.<sup>35</sup> Fitzgerald, for instance, argued that it would "be much better to anticipate such a necessity, and agree upon some plan to remain strong and connected; better to do justice than to force upon the distant districts separation".<sup>36</sup> Although many members regarded separation as inevitable in the long run,<sup>37</sup> decentralization was seen as a means of postponing it, by mitigating northern colonists' sense of grievance and thereby "cut[ting] the ground from under the feet of those who are trying

30. *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-8, pp.796-7.

31. *Ibid.*, pp.798-9. This was also the view of the *Brisbane Courier*. Editorial, *BC*, 25 July 1868.

32. *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, p.800.

33. E.g., *MM*, 27 July, 14 September 1867.

34. *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, p.800.

35. Archer, *ibid.*, pp.791-4; Fitzgerald, *ibid.*, p.799, p.803; Mackenzie, *ibid.*, pp.789-9; Fitzsimmons, *ibid.*, p.807.

36. *Ibid.*, p.803.

37. E.g., Mackenzie, *ibid.*, p.799; Archer, *ibid.*, p.791; Macalister, *ibid.*, p.923.

to raise agitation in the northern parts of the colony against the southern portions of it".<sup>38</sup>

Comparisons with the New Zealand situation studded the debate. However, the implications of this comparison were rather equivocal, on balance damaging the chances of provincial legislation. Supporters of the bill pointed to the population growth and general progress achieved in New Zealand under provincial institutions,<sup>39</sup> while opponents emphasized instead the extent of popular dissatisfaction with the system and the pecuniary difficulties of some New Zealand provinces, especially Auckland.<sup>40</sup> In general, members, with the exception of Fitzgerald, showed little understanding or knowledge of the New Zealand situation.<sup>41</sup>

The merits and defects of provincial councils as a form of local government were thoroughly ventilated in Queensland in 1868. Coincidentally, the merits of the provincial system were under enquiry in New Zealand, where provincial councils had been in operation for some fifteen years.<sup>42</sup> As a result proponents on both sides of the question were able to cite opinion from New Zealand to support their views. Consequently the New Zealand case tended to obscure the issue; there was much discussion on questions like the relevance of its experience to Queensland, on which no one but Fitzgerald had any personal knowledge.

The serious problems which New Zealanders had experienced with the provincial system<sup>43</sup> provided opponents of administrative decentralization with a forceful argument against its introduction in Queensland: they blamed the system itself for the difficulties.<sup>44</sup> Advocates of provincial institutions, on the other hand, searched for specific causes - constitutional

---

38. Archer, *ibid.*, p.794.

39. Archer, *ibid.*, p.794; Fitzsimmons, *ibid.*, p.807; Fitzgerald, *ibid.*, p.801; Macalister, *ibid.*, p.922.

40. Mackenzie, *ibid.*, pp.796-7; Lamb, *ibid.*, p.812. C f., *BC*, 6 March 1869.

41. E.g., Ramsay, *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, p.805.

42. Morrell, *Provincial System*, pp.190-206.

43. *Ibid.*, pp.271-285.

44. E.g., Walsh, *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-68, pp.808-809; Sandeman, *ibid.*, p.812; Lamb, *ibid.*, pp.812-813.



and historical causes, as well as mismanagement - underlying the problems in New Zealand, arguing that in the light of New Zealand experience Queensland could avoid the pitfalls and perfect what was basically a sound governmental system. Though flawed, the north Queensland provincialists maintained, the New Zealand system was still an improvement on the highly centralized government of Queensland.<sup>45</sup> In spite of all explanations, rationalizations and apologies, however, the New Zealand parallel undoubtedly had a negative influence on the fate of the provincial scheme in Queensland in the 1860s.

During 1868-69 it became increasingly apparent, to even the most ardent advocates of provincial institutions, that the government had no intention of conceding any substantial degree of autonomy to the northern districts. The Mackenzie ministry made no move to honour its promise of the previous session to introduce a decentralization measure. By early 1869 Fitzgerald himself was ready to resign the Colonial Treasurership and his seat, convinced of the "hopelessness" of effecting his scheme. He was disillusioned after his short stint in the ministry by the "violent opposition instituted against him by the supporters of the Mackenzie Government", and by the never-ending, fruitless disputes between parliamentary factions in Brisbane.<sup>46</sup> As he ruefully admitted to his constituents, the exigencies of parliamentary politics had forced him to co-operate with neighbouring members to work for attainable, piecemeal reforms, notably in the field of land legislation, and to postpone the achievement of provincial government.<sup>47</sup> To persist in the face of southern opposition and parliamentary inertia, in the attempt to revolutionize the entire governmental structure of the colony, was to forego all

---

45. *PDT*, 9, 16, 30 May, 6, 13 June 1868. This remarkably perceptive series of articles analyzed the defects of the New Zealand system and considered in detail current proposals for its modification and improvement, with a view to finding the most suitable scheme for Queensland.

46. Fitzgerald's letter read at public meeting, *ibid.*, 20 February 1869. Fitzgerald was named Colonial Treasurer in the new ministry, headed by Charles Lilley, which replaced the Mackenzie government in November 1868. He resigned when he became entrapped in some of Arthur Macalister's political intriguing. See Wilson, *Political Career of Macalister*, pp.140-144.

47. Report of public meeting, *PDT*, 11 July 1868.

possibility of improvement. A similar dilemma was to confront northern parliamentary representatives in later years; to a man they adopted the course which Fitzgerald chose, preferring practical gains to tilting at windmills.

Fitzgerald's strategy was obviously failing. The northern manifesto had received little more than cursory notice in the southern press, the declaration of the "principles of government" was to say the least unreliable, and provincial councils were no nearer realization. Northerners became disenchanted with the whole scheme when even its original promoter admitted it to be impracticable. Ironically, Fitzgerald's close personal identification with the provincial scheme contributed to its declining popularity, for the scheme shared in the odium occasioned by Fitzgerald's involvement in several transactions of doubtful integrity, indeed of questionable legality.<sup>48</sup> Owing so much of its rapid rise in public favour to the advocacy of one influential man of high repute, the provincial scheme sank as swiftly in popular estimation when that reputation was lost.

By 1869 disillusionment with the provincial councils scheme was widespread and again people began to look for an alternative. The failure

---

48. Fitzgerald was accused of acquiring while holding the position of Government Surveyor large tracts of land, on credit, at reduced prices, and without public competition - land which subsequently proved extremely valuable. George Smith to the Editor, *ibid.*, 20 February 1869. Letter to the Editor, *MM*, 14 October 1868. But see Fitzgerald's self-defence, letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 11 November 1868. Even more productive of public outrage were charges, made first in the *Brisbane Courier* and *Queensland Express*, that Fitzgerald, together with Archer and Edward Lamb the Secretary for Public Lands, was implicated in certain manoeuvres, constituting a "gross violation" of the spirit if not the letter of the recently passed Land Act, to allow the consolidation of the vast tracts of pastoral land controlled by the Archer family in central Queensland. *BC*, 3 September 1868. *Queensland Express*, 30 September 1868. Editorial, *PDT*, 24 October 1868. Thus "landjobbing" and "dummying" were included among Fitzgerald's more prominent crimes. C f., Fitzgerald's defence, letter to the Editor, *Queensland Express*, quoted by *MM*, 11 November 1868. According to Fitzgerald, the Gazetted proclamation of the consolidation was initially cancelled by the government as a result of political pressure from certain unidentified sources; this decision was later reversed to allow the so-called "Gracemere consolidation".

to secure local governing bodies bred bitterness against the southern government; few now believed that meaningful concessions could be wrung from the apparently hostile, southern dominated parliament.<sup>49</sup> The *Port Denison Times* expressed the general sense of disappointment: "All the bright hopes that we had formed, and been encouraged in forming by our member the late Colonial Treasurer, have vanished into thin air".<sup>50</sup> Public regard for Fitzgerald as for his protege, the provincial council, had reached its lowest ebb, especially since by resigning in February 1868 he committed the cardinal sin of this period of roads-and-bridges politics, leaving his constituents unrepresented in the Estimates debate. His political demise made way for a revival of interest in separation. The Provincial Committee, formerly the institutional symbol of northern aspirations to provincial government, now convened a public meeting to discuss the advisability of petitioning the Crown for separation.<sup>51</sup>

The initiative came from Bowen, the movement evolving independently of Rockhampton and the central districts. In the separation movement of 1865 and in the campaign for provincial councils the north had joined in alliance with central Queensland; the new initiative for separation was the first attempt by the people of north Queensland, as distinct from central Queensland, to obtain an autonomous government of their own. The previous boundary line of Dawes Range was abandoned in favour of Cape Palmerston and the 22nd parallel of latitude, the boundary subsequently sought by separationists for the rest of the century - indeed up till the present. This early delimitation of north Queensland, which separationists have almost invariably followed, gave northerners a distinct entity on which to focus their affections, loyalties, and aspirations.

The previous movement of 1866, which had aimed for a separate responsible government, was based on territorial limits embracing the wealth and population of the central districts. With those excised, there was thought to be little hope of obtaining separation with responsible government: the new movement accordingly advocated Crown Colony

---

49. *PDT*, 23 January 1869.

50. *Ibid.*, 13 February 1869.

51. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1869.

government. The rationale for a step admittedly retrograde was that it would be only temporary, that north Queensland would advance towards complete self-government more rapidly under British tutelage than under "Brisbane tyranny";<sup>52</sup> it would be a temporary sacrifice necessary to obtain the boon of separation. In any case, it was reasoned, under Brisbane rule the north was deprived of true representative government.<sup>53</sup> Support for a Crown Colony was also associated with a complex of ideas about the Imperial connection, such as the notion of Britain as the mother country, a source of succour in times of distress,<sup>54</sup> and the belief that British justice would eradicate corruption and jobbery.<sup>55</sup> Additional attractions were the economy of administration in a Crown Colony, and the supposed prosperity of Mauritius, Ceylon, Demerara, Trinidad and other Crown Colonies.<sup>56</sup> Another argument mentioned at this time was that separation as a Crown Colony would make the large-scale entry of coloured labour more feasible.<sup>57</sup>

North Queenslanders adopted Crown Colony government as their goal because of a policy they imputed to the Colonial Office of requiring a certain demographic base, usually put at about 20,000 people, before granting responsible government.<sup>58</sup> Yet it was significant that this decision also coincided with a widespread revulsion against responsible government in Queensland. The Queensland parliament was widely

---

52. *Ibid.*, 13 February 1869.

53. Comments at public meetings, *ibid.*, 20, 27 February 1869.

54. *Ibid.*, 27 February, 3 April 1869.

55. Letter to the Editor, *MM.*, 26 August 1868, urging "a return to the protecting wing of the Imperial Colonial Secretary *pro tem*, whose remote impartiality would save us from railways running nowhere, debts running everywhere, innumerable jobs, and rampant favouritism".

56. Letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 6 March 1869. Extract from *MM*, quoted by *PDT*, 13 March 1869. It was also pointed out that, requiring fewer elected representatives, Crown Colony government better suited a pioneering society. *Ibid.*, 27 February 1869.

57. *Ibid.*, 25 September 1869.

58. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1869. The population north of Cape Palmerston was 8,000-9,000, increasing considerably in 1869 as a result of gold discoveries. Normanby to Kimberley 26 December 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol. 1, p.660.

criticized for its tendencies towards factionalism and log-rolling, the preoccupation of its members with the narrow, parochial concerns of their own constituencies, and the dearth of broad statesman-like vision. To these failings the *Brisbane Courier* attributed the fact that the Constitution and responsible government were no longer held in the same regard as at the inauguration of the colony:

the fact of such a proposition [for a Crown Colony] being generally mooted is a strong proof of the vexation and disgust with which the proceedings in Parliament are regarded by a large section of the people. 59

It was often remarked, with some plausibility, that the "failure" of parliamentary institutions in Queensland was a result of the premature granting of responsible government - before an experienced group of parliamentarians and civil servants had emerged, and before the dominant economic interests of the colony had stabilized.<sup>60</sup> According to the *Northern Argus*, men all over the colony were "casting their thoughts wistfully towards Great Britain"<sup>61</sup> in the belief that control by the British parliament, which would be impartial and consequently able to take the broad view, would be an improvement. Allied to this was a harking after the certainties of government by the Imperial authorities, the "more solid advantages of a Crown Colony",<sup>62</sup> as a Bowen correspondent put it. The espousal of the Crown Colony idea in northern Queensland may be seen, at least to some extent, as part of this general reaction.

Public meetings in Bowen in early 1869 strongly advocated a separation campaign.<sup>63</sup> To begin with, the existing organization of the Provincial Committee provided a convenient base from which to direct the agitation. While a sub-committee drafted a petition, correspondence was opened with sympathizers in Mackay, Burketown and the Cape River settlement. The overtures of a deputation sent to confer with the Townsville Provincial Committee were uncompromisingly rejected at a public meeting,<sup>64</sup> when the

---

59. Quoted by *PDT*, 13 March 1869. C f., *BC*, 23 February 1869.

60. E.g., separation petition, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol. 1, p.661.

61. Quoted by *PDT*, 13 March 1869.

62. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 6 March 1869. C f., G. Smith's remarks at public meeting, *ibid.*, 27 February 1869.

63. *Ibid.*, 20, 27 February 1869.

64. *Ibid.*, 24 April 1869.

idea of a Crown Colony was ridiculed as a retrogressive step which could lead to the introduction of convicts, or retard the inflow of British capital; Bowen's sincerity in moving for separation was called into question, especially in view of the large amount of government expenditure in that town. This confrontation in Townsville provided an excuse for the *Port Denison Times* and *Cleveland Bay Express* to indulge in a spate of that backbiting and mutual abuse with which they regularly enlivened their editorial columns.<sup>65</sup> Inter-town rivalry, currently exacerbated by competition for the traffic of the goldfields at Cape River, Ravenswood and the Gilbert, hindered co-operation on separation.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the Crown Colony proposal was not without its advocates in Townsville even at this early stage,<sup>67</sup> and as the movement gained momentum Townsville became increasingly more amenable.<sup>68</sup>

In contrast to the reaction in 1866, separation now evoked a sympathetic response from local squatters dissatisfied with the government's handling of pastoral problems.<sup>69</sup> This change of attitude was mirrored in central Queensland where Springsure, which in 1866 was the headquarters of the anti-separation movement, now actively promoted a separation campaign.<sup>70</sup> Squatter discontent became more vocal during 1868, reaching a peak in 1869. Northern pastoralism had not yet emerged from the depression into which it was cast in 1866; the industry was afflicted by continuing low wool and stock prices, and a succession of droughts, on top of the hardy perennials of labour shortage, high cartage costs, aboriginal depredations, and the northern squatter's most "poisonous enemy",<sup>71</sup> distance. Loss of confidence in northern pastoralism among

---

65. E.g., *ibid.*, 17 April 1869.

66. *Ibid.*, 9, 23 January, 3 April 1869.

67. Letter to the Editor, *CBE*, 20 March 1869, quoted *ibid.*, 27 March 1869.

68. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 11 September 1869. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 23 April 1870.

69. Letters to the Editor, *ibid.*, 2, 9 January 1869. *MM*, 4 June 1870. *PDT*, 8 October 1870.

70. Report of meeting, *Peak Downs Telegram*, quoted *ibid.*, 15 January 1870. Report of meeting, *ibid.*, 27 February 1869. De Satge's address to his constituents, *ibid.*, 10 April 1869.

71. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 2 January 1869. C f., letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 9 January 1869. J. Nisbet, *Pioneering Days in Queensland*, pp.18-19. Mitchell Library.

financiers and a crisis in the southern money market led to many foreclosures and a dearth of capital for improvements.<sup>72</sup> Squatters believed legislative concessions to be the only way out of their difficulties, pinning their hopes on greater security of tenure, and provision for compensation for improvements on resumption. Squatters who looked for relief to the Alienation of Crown Land Act of 1868 were bitterly disappointed, for it dealt mainly with land problems in the settled districts of southern Queensland.<sup>73</sup> Several petitions embodying squatter demands were circulated in pastoral districts from the Mitchell to the Burke, and presented to parliament in 1868-69.<sup>74</sup> Their cause was warmly taken up by the Kennedy Provincial Committee, which fostered a spirit of accord between town and country often lacking in previous years.<sup>75</sup>

The goldfields population was a political factor of increasing importance during this period. By the end of 1871 there were an estimated 9,500 diggers in north Queensland,<sup>77</sup> distributed over the Ravenswood, Gilbert River, Cape River and Etheridge fields. The administration of the goldfields caused great dissatisfaction,<sup>78</sup> and support for the idea of separation was regularly expressed:<sup>79</sup>

- 
72. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, p.190. J.W. Raven, *Reminiscences of a Western Queensland Pioneer 1833-1925*, p.22. Mitchell Library.
73. Allingham, *op.cit.*, pp.192-193. See letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 30 January 1869, criticizing the Land Act.
74. *QV&P*, 1868-9, pp.447-463. *PDT*, 27 February 1869.
75. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1869.
76. For the significance of goldfields vote in elections, see *ibid.*, 24 September 1870, 16 September 1871. For influence of Miners' Protection Assoc., see *ibid.*, 8 June, 17 February 1872.
77. MacDevitt's (member for Kennedy) estimate, *ibid.*, 30 December 1871.
78. Letter from Cape River correspondent concerning removal of gold escort and general neglect, *ibid.*, 2 January 1869; irregularity of mails, *ibid.*, 29 May 1869; complaints from Gilbert River about mails and lack of gold escort, *ibid.*, 16 October 1869; *ibid.*, 30 October 1869; complaints from Ravenswood about mails, *ibid.*, 5 February 1870; letter to the Editor, *RM*, about *ad valorem* duty, tax on gold exports, quoted *ibid.*, 25 February 1871; on escort fees, tax on machinery, *ibid.*, 17 June 1871; complaints about goldfield legislation, *MM*, 7 May 1870.
79. Letter from Cape River correspondent, *PDT*, 28 August 1869; *MM*, 7 May 1870; letter to the Editor, *RM*, quoted by *PDT*, 25 February 1871. *RM*, 3 December 1870, 14 January 1871.

Long have we toiled - the South has had the profit;  
 Railways and other toys have swallowed all our gains;  
 Now they deride, our just demands do scoff at,  
 And from bad legislation we suffer all our pains.  
 Cheer, boys, cheer! we'll be no more derided,  
 We'll have no more reasons from any of the band -  
 Never more their grace implore our clear just rights to  
 grant us,  
 But go into a higher court, with three cheers for  
 Albertland! 80

Nevertheless the mining population played no active part in the separation movement for, as the Gilbert River correspondent of the *Port Denison Times* explained, the scattered population of alluvial fields made organizing difficult, especially for a cause lacking immediate relevance to the individual miner.<sup>81</sup> Yet the overall significance of gold discoveries for separation was great. It was generally held even at this time that the discovery of gold would be the north's salvation, assisting the cause of separation by promoting prosperity, increasing population and guaranteeing the economic viability of the proposed new colony.<sup>82</sup> Gold lifted the colony and the north in particular out of the depression which had begun in 1866, giving new life to pastoralism by creating markets on the fields. The new-found confidence played an essential part in the revival of separatism.

Judging by opinions expressed in southern newspapers, southern reactions to separation were quite favourable at this time. Indeed an organization was formed in Brisbane to assist the northern movement,<sup>83</sup> with the approval of the *Brisbane Courier* and *Queenslander*.<sup>84</sup> The Ipswich-based *Queensland Express* also favoured northern separation.<sup>85</sup> It was argued that separation would be mutually beneficial, that a smaller less diverse Queensland could be governed more efficiently and more cheaply. Since

---

80. *PDT*, 7 May 1870.

81. Letter from Gilbert correspondent, *ibid.*, 4 December 1869. Although the correspondent failed to mention it, the peripatetic nature of alluvial miners was an added difficulty. Cf., letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 31 December 1869.

82. Letter from Cape River correspondent, *ibid.*, 29 May 1869; *ibid.*, 31 August 1872.

83. *Ibid.*, 4 September 1869.

84. *BC*, quoted *ibid.*, 21 August, 4 September 1869. *Queenslander*, 25 September 1869.

85. *Queensland Express*, 31 March 1869, 20 August 1870.



separation was inevitable - a common assumption from the establishment of the colony as has been seen - there was little point in postponement.<sup>86</sup> The *Courier* tried to clarify and explain southern attitudes:

The agitation for separation from New South Wales has been so recent, the expense and difficulty of satisfactorily administering the affairs of so large a colony as Queensland now is have been found so great, and the impossibility of satisfying the demands of the residents of the Northern towns has long been so apparent, that there has neither been time nor opportunity for the growth in [the southern] part of the colony of a feeling antagonistic to further separation. On the contrary, it has always been maintained by all classes that the time would certainly come when the colony must be divided into two or more, and the persistent cultivation of a bad feeling towards the South by the leaders of public opinion in the North has had the effect of increasing the desire for a speedy consummation of this Separation. 87

A number of experienced southern politicians also endorsed the separation movement, including the Hon. R. Pring (Burnett), Queensland's first Attorney-General,<sup>88</sup> and Arthur Hodgson (Warrego), Colonial Secretary from January 1869 till October.<sup>89</sup>

Northern attitudes to the south and to southerners were not so benign, as the election in 1869 demonstrated. In July 1869 three candidates came forward to replace Fitzgerald: G.E. Dalrymple, lately returned from England, Michael Cunningham, a Burdekin squatter, and J.K. Handy, a Brisbane lawyer. None of these could claim popular support in Bowen. The Brisbane man was condemned by his origins; both Dalrymple and Cunningham had only recently returned after a two or three year absence in England. Voters in Bowen, dubious about Dalrymple because of the unpopularity of his previous term in office, were incensed by his silence on separation when setting forth his political platform. Cunningham, from the North Kennedy, was dubbed the "Townsville candidate", and consequently rallied little support in Bowen.<sup>90</sup>

---

86. *Ibid.*, 20 August 1870. *Queenslander*, 25 September 1869. *BC*, 4 January 1870.

87. *Ibid.*

88. *PDT*, 1 April 1870.

89. *Ibid.*, 6 November 1869. Hodgson left for England in late 1869 to take up the position of Agent-General. During the 1880s he was a member of the London Committee of the North Queensland Separation League.

90. *Ibid.*, 19 June, 3 July 1869, 18 June 1870.

This was the dismal background to the nomination of the English radical, John Bright, as a candidate for the Kennedy, an episode which gained notoriety throughout the colony as the "John Bright Farce".<sup>91</sup> In nominating Bright, James Hall-Scott was pursuing an idea conceived in 1866 when he suggested nominating Mr Nobody.<sup>92</sup> The idea, which had been raised at separation meetings in Bowen earlier in 1869,<sup>93</sup> also recalled Rockhampton's nomination of Bright in 1867.<sup>94</sup> Nominating Bright, the famous defender of liberty, would be a more eloquent protest than nominating Mr Nobody; more practically, Bright might even champion the cause in London.<sup>95</sup>

The John Bright episode was, as the *Port Denison Times* put it, "an earnest and solemn protest against the tyranny of the Brisbane oligarchy, and...an acknowledgement of the practical worthlessness of the franchise under present conditions".<sup>96</sup> Or, in the melodramatic language of Hall-Scott himself, it was to draw attention to the fact that "our member had no more power in the Parliament of Brisbane than the Abyssinian captives had in the Court of Theodore the tyrant".<sup>97</sup> By nominating Bright and accepting voluntary disfranchisement northerners followed a precedent set in the Port Phillip district where Earl Grey, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, was returned to the parliament of New South Wales by separationists.<sup>98</sup>

The Provincial Committee, organizers of the separation movement, were charged by public meeting with organizing Bright's election campaign.<sup>99</sup>

---

91. *Ibid.*, 3 July 1869.

92. *Ibid.*, 25 August 1866.

93. E.g., *ibid.*, 27 February 1869.

94. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1867.

95. *Ibid.*, 3 July 1869.

96. *Ibid.* C f., Bernays, *Queensland Politics*, p.56.

97. *PDT*, 3 July 1869. Theodore, the ruler of Abyssinia took captive several European residents in his capital. They were released by a British military expedition under the great Victorian soldier Sir Robert Napier in 1868.

98. Report of public meeting, *PDT*, 10 July 1869. See above p.6.

99. *Ibid.*

The name of John Bright was linked directly with separation during the campaign, the Committee convening an election meeting to consider "supporting John Bright and Separation",<sup>100</sup> while advertisements exhorted electors to "Vote for John Bright and Separation. Separation and Nothing Else".<sup>101</sup>

The electoral returns indicated divergent voting patterns within the region:<sup>102</sup>

TABLE 2: Kennedy Electoral Results 1869

	<u>Bowen</u>	<u>Townsville</u>	<u>Mackay</u>	<u>Strathmore</u>	<u>Dalrymple</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bright	32	1	45	1	0	79
Cunningham	1	68	1	1	7	78
Handy	0	4	0	0	0	4
Dalrymple	3	2	3	0	0	8

Bowen and Mackay voted together in opposition to Cunningham, the North Kennedy man. Townsville solidly supported Cunningham and, if the *Cleveland Bay Express* was any index of local opinion, thought Bright's candidature ludicrous.<sup>103</sup> The negligible vote for Bright in Townsville also reflected antagonism to separation at this stage. The low attendance of Bowen voters at the poll was attributed by one political commentator to inadequate preparation of public opinion on the significance of Bright's election. According to this observer Bright was returned because "tacked to his name was the charm 'Separation'",<sup>104</sup> his victory clinched by the votes of Mackay electors voting "simply on Separation principles".<sup>105</sup>

While the separation movement developed in north Queensland, a number of schemes came before the colonial parliament which were designed to

---

100. *Ibid.*

101. *Ibid.*

102. *Ibid.*, 17 July 1869.

103. *Ibid.*, 21 August 1869.

104. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 17 July 1869. Cf., Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, pp. 142-143; Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, p. 197.

105. *PDT*, 17 July 1869. On Mackay's motives, see also *MM*, 30 April 1870, which describes Bright's election as a "practical protest against the mal-administration of political justice to North Queensland".

mollify northern discontent.<sup>106</sup> In what was to become a familiar pattern, manifestations of separatist sentiment were met by offers of lesser concessions - not perhaps the wisest way of convincing the agitators that their efforts were futile. All these offers were half-hearted, exciting no more enthusiasm in the north than among southern members of parliament. The promoters of the schemes faced the same dilemma as authors of decentralization measures up until the end of the century: concessions which southerners rejected as too extreme, northerners considered niggardly. Southern opposition blocked each of the decentralization schemes though northern members supported them as steps in the right direction. Among southern members who spoke against these measures some did so avowedly to protect the interests of their region; others expressed a preference for outright separation; still others resisted decentralization lest it encourage rather than assuage separatist tendencies.<sup>107</sup> These arguments were to become familiar in debates on decentralization for decades to come. Unpalatable to the representatives of the south, the reforms held out were also unable to tempt northern separationists from their cause; the benefits of decentralization paled beside those expected from separation, which was often seen as a panacea for all social, economic and political ills. Moreover, southern reactions to the proposals - equivocation, downright hostility, luke-warm enthusiasm, rarely support - did nothing to bolster northern confidence that the schemes would ever pass beyond the discussion stage.<sup>108</sup>

In July 1869 the Premier, Charles Lilley (Fortitude Valley), introduced sixty-six resolutions on local government, embodying his decentralization scheme. The colony would be divided into 17 local government districts; when the population of any of these districts reached 6,000, local self-government, including the power of imposing local taxation

- 
106. In addition to the two decentralization schemes mentioned in the following paragraphs, there was also W.H. Walsh's abortive system of Road Boards, for local supervision of road-making. See *ibid.*, 12 October 1872.
107. E.g., Miles, *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, p.541; Clark, *ibid.*, pp.547-8; Wienholt, *ibid.*, p.621; Thorn, *ibid.*, p.620; Lilley, *ibid.*, p.624; Buchanan, *ibid.*, p.539; Stephens, *ibid.*, p.547, p.627.
108. *PDT*, 7 January 1871, 13 July 1872.

for local improvements, would be granted. After deducting an amount for the expenses of central government, the balance of the colony's surplus revenue would be distributed to local government districts on a population basis as a grant-in-aid, subject to local control.<sup>109</sup> In northern Queensland the scheme was received with unmixed hostility. It was denounced as "a transparent sham", and Lilley was branded a "charlatan" for introducing it.<sup>110</sup> Because the 6,000 population clause seemed, for the foreseeable future at least, to put any benefits of the scheme well out of northern reach, northerners concluded that the scheme was designed to be inoperative.<sup>111</sup> Southern members greeted the proposal with no greater warmth. It was rejected by parliament in July 1869.<sup>112</sup>

In December 1870 a new Premier, A.H. Palmer (Port Curtis), introduced a financial separation bill, the prototype for a series of bills which appeared through the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>113</sup> As a private citizen Palmer had signed the petition for separation at Dawes Range<sup>114</sup> but he refused to make separation a ministerial issue, probably because of dissidence within cabinet. As a compromise he introduced a government measure to give greater local autonomy to the northern districts.<sup>115</sup> The bill proposed to divide Queensland into three financial districts: the Northern division comprising the area north of Cape Palmerston, the Central division between Cape Palmerston and the Maroochydhore River, and the Southern division extending to the southern boundary of the colony. The accounts of each district would be kept separate. Three standing committees of the Legislative Assembly, comprising parliamentary representatives of the three financial divisions, would report to the Assembly on public works or other local expenditure required in each division.

---

109. *QV&P*, 1869, Vol. 1, pp.285-290. J.E.R. Pearson, Sir Charles Lilley in Queensland History (1952), pp.20-23. John Oxley Library.

110. *PDT*, 17 July 1869.

111. Editorial, letter to the Editor, comments at public meeting, *ibid.*, 3 July 1869. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 10 July 1869. C f., *BC*, 12 June 1869.

112. *QPD*, Vol. 9, 1869, p.460.

113. *QV&P*, 1870, 3rd session, p.164.

114. See below pp. 93-94.

115. Jobson, Biography of Palmer, p.55.

Northerners questioned the Premier's sincerity in bringing forward the bill, pointing accusingly to his coolness in introducing it, for Palmer had stated that he did not intend to press it, and had not named a date for the second reading.<sup>116</sup> In April 1871 he went so far as to name a date,<sup>117</sup> but no second reading took place.<sup>117</sup> To the editor of the *Port Denison Times*, the scheme appeared equally cumbrous and impracticable.<sup>118</sup> In the north the lack of authority of the standing committees was considered the most serious drawback to the scheme; the southern-dominated parliament would retain ultimate responsibility for local expenditure.<sup>119</sup> A similar criticism was levelled at Palmer's second bill, a supposed improvement on the first.<sup>120</sup> When this passed its second reading in 1872 there was no jubilation in northern Queensland;<sup>121</sup> nor did its effective shelving later in the session cause any regret.<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless its fate in parliament contributed to the northern belief that no reliance could be placed on southern politicians' promises of amelioration.<sup>123</sup>

Despite half-hearted southern attempts at appeasement the separation movement was sustained throughout 1870 and 1871, though at times only with difficulty. Bowen was the mainspring of the movement, but Bowen's influence in the Kennedy was fast waning as gold discoveries altered trade patterns. Reviewing 1870 the *Port Denison Times* painted a bleak picture: Bowen's exports and imports had both declined, the former from £35,662 in 1869 to about £27,000 for 1870, the latter from £43,000 to £27,018; in the same period customs revenue had shrunk from £7,072 to about £4,600.<sup>124</sup> The population had "sensibly diminished; many empty houses disfigure our

---

116. *PDT*, 7 January 1871. C f., *BC*, 22 December 1870.

117. *QV&P*, 1871, p.22.

118. *PDT*, 7 January 1871.

119. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*, 20 May 1871.

120. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1872. This proposed to divide the colony into four financial districts - North, Centre, South, and Wide Bay-Burnett.

121. *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, p.55; *PDT*, 13 July 1872. The second reading was passed by a majority of one, several members known to be opposed to the bill being absent.

122. *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, p.629; *PDT*, 3 August 1872.

123. E.g., *RM*, 10 August 1872.

124. *PDT*, 31 December 1870. The 1868 figures were: exports £48,389; imports £48,691. The trend is clear.

streets, and many have been taken bodily away to Ravenswood and elsewhere".<sup>125</sup> Bowen suffered loss of population to the goldfields without the compensation of increasing trade, having lost the contest for the goldfields trade to Townsville, while Mackay and even Rockhampton also encroached upon its commerce.

The apathy for which Bowen was known in business matters flowed over into the separation movement,<sup>126</sup> the secretary of the Kennedy Provincial Committee, W.J. Allom, complaining of the absence of strong public feeling, and the related lack of funds to carry on the movement. In the year to February 1870 a meagre £24 had been subscribed, more than half by Committee members, leaving a deficit of £14.3s.<sup>127</sup> What little political energy remained in Bowen was consumed in factional fighting within local organizations:<sup>128</sup> as a result the Kennedy Provincial Committee was superseded in September 1870 by the Kennedy Provincial Association, which in turn succumbed to the challenge of the Kennedy District Committee in March 1871. These wrangles lowered the prestige of Bowen's separation organization among her neighbours.<sup>129</sup>

Another factor had supervened in mid-1869 which contributed to the demise of the separation movement. In July a revival of separatism occurred at Rockhampton where there was resentment at the shelving of Lilley's Local Government Resolutions, which had found more favour in Rockhampton than in districts to the north.<sup>130</sup> Unfortunately for separationists north of Cape Palmerston,

---

125. *Ibid.*

126. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 9 January 1869; *ibid.*, 20 February, 15 May, 11, 31 December 1869, 23 April 1870; *ibid.*, 2 July 1870 - "Bowen is fast becoming a byword for anathetic sloth..."; *ibid.*, 1 October 1870, 10 June 1871; extract from *RM*, quoted *ibid.*, 28 October 1871; *ibid.*, 2, 30 November 1872.

127. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 2 April 1870.

128. *Ibid.*, 21 August 1869. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 28 August 1869.

129. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 26 November 1870, referring to letters published in *CBE*, 12 November, 19 November, mocking K.P.C. and criticizing its management. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 8 April 1871, referring to article in *CBE*, 1 April 1871, mocking K.P.A.

130. *Ibid.*, 31 July, 21 August 1869. Statements of delegate of Rockhampton Separation Committee, *ibid.*, 5 March 1870.

the fates of the two movements became entwined. Attempts to resolve the disagreements between them occupied the attention of separationists in Rockhampton and in north Queensland for at least the next three years:<sup>131</sup> discord led to the failure of both.

Rockhampton soon moved to draw the northern movement under its wing, which Bowen in particular steadfastly resisted. A delegate of the Rockhampton Separation Committee was sent to northern ports to disarm opposition, reassuring separationists of the good intentions of their comrades in the central district. Stressing the need for co-operation, the Rockhampton Committee promised to make provision for the future separation of districts north of Cape Palmerston after achieving its goal of separation at the line of Dawes Range.<sup>132</sup>

In Bowen the Rockhampton proposals were given short shrift, the overtures of the Rockhampton delegate unequivocally rebuffed.<sup>133</sup> He was received more favourably at Mackay, perhaps because geographical proximity allowed Mackay to fall more easily than Bowen into Rockhampton's orbit, perhaps because Mackay lacked the metropolitan ambitions of Bowen. The editor of the *Mercury* supported separation on any terms, so anxious was he to escape Queensland's aegis, and advised Mackay people to sign the Rockhampton separation petition.<sup>134</sup> Bowen interpreted this not as desertion from the northern camp, but as a sign of Mackay's innocence about the issues dividing the two movements. Hence both Rockhampton and Bowen claimed the allegiance of Mackay as they competed for its support.<sup>135</sup>

The possible defection of Townsville worried Bowen separationists more than that of Mackay. Immediately after the Rockhampton revival this

---

131. Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, p.33. In 1872 Anthony Trollope found the boundary controversy still raging: "South of Rockhampton say Rockhamptonites. But in that case Rockhampton would also be at the extremity, and the people north of that - ay, four hundred miles to the north of it - would have to send the sweat of their brows to that city. The coming golden era of sugar and northern gold is destined to bless a region nearer to the sun even than Rockhampton. Let Cape Palmerston be the point, and Bowen or Townsville the new capital. And so the matter is debated".

132. *PDT*, 21 August 1869.

133. *Ibid.*, 19 March 1870.

134. *MM*, 26 February, 12 March 1870.

135. *PDT*, 4 September 1869.



fear prompted the Bowen committee to attempt to conciliate Townsville on the Crown Colony issue, by emphasizing that it was only a means to the real end of separation.<sup>136</sup> The *Port Denison Times* even advised expunging the Crown Colony idea from the petition.<sup>137</sup> For a time it seemed that Townsville was moving closer to Rockhampton, rumours circulating that the Townsville Provincial Committee and *Cleveland Bay Express* were willing to endorse the Rockhampton petition provided that a clause stipulating a centrally located capital was inserted.<sup>138</sup> In the event Bowen's fears came to nothing, though neither did Townsville wholeheartedly support Bowen.

As the *Port Denison Times* finally confessed, the real issue between Bowen and Rockhampton was the site of the new capital.<sup>139</sup> Bowen residents feared that Rockhampton's larger population and superior influence in England, notably in the person of Sir Charles Nicholson, would ensure her selection.<sup>140</sup> With Bowen itself in mind, they insisted on a "central capital": Rockhampton would be a second Brisbane, situated in the far south of the new colony. Moreover, Rockhampton's harbour facilities could not compare with those of Bowen.<sup>141</sup>

Two developments heightened rivalry between Rockhampton and Bowen. Firstly, the decision to create a separate Anglican See in northern Queensland necessitated the selection of a cathedral city, and in the minds of north Queenslanders this choice was closely associated with the issue of the new capital. Rumours that Rockhampton had been chosen were taken as confirmation of her victory in the larger stakes, in the belief that English ecclesiastics preferred metropolitan towns and had inside information on the separation question.<sup>142</sup> So strong was public opinion on the issue that Bowen Anglicans addressed a petition to the Archbishop of Canterbury protesting at Rockhampton's selection and

---

136. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1869.

137. *Ibid.*, 28 August 1869.

138. *Ibid.*, 19 March 1870.

139. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1870.

140. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 23 April 1870. *Ibid.*, 22 April 1871.

141. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1870.

142. *Ibid.*, 3 December 1870.

advancing the claims of Bowen.<sup>143</sup> Secondly, growing commercial rivalry for the trade of the Bowen Downs district increased suspicion of Rockhampton, intensifying local jealousies.<sup>144</sup>

Mistrust led to a desire on the part of Bowen residents to frustrate Rockhampton's efforts to obtain separation at Dawes Range. Counter-petitions to Rockhampton's were suggested, as was a separate petition praying for a "central capital".<sup>145</sup> The feeling prevailed that if Rockhampton was allowed to accomplish its aims, north Queensland would still be tributary to a metropolitan octopus, while Bowen's own ambitions would be forever blocked. Rather than allow this some members of the Kennedy Provincial Committee went so far as to propose joining Brisbane in support of some form of decentralization.<sup>146</sup> In fact none of these suggestions was taken up, but disunity nevertheless reduced the chances of separation. Strangely, the *Port Denison Times* took perverse delight in noting that the arrival at the Colonial Office in mid-1872 of a separate northern petition, emanating from Bowen, confused officials and complicated the whole separation question.<sup>147</sup>

In December 1870 when the member for Rockhampton, Alexander Fyfe, introduced into the Assembly motions in favour of separation at Dawes Range, he had barely begun his speech when the debate was adjourned for want of a quorum, so little interest did southern members take in the question.<sup>148</sup> It was in part this fiasco in parliament, and in part a belief

---

143. *Ibid.*, 4 February 1871.

144. *Ibid.*, 14 January 1871.

145. *Ibid.*, 19 March 1870; reports of meetings of K.P.C., *ibid.*, 21 May, 18 June 1870.

146. Report of meeting of K.P.C., *ibid.*, 21 May 1870.

147. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1872. Report of meeting of Rockhampton Separation Committee, *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 29 June 1871.

148. *QPD*, Vol. 11, 1870, pp.314-315. Fyfe subsequently withdrew the motions. *Ibid.*, p.320. In November 1871 Fyfe, and E.O. MacDevitt the member for Kennedy who had been asked by the Kennedy Provincial Association to bring the separation question before parliament, possibly in an effort to avoid the problems encountered by Rockhampton when it omitted this preliminary before sending the petition, were to introduce further separation motions into the House. This did not eventuate because the deadlock over the Electoral Districts Bill brought all parliamentary business to a standstill. *PDT*, 9 December 1871.

in the separation power of the Crown under the Imperial Statute of 1855, that persuaded the Rockhampton Separation Committee to send their separation petition to the Queen rather than to the Queensland parliament.<sup>149</sup> In January 1871 the acting Governor forwarded the Rockhampton petition to the Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, volunteering the opinion that the separation question was "not yet ripe for legislation".<sup>150</sup> He expanded on this in February, pointing out that the Queensland parliament had never yet expressed a formal opinion on separation; impugning the motives of the petitioners; and looking forward to the passage of a redistribution bill to increase northern representation, so assuaging northern discontent.<sup>151</sup> These arguments of the acting Governor carried great weight with senior officials at the Colonial Office.<sup>152</sup> Furthermore the Executive Council of Queensland had refused to tender any advice on the petition, and in the absence of an expression of opinion by the parliament or government of Queensland the Secretary of State declined to take any steps in the matter.<sup>153</sup>

Interviewing a central Queensland delegation the following year, Lord Kimberley explained the Colonial Office attitude fully and candidly: it was necessary to have an expression of opinion from the colonial legislature, and separationists had so far made no effort in the colonial parliament to attain their ends;<sup>154</sup> the disintegration of colonies was undesirable and

- 
149. Extract from *Northern Argus*, 14 January 1871, quoted *ibid.*, 21 January 1871.
150. O'Connell to Kimberley 24 January 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol 1, p 655.
151. O'Connell to Kimberley 20 February 1871, *ibid.*, p 658. On the motives of the petitioners O'Connell commented: "it cannot be ignored that underlying the stratum of real grievances which the petition discloses, there rests a mass of interested and personal motive, arising from a desire to reap the advantage of the increased value of property which would be created wherever the capital of the new colony may be fixed...."
152. Holland, minute 28 April 1871; Rogers, minute 28 April 1871; Knatchbull-Hugessen, minute 29 April 1871, on O'Connell to Kimberley, confidential, 20 February 1871, CO 234/26.
153. Kimberley to O'Connell 8 May 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol.1, p.659.
154. Report of meeting of Rockhampton Separation Committee, *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 29 June 1872.

contrary to the policy of the British government, which preferred to see them consolidated;<sup>155</sup> the new redistribution bill, or a system of local government, might solve the petitioners' problems.<sup>156</sup> This official attitude remained unchanged for the remainder of the century.

In December 1871 another petition was despatched from Queensland, this time from Bowen. It drew attention, like its forerunner from Rockhampton, to the huge area of Queensland, the consequent difficulty of administration, and the lack of adequate political representation for northern colonists. In this case a boundary was proposed running from Broadsound west-south-west to the Tropic of Capricorn, then along the Tropic to the border of South Australia,<sup>157</sup> whereas the original separation petition drawn up by the Kennedy Provincial Committee in 1869 had recommended the Cape Palmerston line for the boundary.<sup>158</sup> Copies of the latter had been distributed for signature in late 1869 and 1870, recalled in July 1870 and prepared for despatch to England.<sup>159</sup> However, a supporter in England had meanwhile shown a copy of the petition to Colonial Office officials, and wrote privately to the Committee of their reaction: the Imperial government would be unlikely to interfere in Queensland affairs to separate north Queensland without the consent of the local parliament; certainly it would not create a Crown Colony in the north. Consequently the intention of presenting the petition was abandoned.<sup>160</sup> Then in late 1871 the Kennedy District Association secretly sent a modified version of the petition to the Governor for transmission to the Secretary of State.<sup>161</sup> The movement had hitherto argued for a Cape Palmerston boundary; the modified petition proposed the Tropic of Capricorn, ostensibly to ensure that trade went to its natural outlet.<sup>162</sup> Here was another manifestation of commercial rivalry between Bowen and Rockhampton - in this case over the traffic of Clermont and the Peak Downs copper

---

155. Drury Cutting Book No.1, p.277. John Oxley Library.

156. *Ibid.* PDT, 13 July 1872.

157. Normanby to Kimberley 26 December 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol.1, pp.660-662. See Map No. 3.

158. *PDT*, 22 January 1870.

159. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1870. Report of deputation to Normanby, *ibid.*, 7 October 1871.

160. *Ibid.*

161. *Ibid.*, 17 August 1872.

162. Normanby to Kimberley 26 December 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol.1, p.660.

fields,<sup>163</sup> which in the event of separation at the 22nd parallel might have been cut off from Bowen by a border tariff.<sup>164</sup>

The northern petitioners assured the Secretary of State that north Queensland could support a separate government, referring to its commercial wealth, mineral resources, and pastoral and agricultural potential. They complained of the expenditure of huge sums of money in southern Queensland on railways, bridges and extravagant public buildings from revenue derived from the north. To avoid local jealousies and a repetition of the Brisbane disaster, they recommended that an Imperial Commission choose the new capital. Acknowledging that the north lacked men of independent means to form a responsible government, the petitioners called for a Crown Colony form of government, "until the new colony shall, under the fostering care of the Crown, have attained such advancement in population, material wealth, and the discipline of good government, as to be fitted for the enjoyment of full constitutional privileges with advantage to herself and honour to Great Britain".<sup>165</sup>

In forwarding the petition the new Governor, the Marquis of Normanby, advised that he considered separation premature until the country was more developed, and noted the disunity of northern separatists on the boundary and capital questions. Although a visit to northern Queensland soon after his arrival in the colony had convinced him that separatist feeling in the north was strong, he believed there were good reasons for postponing a decision on the question.<sup>166</sup> Normanby was satisfied that ameliorative legislation would mitigate, if not eradicate, the influence of separatism. He pointed to the scanty population of northern Queensland, its scattered distribution, and the

---

163. *PDT*, 3 September 1870.

164. Note that it was in large part to secure this trade for itself that Rockhampton later dropped separation in exchange for the railway extension. Letter to the Editor, *BC*, 25 November 1872. See below p. 101.

165. Normanby to Kimberley 26 December 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol.1 pp.660-662.

166. *Ibid.*, p.660, p.662. Normanby to Kimberley, marked "Separate", 19 October 1871, CO234/27.

absence of a leisured class which might be entrusted with the administration of government. Moreover, he added, the poor quality of much of the land would forever preclude a high population density. Normanby reminded the Colonial Office that the vaunted mineral wealth of the north was as yet undeveloped, and the future development of the industry unpredictable.<sup>167</sup> The Governor's observations were on the whole sober and well-balanced, helping to account for the high regard in which the Colonial Office held his judgement.

To the disgust of officials at the Colonial Office, the Palmer ministry continued to shirk expressing an opinion on the question.<sup>168</sup> Henry Holland, the assistant under-secretary, agreed with Lord Normanby that separation was not desirable at that time; Knatchbull-Hugessen, the parliamentary under-secretary, and Lord Kimberley concurred.<sup>169</sup> The petition received a reply similar to that granted its Rockhampton forerunner:

Her Majesty's Government cannot entertain a question of such paramount importance to the colony, and involving so many serious and difficult points of principle and detail, until it has been fully discussed by the Colonial Parliament, nor until the Ministers possessing the confidence of the Assembly have determined upon and expressed their own policy in the matter. 170

Rockhampton's reaction to the British reply was to cut its losses, drop separation, and enter into a pact with Brisbane to pass a new railway loan, sharing in the spoils. Opposition to increases in Queensland's public debt, particularly for the purposes of southern railways, had long been an issue in Rockhampton, especially in separationist circles.<sup>171</sup> Nevertheless the possibility of a compromise on the railway question had been mooted from early 1870. Macalister as Minister for

167. Normanby to Kimberley 26 December 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol.1, p.662.

168. E.g., Herbert, minute 7 March 1872, on despatch No.102, CO234/27.

169. Holland, minute 6 March 1872; Hugessen, minute 9 March 1872; Kimberley, minute 10 March 1872, on despatch No.102, CO 234/27.

170. Kimberley to Normanby 15 March 1872, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol.1, p.663. Kimberley was reported to have told the central Queensland deputation: "He would be a bold minister who would propose a crown colony, and he certainly was not the one to do it." Drury Cutting Book No.1, p.277.

171. E.g., resolution carried at Rockhampton separation meeting, *PDT*, 21 August 1869.

Public Works visited Rockhampton in March, allegedly to offer a deal: the unprofitable line from Rockhampton to Westwood, 33 miles inland, would be extended a further 100 miles to the Mackenzie if Rockhampton assisted Brisbane in passing the new loan.<sup>172</sup> The *Rockhampton Bulletin*, though advocating separation, was already aware of the temptation: "Visions of thousands of workmen on the line, weekly payments, and money dropping into the empty tills of the Rockhampton shopkeepers, are apt to damp the ardour for Separation and to incline men to listen to the voice of the charmer."<sup>173</sup>

The disappointing answers to the separation petitions,<sup>174</sup> and the obstacle which Bowen's recalcitrance put in the way of success,<sup>175</sup> persuaded central representatives to accept the surer, more immediate advantages of the railway extension. Despite the wealth derived from copper and gold Rockhampton remained commercially dependent on the up-country squatters, making communications with them vital for her continued prosperity and progress.<sup>176</sup> In 1872 the new loan was passed, Rockhampton got its railway, and separation disappeared as a vital political issue.<sup>177</sup> The separation cry was not heard again in Rockhampton for almost two decades - until 1890 when it was rekindled in response to the apparent imminence of north Queensland separation. Rockhampton's tergiversation from separation over the railway loans question led many to believe that the separation movement had been only a political tactic to attract greater government expenditure.<sup>178</sup> When separation was discarded some members of the Rockhampton Separation Committee felt that they had been betrayed by fellow-townsmen; in the case of at least one committee-man this experience left a residue of distrust which made him sceptical of separationists' motives for over twenty years.<sup>179</sup>

---

172. *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 12 March 1870.

173. *Ibid.* In 1870 Rockhampton was cut off from its back country for five months, when not a single laden dray passed over the main road to the interior; this had threatened to produce a commercial collapse in the town.

174. *Ibid.*, 29 July 1871.

175. *Ibid.*, 12 March 1870.

176. Letter to the Editor, *BC*, 25 November 1872.

177. Discontent was also allayed by provision for expenditure on the Fitzroy bridge, a new post office, a new Customs House, and on harbour facilities. Voss, *Separatist Movements in Central Queensland*, p.42.

178. Letter to the Editor, *BC*, 25 November 1872.

179. *NM*, 10 November 1885. He was Thadeus O'Kane, who later became editor of the *Chartiers Towers Northern Miner*.

The negative reply to the petitions also brought the separation movement in Bowen to an end, for success seemed unattainable in current circumstances of local decline, and indifference or jealousy in other northern towns. Nevertheless Bowen's reaction to this impasse stood in marked contrast to that of Rockhampton: Bowen not only maintained its faith in separation as the ultimate solution to northern problems, but, alone among northern centres, persistently advocated territorial separation while others pursued the more moderate goal of "financial separation".



## CHAPTER 5

### FINANCIAL SEPARATION

During the 1870s there was no abatement of northern discontent. If anything the stridency of northern complaints, voiced at public meetings, in newspapers and in parliament, increased, partly because of dissatisfaction on northern goldfields. The question in the north was whether the remedy lay in complete territorial separation, or in "financial separation" with decentralization. In general northern opinion favoured the latter in principle, although the financial separation bills discussed in parliament aroused little enthusiasm. Bowen remained throughout the period the bastion of territorial separation, though two attempts by the Bowen Separation Committee to initiate a general northern movement, in 1876 and 1878, were unsuccessful. The north lacked unity of purpose. In consequence, the net result of all the talking, threatening and cajoling of northerners and their representatives, of numerous manifestos and plans of action, was negligible; northern problems were no nearer solution at the end of the decade than at the beginning.

During the 1870s the settlement and economic development of northern Queensland progressed rapidly, based primarily on several rich gold discoveries. Sugar cultivation, from 1865 concentrated in the Mackay district, was extended to the Herbert River by 1872, and, after a temporary check in mid-decade as a result of cane disease, was introduced in the Burdekin, Johnstone and Cairns areas by the end of the decade. Slowly recovering from the depression which followed the 1866 crisis, pastoralists attained moderate prosperity, relying mainly on the widely-distributed markets created by gold discoveries.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the decade population had increased more than three times.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.91. Allingham, *Taming the Wilderness*, pp.204-207.
  2. The Census of 1871 put the population of the Northern Division at 10,608. *QV&P*, 1872, Vol.1, p.996. By the time of the Census of April 1881 population had increased to 35,109. *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.2, p.952.

Rapid growth placed severe demands on the colonial government, which was called upon to provide police protection as population dispersed over large areas of country; economic infrastructure, notably in the form of communications, to facilitate trade and commerce; and legislation to promote rapid expansion of northern industry. Northerners believed that their rising contributions to the colonial Treasury entitled them to a proportionate share of public expenditure, and demanded constant attention to their expanding wants. This situation was bound to produce tension between northern settlers and the government; dissatisfaction was frequently expressed in demands for separation from the south, whether financial separation or complete territorial severance.

The problems of rapid growth were especially acute in the new mineral fields. Usually without warning, gold finds attracted a sudden influx of miners, and on their heels shopkeepers, merchants, carriers and vendors of other services. Even a very attentive government responding rapidly to the needs of a new goldfield could not have avoided some delay in the provision of basic services. Government planning simply took no account of such unpredictable contingencies as gold rushes and, in the short term, government resources could not meet the unexpected demands suddenly put upon them. The problem was exacerbated by conflicting attitudes of miners and government officials towards gold mining itself, and the harsh conditions prevailing on northern fields.

In northern Queensland the early short-lived rushes to Star River and Mt Wyatt were followed by full-scale rushes to Cape River in 1867, Ravenswood and Gilbert River in 1869, the Etheridge in 1870, Charters Towers in 1872, the Palmer in late 1873, and the Hodgkinson in 1876. Several smaller but nonetheless significant gold rushes occurred in the later 1870s.<sup>3</sup> Hopeful miners poured into the north from southern Queensland, from other Australian colonies, and from overseas - notably from New Zealand and China. Many northerners deserted jobs on pastoral stations or in coastal

---

3. For example, the Coen in 1878, the Mulgrave in 1879, and the Woolgar in 1880.

settlements to join the rush. Pleas for greater police protection were constant, as gold lured miners far beyond the limits of previous European settlement, bringing them into contact with aborigines as yet unconquered.<sup>4</sup> Townships, at first mere collections of tents and bark humpies,<sup>5</sup> sprang from nowhere - on the fields themselves, like Capeville, Ravenswood, Gilberton, Georgetown, Charters Towers, Maytown, and Byerstown; or, like Cooktown, Cairns, and Port Douglas, as coastal depots and ports to service the new industry. Within the space of a few months a newly-established community would begin to assert its claims for public expenditure - for a Court House, a Customs House, mail services, telegraphic communications, roads, bridges, surveyed streets, harbour facilities and, very soon, the much-coveted railway.<sup>6</sup>

These claims were invariably backed by reference to the mining industry's contribution to the colonial economy. Gold had boosted Queensland's income at a critical time of depression following the crisis of 1866: the value of gold produced in Queensland rose from £68,325 in 1866 to £151,125 in 1867 and £473,956 in the following year. From the mid-1870s until the end of the decade the annual value of output consistently exceeded

- 
4. *RM*, 18 November 1871. Debate on police protection on Gilbert River goldfield, *QPD*, Vol. 9, 1869, pp.271-273. *MM*, 27 September 1873. W.O. Hodgkinson to Macalister 9 February 1874, QSA COL/A192, No. 255. N.A. Loos, *Aboriginal-European Relations in North Queensland, 1861-1897*, p. 195, p. 200.
  5. P. Bell, "Houses in North Queensland Mining Towns, 1864-1914" in K.H. Kennedy (ed.), *Readings in North Queensland Mining History* (Townsville 1980), Vol. 1, pp.301-305. Extensive construction in bark and slab tended to occur in reefing towns in the interval between achievement of economic stability and ready availability of conventional building materials and skilled labour.
  6. Letters from Cape River correspondent, *PDT*, 2 January, 10 July, 28 August 1869; 9 April, 28 May 1870. Letter from Cape River correspondent, *MM*, 7 May 1870. Letter from Gilbert River correspondent, *PDT*, 16 October 1869. Letter from Ravenswood correspondent, *ibid.*, 5 February 1870. Letter to the Editor, *RM*, quoted *ibid.*, 25 February 1870. *RM*, 18 November 1871, 13 January, 4 May 1872. Letter from Port Douglas correspondent, *CC*, 18 May 1878. Memorial to Colonial Treasurer, *ibid.*, 17 October 1874.

£1,000,000;<sup>7</sup> about 90% was won from northern fields.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, miners contributed to government revenue through indirect taxation in the form of taxes on mining machinery, customs duties, the irksome export tax on gold,<sup>9</sup> gold escort fees, miner's rights and business licences.<sup>10</sup> It was argued that these contributions to revenue should be matched by government expenditure in mining districts - in justice to those whose efforts produced the revenue, and as an investment in the continued expansion of the industry and economic development of mining areas.<sup>11</sup>

The ideological counterpart of this argument was an extension to the miner of the pioneering ethos, formerly the preserve of the pioneer pastoralist:

The pioneer squatter and the pioneer merchant have their merits; but the former never suffers the hardships that are too often the lot of the prospector, and the latter, from the necessities of his position, but follows where others have gone before. The miner, however, through innumerable hardships, pursues his self-appointed task of developing the resources of whatever district he prospects. 12

His motives apparently untainted by gold lust or greed, the miner pursued his altruistic task undaunted.

If he be successful, the working man, the storekeeper, the merchant, the squatter - the whole country, profit by his labors. If he be not successful, he shoulders his swag and tramps off, to begin his labors anew. 13

- 
7. J. Stoodley, *The Queensland Gold-Miner in the Late Nineteenth Century: His Influence and Interests* (M.A. University of Queensland 1964), Appendix B.
  8. *Ibid.*, Appendix A.
  9. Resolution adopted by public meeting at Ravenswood against the export duty, *QPD*, Vol. 12, 1871, p.306. This duty applied until mid-1872 when the Gold Duty Bill was passed, providing for its reduction in stages until it was finally abolished in January 1874.
  10. For a general discussion of taxation in the Queensland mining industry, see Stoodley, *op.cit.*, pp.13-19.
  11. *RM*, 18 November, 23, 30 December 1871, 29 June 1872.
  12. *Ibid.*, 21 October 1871.
  13. *Ibid.* C f., *ibid.*, 30 December 1871; *CC*, 8 August 1874.

The government's ingratitude rankled with the pioneer miners. The current prosperity and rapid progress of Queensland and indeed Australia were attributed to gold; mining was the key to future growth.<sup>14</sup> Yet, it was contended, the government showed a total lack of sympathy for this crucial industry. Comparing their treatment with that given sugar growers, for instance, who were favoured with subsidies on their machinery, miners believed themselves the most downtrodden group of producers in the colony.<sup>15</sup> It was this sense of oppression as a group which prompted the formation of Miners' Protection Associations at Ravenswood and Charters Towers.<sup>16</sup> To some it appeared that mining was specially taxed - through gold export duty, mining licences and escort fees<sup>17</sup> - when import duties on the necessities of life were already a heavy burden for the working miner. This sense of persecution was acknowledged by W.O. Hodgkinson, one of the ablest and most widely respected of gold wardens,<sup>18</sup> who recommended the "abolition of the export duty on gold, as savoring of class legislation", adding that it promoted "the impression that the Government, from the politically-defenceless position of the gold miner, regards him as a fair object of prey".<sup>19</sup> These grievances were felt the more keenly because miners commonly lived under harsh conditions, which only government action could mitigate.

Early life on the fields, especially that of the prospector, was often pioneering of the most difficult description, involving attacks by natives, scarcity of provisions and complete absence of comforts, and countless difficulties from the climate, the weather, high costs, lack of communications and transport, misfortune in the actual search for gold, and often complete penury. 20

- 
14. *RM*, 21 October 1871.
  15. *Ibid.*, 9, 30 December 1871. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 1 June 1872. Macdevitt (Kennedy), *QPD*, Vol. 11, 1870, pp.108-109, p.205. Hodgkinson, *QPD*, Vol. 17, 1874, pp.714-716.
  16. *RM*, 21 October 1871.
  17. *PDT*, 17 June 1871.
  18. See J. Stoodley, "Hodgkinson" in D. Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne 1972), Vol. 4, p.404.
  19. *QPD*, Vol. 12, 1871, p.305. As mining warden on the Etheridge, Hodgkinson gave this advice to the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the management of the goldfields.
  20. J. Stoodley, *Some Social Aspects of Early Gold-Mining in Queensland* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1951), p. (i).

The government, on the other hand, was conscious that miners were nomadic and mineral fields impermanent. Officials often pointed disparagingly to the erratic, in some ways irresponsible, lifestyle of the peripatetic gold miner.<sup>21</sup>

If the Northern miner has one besetting sin, and, if such a thing is possible, even in a larger degree than his Southern brother . . . it is his readiness at a moment's notice to sacrifice his all, if required, to enable him to hurry off to the scene of some new discovery - good or bad, authenticated or not. He most probably leaves a claim that means good wages, if nothing better, and tramps, suffering all kinds of danger and hardships . . . . 22

Perhaps the yeoman ideal which so deeply influenced Queensland's early legislators<sup>23</sup> prejudiced governments against the miner, an attitude which the miners, seeing themselves as the economic back-bone of the colony, bitterly resented.<sup>24</sup> The contrast in attitudes was highlighted in differing connotations given to the phrase, "Wandering Digger". Originally used by W.H. Walsh, the Secretary for Public Works and Gold Fields, in a pejorative sense,<sup>25</sup> it was taken up by the *Ravenswood Miner* to symbolize a figure of romantic heroism and enterprise, the life-blood of the nation,<sup>26</sup>

- 
21. W.H. Walsh, Secretary for Public Works and Gold Fields, criticizing alluvial miners, *QPD*, Vol. 12, 1871; pp.319-320. C f., *QPD*, Vol. 9, 1869, p.330. See also *RM*, 21 October 1871.
  22. Mines Report for 1878, *QV&P*, 1879, Vol. 2, pp.397-398. Phillip Sellheim, gold warden on the Palmer in the late 1870s, made this comment.
  23. G. Lewis, *A History of the Ports of Queensland: A Study in Economic Nationalism* (Brisbane 1973), pp.31-34. J.M. Powell, *Environmental Management in Australia 1788-1914* (Melbourne 1976), pp.82-84.
  24. A miner's letter to the Editor, *Queensland Express*, 1 September 1869. *RM*, 21 October, 23 December 1871. In Ravenswood and the Gilbert River goldfield, this sense of official contempt was forced on miners' attention by the actions of Gold Commissioner T.R. Hackett, who was seen as the representative of the government. Hackett was extremely unpopular and in 1871 a petition signed by more than 1,000 miners and businessmen of Ravenswood requested his removal from office. *QV&P*, 1871-72, Vol. 1, p.37. John Macrossan gained a foothold in politics by leading the campaign against Hackett. R.B. Brown, *A History of the Gilbert River Goldfield, 1869-1874* (B.A.Hons. JCU 1974), pp.28-36. Before this Hackett had aroused popular indignation on the Gilbert River goldfield. See *RM*, 11, 18 November 1871, 13 January, 6 April 1872.
  25. *QPD*, Vol. 11, 1870, p.228.
  26. *RM*, 21 October, 30 December 1871.

the "bone and sinew of the colony".<sup>27</sup> With each repetition, and they were frequent, the phrase emphasized the disparity in attitude.

The failure of parliamentary representation to keep pace with the growth of mining population was a special grievance, since it weakened the power to obtain redress:<sup>28</sup> the government attitude towards admitted inequalities must have been hardly less galling. Speaking of the Kennedy, which he admitted was the "worst represented district in the colony" and of Normanby, each allocated a single member although the two together had a population sufficient for five representatives,<sup>29</sup> a Colonial Secretary in 1871 observed "that the greater portion of the population of Kennedy proper were very erratic in their movements; and it would be impossible, therefore, to fix the number of representatives, as the population might, *and no doubt would*, be much larger every year".<sup>30</sup>

The government did not regard gold mining as a reliable basis for economic development, in the way of more stable industries such as agriculture or pastoralism.<sup>31</sup>

The pastoral occupants improved the land and benefitted the country the more the longer they stopped on it. The gold diggers destroyed the ground, and took away that for which they sought, and which did not come back again. . . .<sup>32</sup>

In essence the government regarded mining as an ephemeral activity on which

27. *Ibid.*, 23 December 1871.
28. *RM*, 28 October, 9, 23 December 1871. *Queensland Express*, 15 September 1869.
29. There were 3,784 adult males in the Kennedy electorate at this time. *QPD*, Vol. 13, 1871-72, p.221.
30. *Ibid.* Italics added. The speaker was A.H. Palmer, the occasion a debate on his Electoral Districts Bill. Cf., Groom, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.137; Grimes, *ibid.*, pp.739-740. Macalister to Macrossan, Fitzgerald and Hodgkinson 13 April 1874, *BC*, 15 April 1874. Cf., Griffith on representation of Croydon goldfield, *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p.897.
31. Bell (Colonial Treasurer), *QPD*, Vol. 12, 1871, p.307; Thompson (Secretary for Public Lands), *ibid.*, p.314.
32. *Ibid.*, p.315. In 1877 J.C. Kidgell, member for Gympie, recalled in anger Walsh's remarks referring to "miners as wandering diggers, roving over the face of the country, and making holes for sheep and cattle to fall into". *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.731. Cf., *MM*, 27 September 1873 - "in the eyes of our paternal Government a few sheep or cattle are of much more value than the lives of any number of wandering diggers".

large public expenditure would be wasted. Of alluvial gold mining this was accurate enough: by the early 1870s the once-flourishing fields at Star River, Mt Wyatt, Cape River and Gilbert River already lay abandoned; it had yet to be shown that a longer life awaited the reef mines of Ravenswood and Charters Towers.

Miners themselves were fully aware that most mines had only a short life: indeed some of the vehemence with which government expenditure was demanded arose from this recognition. In a typical gold town, itinerant hawkers and shopkeepers who with their wares and tents followed the miners to a new rush were displaced after a year or two by a new group of commercial interests including larger merchants, tradesmen and professionals.<sup>33</sup> Sometimes representatives of extensive commercial enterprises, they set up more pretentious business establishments requiring considerable capital outlay. Their decision to invest was in effect a commitment to the town and its future; it was their vital interest to ensure that there was, indeed, a future.

Therefore local businessmen tried to fortify their chosen base by attracting to it administrative functions, public offices and above all adequate transport facilities. Improved links between the fields and their service centres lowered costs and hence prolonged the life of both. The quality of communications often decided the ultimate fate of goldfields and their outlets; poor communications figured prominently in the decline of both the Gilbert and Palmer fields. With an adequate communications system radiating from the town, trade and wealth resulting from a new discovery in the vicinity might bolster an established township rather than promote a new one. The people of Cooktown, for example, were obsessed with consolidating transport links with the Palmer district by means of a network of roads or - most effective of all in eliminating competition - a railway. When the Hodgkinson goldfield was proclaimed, strong efforts were made to convince the government and commercial interests that Cooktown was its natural outlet so that a road would quickly be built. Rivalry with Cardwell for the trade of the Palmer, and with Cairns and Port Douglas for that of the Hodgkinson,

---

33. Stoodley, *Social Aspects of Gold-Mining*, pp.16-19, p.31.



gave a stimulus to these moves.<sup>34</sup> Since owners of local newspapers, who were often also editors, were among this group of businessmen with a substantial stake in the future of the town, their ardour in demanding government attention was only natural.

While mining populations felt that the extent of their contribution to the colony entitled them to just recompense, the government stressed the cost of providing necessary services. One minister

estimated the cost of managing these gold fields, of preserving law and order, administering justice, protecting the lives and property of the diggers, making roads for them - and that was a very expensive item - as quite equal to the revenue they produced in the shape of export duty, miner's and business licences, fees of offices, and so forth. 35

Indeed the government considered that it was bestowing a privilege in allowing colonists to take treasure out of the ground.<sup>36</sup> Even if governments had been entirely in accord with the views of miners, the rapidity with which the mining frontier advanced and the pace of change within that frontier would have prevented their meeting northern expectations. Delays in providing basic services were inevitable. The location of many northern fields, isolated in difficult terrain deep in the interior, far from established coastal service centres, beyond the limits of pastoral occupation, compounded the problem. The north Queensland gold mining development differed significantly from that in New South Wales and Victoria, where the metal was found in settled pastoral districts: in northern Queensland the frontier was a mining frontier.<sup>37</sup>

---

34. CC, 10 October 1874, 22 November 1876.

35. Walsh (Secretary for Public Works and Gold Fields), *QPD*, Vol. 11, 1870, p.159. Walsh was treating the special levies made on mining communities as if they were their only contribution to revenue, whereas mining populations contributed just like other sections of the community through customs duties and so on. Cf., Thompson, *QPD*, Vol. 12, 1871, p.315 - ". . . the gold diggers were the most expensive class the Government had to deal with." See also Stephens (Colonial Treasurer), *QPD*, Vol. 9, 1869, p.272.

36. Thompson, *QPD*, Vol. 12, 1871, pp.314-315.

37. L.J. Colwell, "The North Queensland Goldfields" *Lectures on North Queensland History* (Townsville 1974), p.76.

The settlement of Cooktown and the Palmer was a case study of rapid growth and the problems it created. Traces of gold were found in the Palmer River area in 1872 by William Hann's exploratory party, but were dismissed as insignificant. Following up their report J.V. Mulligan found rich deposits of alluvial gold along the river, precipitating a massive rush to the district in late 1873. Cooktown, established as the stopping-off point and supply depot,<sup>38</sup> grew rapidly in population and wealth through its trade with the mining population in the hinterland. By the beginning of 1875 there were approximately 3,500 miners on the fields<sup>39</sup> and 2,000 residents in Cooktown. Between the first quarter and last quarter of 1874, the customs revenue collected at Cooktown rose from £1,140 to £11,662; by the end of the year gold valued at nearly half a million pounds had been sent through the port.<sup>40</sup>

From the beginning of settlement there were continual complaints about the inadequacy and inefficiency of police protection in the area.<sup>41</sup> In particular carriers, whose transport functions were essential for the continuation of mining on inland fields, complained about aborigines spearing draft animals.<sup>42</sup> Insufficient numbers of police, and government niggardliness in provisioning the Native Mounted Police, which was regarded as an irregular fighting force, were blamed for the frequency of aboriginal depredations, which persisted until the end of the century.<sup>43</sup> This was interpreted as no less than a breach of the fundamental contract between government and governed which was the foundation of all organized government:

- 
38. J.J. Hogg, *An Early Day Rush: Reminiscences of J.J. Hogg* (1873). Fryer Library. CC, 30 October 1875.
39. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.55.
40. CH, 2 January 1875.
41. *Ibid.*, 15 July 1874, 23 June 1875, 3 February 1877. CC, 5 February 1879. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 16 July 1879. Extract from *Hodgkinson Mining News*, 21 December 1878, quoted *ibid.*, 31 December 1878. Sellheim to Colonial Secretary 23 March 1875, QSA COL/A208, No. 1091.
42. Letter to the Editor, CC, 9 January 1878. CH, 24 March 1877.
43. CC, 12 July 1874. Loos, *Aboriginal-European Relations*, pp.237-238. The Palmer aborigines were reputedly especially belligerent. W.H. Corfield, *Reminiscences of Queensland, 1862-1899* (Brisbane 1921), pp.55-59, 62-64.

the first duty of a Government is to protect the lives and property of the citizens of the state it governs, as it is also the first duty of the governed to support the Government by supplying the revenue necessary to enable it to perform its duty in this respect. 44

The fears expressed by miners on the Palmer were genuine and well-founded, even if, as the government maintained, the dangers were sometimes exaggerated. For its part, the government had reason on its side in asserting that it was impossible to provide adequate police protection over so vast an area, and that miners needlessly increased the dangers of which they complained.

In a wild unsettled country it would not be possible for ten detachments of police to protect from the blacks, solitary travellers or persons out prospecting who do not take ordinary precaution and who frequently keep as a close secret the direction they intend taking. 45

In addition to demanding greater police protection, the Palmer miners complained about the unreliability of gold escort services and mail deliveries, and the lack of adequate communications. In Cooktown itself there were frequent demands for an adequate police force, reliable telegraphic communication, provision for defence against foreign attack, construction of roads and streets, and a postal service.<sup>46</sup> As late as 1879 Cooktown's mayor complained about the absence of roads, punts, bridges or any other means of communicating with the interior.<sup>47</sup> Despite spirited efforts from the Cooktown Railway League no progress had been made on the proposed line

---

44. CH, 24 March 1877. C f., letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 23 June 1875; CC, 18 July 1874; Kennedy, *Four Years in Queensland*, pp.70-73.

45. D.T. Seymour (Police Commissioner) to Colonial Secretary 30 April 1876, enclosed in QSA COL/A195, No. 1142. C f., Seymour to Colonial Secretary 26 November 1875, QSA COL/A214, No. 2973; Macalister, *QPD*, Vol. 17, 1874, p.716. It is important to note that the fears of aboriginal violence and complaints of inadequate police protection expressed on the Palmer were merely a special instance of a recurrent theme in north Queensland from the founding of Bowen in the early 1860s until the turn of the century. For an illuminating treatment of the subject see H. Reynolds, "Racial Violence in North Queensland" *Lectures in North Queensland History*, (Townsville 1975), pp.21-29.

46. CH, 2 January 1875. CC, 6 June 1874.

47. *Ibid.*, 19 April 1879.

from Cooktown to the Palmer.<sup>48</sup> Telling comparisons were made with gold-mining districts in the south: Gympie, for instance, less than a year after its establishment, had mail and coach services unheard-of on the Palmer.<sup>49</sup>

Such complaints were always supported with the argument that public expenditure in a district should be commensurate with the revenue produced.<sup>50</sup> Meetings of indignant residents protested regularly against parsimonious allocations in the government Estimates for public works in the Cook district. A resolution of 1877 was typical:

in view of the large and increasing revenue derived by government from the port of Cooktown, this meeting is deeply sensible of the very great and serious injustice done to the Cook district through the smallness of the amount placed upon the Estimates for works imperatively required. 51

The pioneer miner was lauded for his part in bringing the resources of the country to light:

These men have opened up the Peninsula of York, and have suffered incalculable hardships and privation, have risked their lives and have proved that this great northern country is one of the greatest gold-producing districts of the colony . . . . 52

As compensation miners, indeed the whole northern pioneering community, deserved to have their wants administered to. Indeed it was argued that in a rich frontier district such as the Cook the government's responsibility went beyond merely matching expenditure to revenue: government should maximize its development by additional funding to allow its full revenue-producing potential to be realized.<sup>53</sup>

---

48. See Petition, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.384. Railway Survey from Cooktown to Byerstown, *ibid.*, pp.584-585.

49. *CC*, 10 October 1874.

50. *Ibid.*, 6 June, 18 July 1874, 8 September 1875. *CH*, 12 December 1874, 2 January 1875. Murphy, *QPD*, Vol. 24, 1877, pp.1195-1196.

51. Report of public meeting, *CH*, 30 June 1877.

52. *CC*, 8 August 1874. C f., *ibid.*, 10 October 1874; report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 11 October 1876.

53. *CH*, 24 June 1874. Government neglect, especially in providing adequate police protection was often said to have hindered the exploitation of the Palmer goldfield and contributed to its decline. *Ibid.* *CC*, 10 October 1874, 22 February, 9 October 1878. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p.989. C f., *MM*, 27 September 1873; Dalrymple to Colonial Secretary 10 October 1872, QSA CCL/A183, No. 1009.

The corollary of this kind of reasoning was that other districts benefitted from the shortfall of expenditure in Cooktown, and the district singled out as the prime beneficiary of revenue "filched" from Cooktown was Brisbane.<sup>54</sup> To the people of Cooktown, Brisbane was able to appropriate northern revenue because it dominated the colonial parliament,<sup>55</sup> and Cooktown was especially vulnerable because of inadequate representation. Rapid growth in the Cook district meant that representation always fell behind increase of population. At the end of 1874 there were 5,000 people in the district but no parliamentary representative.<sup>56</sup> By the time the first member for Cook took his seat in the Assembly in mid-1876, the demand was for two members - one for Cooktown, and one for the Palmer to attend to the special requirements of the mining community.<sup>57</sup> With the opening of the Hodgkinson field in 1876 and further population growth, the demand grew to three members for the district.<sup>58</sup> In 1877 the constituency of Cook had twice as many electors as other constituencies in the colony, notably the West Moreton group of electorates.<sup>59</sup> When three members were provided in the Electoral Bill of 1878, four were claimed.<sup>60</sup> Inadequate representation was compounded by the incompetence of the first member.<sup>61</sup> A sense of frustration and dissatisfaction with the administration of the colony naturally followed.

- 
54. Report of public meeting, *CC*, 11 October 1876. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1878. *CH*, 21 October 1876.
55. *CC*, 11 October 1876, 1 June, 9 November 1878.
56. *CH*, 12 December 1874, 17 April, 1 May 1875. Memorial to Colonial Treasurer, *CC*, 17 October 1874.
57. *CH*, 10 May 1876. The first member for Cook was W.E. Murphy.
58. *Ibid.*, 27 September 1876. *CC*, 27 June 1877. *Hodgkinson Mining News*, 12 January 1878.
59. *CC*, 27 June 1877. *CH*, 17 February 1877. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.136.
60. *CC*, 14 August 1878.
61. *CC*, 14 February, 15 August 1877, 27 April 1878. *CH*, 17 February, 12 September 1877. *Hodgkinson Mining News*, 31 August 1878. Murphy was accused in parliament by Macrossan, Walsh and Morehead of inattention to his duties, absence from important divisions and non-participation in debates. *CH*, 31 October 1877. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 24, 1877, p.1301, p.1310; Walsh, *ibid.*, p.1309.

To pacify discontented northerners or at least to stem the carping of their representatives, the governments of the 1870s toyed with the idea of financial separation. This was a decade of frequent ministerial changes and rapid turnover of the Premiership; including financial separation in the ministerial programme did no harm and could attract useful support from northern members. To make sense of the legislative proceedings which followed, it is necessary to be clear about the nature of parliamentary politics in 19th century Queensland. Political parties as we know them, with their permanent constituency organizations, their platforms and discipline did not exist. Of necessity each ministry was a loose coalition of several groups, needing in addition the support of substantial numbers of independents. It was difficult for any Premier to set out even the appearance of a legislative programme: it was impossible for him to guarantee the passage of any bill. The unexpected defection of some supporters, even of some ministerial colleagues, might force the abandonment of a measure, as too might the absence of members, which was common particularly towards the end of a session. Short-lived ministries, a quick succession of Premiers were well known consequences: less well known but equally important for this study was the effect on legislative measures. In promising to bring in a measure on a particular subject a minister was not committing himself to getting it passed: this he simply could not do. All he undertook was to give the House the opportunity to consider the bill and to pass it or some modified version, if a majority was found in favour; if not, the bill would lapse with no loss of prestige to the ministry still less any sense that it had dishonoured a pledge.

Financial separation involved dividing the colony into districts whose financial accounts would be kept separate; after allowing for a share of the general expenses of the colony, the remainder of each district's revenue would be available for local purposes. The theory was that no district could then complain that it was disadvantaged by having its revenue spent on public works in other parts of the colony. Yet northern reactions to the bills framed by southern governments in this period were scarcely more enthusiastic than those of southern representatives, who scorned the scheme as a "sop to the North".<sup>62</sup> Members generally voted according to how they

---

62. Clark (Warwick), *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, p.548.

expected the scheme to affect their own electorates,<sup>63</sup> southern members refusing any significant concessions to the north. As Macrossan charged, speaking of the 1877 Financial Districts Bill:

It was a Bill which would prevent the South from obtaining the revenue of the North, and spending it in Southern works. That was the meaning of the Bill, and that was the meaning of the opposition which was displayed towards it. 64

Arthur Palmer brought in his first financial separation bill in 1870 with the object of undercutting the separation movement then proceeding in northern and central Queensland.<sup>65</sup> It divided the colony, for financial purposes, into three divisions - North, Centre and South; the southern boundary of the northern division was set at Cape Palmerston. Separate accounts were to be kept of revenue and expenditure in each division; a Royal Commission was to apportion the existing public debt and settle other preliminary matters. Local revenue was to be spent on local works approved by parliament, on the advice of three Standing Committees comprising parliamentary members from the electorates within each division.<sup>66</sup> This, the first of a long series of financial separation bills, set the basic pattern for its successors: the government made no effort to take it beyond the first reading.<sup>67</sup>

In 1872 Palmer abandoned the bill in favour of a second measure along slightly different lines,<sup>68</sup> again intended to quieten the northern clamour for territorial separation and eliminate the need for territorial division in the foreseeable future.<sup>69</sup> A fourth financial division, Wide Bay-Burnett, was added; Palmer explained that his aim was to keep together in matters of

63. E.g., see Hemmant (Bulimba), *QPD*, Vol. 19, 1875, p.1074.

64. Macrossan (Kennedy), *QPD*, Vol. 24, 1877, p.1237.

65. Jobson, *Biography of Palmer*, p.55, p.78.

66. Palmer (Port Curtis), *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, pp.49-51.

67. *QV&P*, 1871, p.22.

68. Palmer, *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, pp.49-51.

69. Palmer, *ibid.*, pp.554-555, p.619; Thompson (Ipswich), *ibid.*, p.536; Morehead (Mitchell), *ibid.*, p.540; Ramsay (Western Downs), *ibid.*, p.546.

revenue and expenditure districts with similar interests, which sent their produce to the same port.<sup>70</sup> Each Standing Committee would now include all members for electorates within the division, not merely representatives from their number. Instead of a Commission to apportion the public debt, schedules attached to the bill set out the share of each financial division. To a large extent it was this provision that defeated the bill.

Of the bill's opponents only William Hemmant objected to the basic principle. He argued that the object of government was to obtain by combination benefits unattainable through isolated action; subdividing the state into financially independent divisions would defeat this object. Since public works had to be commenced somewhere, it was reasonable to begin in the first settled and most thickly populated areas where they were more likely to prove productive.<sup>71</sup> Most southern opponents of the bill based their objections on more prosaic grounds, with particular regard to the way the bill would affect their own electorates. According to Palmer's statistics, the Northern, Central and Wide Bay-Burnett districts enjoyed local credit balances, while the South in the preceding twelve months had a deficit of £16,000 because of the large share of public loans spent in the southern district. Thus financial separation would have meant either increased taxation or reduced expenditure on public works in the south, in order to balance the district's account; southerners objected to both alternatives.<sup>72</sup> George Thorn of West Moreton warned his colleagues that "any southern members who might support [the bill] would, when they again went before their constituents, catch pepper".<sup>73</sup>

Several southern members opposed the bill because it would saddle their particular district - the western district, East Moreton or Logan - with a debt incurred largely for the Southern and Western Railway and public works

---

70. Palmer, *ibid.*, p.619.

71. Hemmant (East Moreton), *ibid.*, p.532.

72. Hemmant, *ibid.*, pp.529-530; Buchanan (Warrego), *ibid.*, p.539; Griffith (East Moreton), *ibid.*, p.552, p.623; Miles (Maranoa), *ibid.*, p.541; Clark, *ibid.*, pp.547-548.

73. *Ibid.*, p.620.



in Brisbane, from which their electorates had received no direct benefit.<sup>74</sup> Clearly resentment against Brisbane, which fostered a sense of unity in north Queensland, militated against it in the southern division. Several speakers remarked upon the arbitrary boundaries of financial districts,<sup>75</sup> among them S.W. Griffith, who went so far as to inquire if there was any reason why boundary lines should run east-west and not north-south.<sup>76</sup>

During the debate the failure of financial decentralization in New Zealand was raised by those adverse to the measure,<sup>77</sup> its supporters, as before, denying that the parallel was apt.<sup>78</sup> Fears were raised that the bill would lead to an undesirable parochialism, and eventually to territorial separation.<sup>79</sup> Despite this opposition the bill passed its second reading,<sup>80</sup> but it never came out of committee.

In 1874 John Murtagh Macrossan entered parliament as member for Kennedy. He had stood as a miners' representative, having worked as a miner in Victoria, New South Wales, New Zealand and on a number of Queensland fields. Macrossan had been involved in the political organization of the mining population through his efforts to form the Ravenswood and Charters Towers' Associations. He was returned in 1874 as a popular hero, after publicly whipping the despised Gold Commissioner Hackett at Ravenswood.<sup>81</sup> During the election campaign Macrossan had pledged himself to support financial separation,<sup>82</sup> and during the remainder of the 1870s he was in the forefront of the northern parliamentary effort to implement the scheme.

---

74. E.g., Miles, *ibid.*, pp.540-541; Hemmant, *ibid.*, p.531; Griffith, *ibid.*, p.551; Thorn (West Moreton), *ibid.*, p.620.

75. E.g., Hemmant, *ibid.*, p.531; Miles, *ibid.*, p.540.

76. Griffith, *ibid.*, p.622. C f., Grimes (Bulimba), *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.738.

77. Hemmant, *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, p.531; Buchanan, *ibid.*, p.539.

78. Palmer, *ibid.*, pp.533-534; Macdevitt (Kennedy), *ibid.*, p.544.

79. Hemmant, *ibid.*, p.527; Miles, *ibid.*, p.541; Buchanan, *ibid.*, p.539.

80. By the barest of margins: 14-13. *Ibid.*, p.555.

81. W.R.O. Hill, *Forty-Five Years' Experiences in North Queensland, 1861-1905* (Brisbane 1907), p.54.

82. *Northern Advocate*, 16 August 1873.

In early 1874 Macrossan, together with T.H. Fitzgerald (member for Bowen) and W.O. Hodgkinson (Burke), submitted to the government a manifesto detailing northern wants.<sup>83</sup> A fourth northern representative, E.O. Macdevitt, the member for Ravenswood, did not sign the manifesto, for which act of treachery and for having accepted office as Attorney-General in the Macalister ministry he was severely castigated in the Bowen press.<sup>84</sup> The manifesto urged the government to

redress the grave and well founded complaints of the inhabitants of North Queensland against the unfair division of public revenue and misapplication of funds rightly belonging to them and against the great obstacles to thorough representative government in their regard caused by the inconvenient position of the present capital . . . . 85

Two alternatives were presented: financial separation for the portion of the colony north of Cape Palmerston, having in view the ultimate removal of the capital to a more central position; or an address to the Queen from both Houses of Parliament affirming the desirability of territorial separation.

The ministerial reply, though refusing either to transfer the capital or accede to territorial separation, foreshadowed a measure for financial readjustment in a forthcoming session.<sup>86</sup> From 1874 the programme of the Macalister government included financial separation for the north,<sup>87</sup> but when the ministry resigned in May 1876 nothing had been done to introduce the scheme. This was not singular: several ministries during the 1870s professed commitment to financial separation, apparently regarding

83. Macrossan, Fitzgerald and Hodgkinson to Macalister 21 January 1874, QSA COL/A192, No. 260. Among other demands, they wanted abolition of the requirement that ministers seek re-election; travelling expenses and living allowances for members of parliament from outside Brisbane; representation for Cooktown and the Palmer; and arrangements for introducing Indian coolies for tropical agriculture.

84. *PDT*, 29 January 1878.

85. Macrossan, Fitzgerald and Hodgkinson to Macalister 21 January 1874, QSA COL/A192, No. 260.

86. Macalister to Macrossan, Fitzgerald and Hodgkinson 13 April 1874, *BC*, 15 April 1874.

87. *BC*, 13 January 1874.

this as a means of attracting support without obligation to act.<sup>88</sup>

In 1875, having learned that the government did not intend to deal with financial separation during that year,<sup>89</sup> Macrossan introduced a motion presenting financial separation in a conservative guise:

That a large amount of dissatisfaction prevails as to the inequitable distribution of the revenue in the northern parts of the colony, and in order to prevent a demand for territorial separation arising therefrom, it is, in the opinion of this House, the duty of the Government to introduce a measure dealing with financial separation without delay. 90

Macrossan put the case for treating customs revenue as local, pointing out that because of its relatively high proportion of adult males the north contributed over twice as much per head as the south;<sup>91</sup> he added that customs on goods consumed in the north but entering the colony at southern ports should also be included in northern revenue.<sup>92</sup> In the course of the debate John Douglas, the member for Maryborough who later became Premier, expressed himself strongly in favour of territorial separation. When Macrossan moderated the motion to make it acceptable to the government by omitting the offensive words "inequitable" and "without delay", it was carried without division.<sup>93</sup> However, despite the resolution of the House, and Macalister's professed commitment to financial separation, the latter reaffirmed in the government's opening speech in 1876, the promised bill was not proceeded with.<sup>94</sup>

The issue was not revived until John Douglas, an avowed supporter of northern separation, became Premier in 1876; even then northern members

---

88. On the other hand, if financial separation was not included in a ministerial programme, the opposition was sure to attack the government for the omission. E.g., Macalister, *QPD*, Vol. 10, 1870, pp.26-29.

89. *QV&P*, 1875, Vol. 1, p.225.

90. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 19, 1875, p.1069.

91. *Ibid.*, p.1066.

92. *Ibid.*

93. *Ibid.*, pp.1081-1082.

94. A Bill to authorize the constitution of District and Shire Councils, and to make provision for the due expenditure of moneys granted by Parliament for local purposes. *QV&P*, 1876, Vol. 1, p.34, p.60, p.501.

made little headway against southern resistance. Douglas ordered a Royal Commission to develop an equitable scheme of financial separation. The Commission comprised Thomas McIlwraith, who was chosen as chairman, representing the western districts; Macrossan, H.E. King and J. Scott representing northern and central interests; and southern representatives, J. Pettigrew, J.S. Turner, W.L.G. Drew and E.B. Forrest, the last three closely connected with mercantile interests in Brisbane.<sup>95</sup> Its brief was to "inquire into the most equitable plan for the division of the colony into separate districts for financial purposes."<sup>96</sup> To begin, the Commissioners decided that it was beyond their terms of reference to consider the desirability of financial separation as such.<sup>97</sup> King proposed and Macrossan seconded that the best plan was to create four financial districts - the southern, Wide Bay-Burnett, central and northern districts. Although McIlwraith, Forrest and Turner would have preferred three divisions, the motion was carried.<sup>98</sup>

The most contentious issue was whether customs and excise revenue would be classified as part of local revenue. Against the northern contention that it ought to be because northerners made a larger contribution per head than southerners, Drew marshalled a formidable array of arguments: there was no precedent in other countries for treating customs as local revenue; northerners' contributions to customs, though currently larger, would gradually equalize with the south as society developed in the north; some other sources of revenue, such as land revenue, were contributed in larger proportion by the south; it was difficult to ascertain with any precision the customs revenue of each district; it would put an obstacle

---

95. Macrossan, *QFD*, Vol. 23, 1877, pp.742-743. McIlwraith was the member for Maranoa; Macrossan-Kennedy; H.E. King-Ravenswood; J. Scott-Springsure; J. Pettigrew-Stanley. Turner, Drew (Under Secretary to the Treasury) and Forrest, though not members of the Assembly, were included for their financial experience. The Commission sat between 5 April and 14 June 1877.

96. Report of Financial Separation Commission, *QV&P*, 1877, Vol. 2, p.147.

97. *Ibid.*, p.151.

98. *Ibid.* Later Pettigrew joined Forrest and Turner against the four-district plan, but McIlwraith then supported it, so the four-way division was retained. *Ibid.*, p.158.

in the way of Australian federation if financial districts had a stake in keeping tariffs high.<sup>99</sup> Eventually the northern point of view prevailed, though only on McIlwraith's casting vote.<sup>100</sup> In fact, on three significant occasions the chairman's casting vote resolved an impasse within the Commission, since both northern and southern representatives usually voted en bloc.

When the report was submitted in June 1877 the government made a show of taking immediate action. In August the Colonial Treasurer, J.R. Dickson, introduced a ministerial bill, supposedly embodying the principal recommendations of the Royal Commission. However, as subsequent speakers noted, his opening speech "damned the Bill with very faint praise, and treated it in a way which might be expected from one who opposed it".<sup>101</sup> Dickson stressed that although the government promoted the bill, individual members of cabinet did not consider themselves bound by its details;<sup>102</sup> he tried to discredit the Commission's conclusions, observing that several important questions had been decided only on the casting vote of the chairman;<sup>103</sup> he argued strongly for eliminating the Wide Bay-Burnett district, anticipating an amendment in Committee to that effect;<sup>104</sup> although he considered the provision classifying customs and excise as local revenue the most prominent feature of the bill, distinguishing it as an advance on all previous separation bills,<sup>105</sup> he added that this would hinder any future Treasurer who wished to lower the tariff, for financial districts would have a direct interest in keeping it high;<sup>106</sup> he explained that he had not incorporated in the bill the Commission's recommendation for special

99. *Ibid.*, p.153.

100. *Ibid.*, pp.154-155. McIlwraith, Macrossan, King and Scott voted in favour of classifying customs as local.

101. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.741. C f., McIlwraith, *ibid.*, p.735; Grimes, *ibid.*, p.738.

102. *Ibid.*, p.722.

103. *Ibid.*

104. *Ibid.*, pp.724-725. Dickson, *QPD*, Vol. 24, 1877, p.1208.

105. Palmer's bills had included customs in local revenue but had stipulated that total customs revenue would be divided on a population basis, which was unsatisfactory to northerners.

106. *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, pp.725-726.

taxation in particular financial districts when revenue fell short of liabilities because he believed the bill could not be carried with such an unpopular clause. Indeed Dickson's equivocation over the whole concept of the bill was shown in his comment that the abundance of one district might temporarily make up for the deficiencies of another,<sup>107</sup> which, as McIlwraith and Macrossan justly observed, was antagonistic to the essential principle of financial separation.<sup>108</sup>

The Premier's comments did little to bolster confidence in the government's determination to pass the bill. Douglas simply reaffirmed his personal opinion that territorial separation was preferable to financial separation, confusing the issue further by suggesting an entirely novel form of financial separation:

Personally, I should be inclined to adapt the recommendations of this commission to two districts alone - districts divided by a line running from Cape Palmerston westward. That would be the best thing to adopt, and it might lead to territorial separation. . . . 109

As Macrossan remarked, "the Premier was not satisfied with damming it with faint praise, but he damned it entirely".<sup>110</sup>

McIlwraith had early perceived that "there is such a difference of opinion on the Treasury benches that it will be fatal to the Bill. . . ." <sup>111</sup>  
Some government supporters assailed the bill in committee, focusing on the

---

107. *Ibid.*, p.724.

108. McIlwraith, *ibid.*, p.735; Macrossan, *ibid.*, p.744. A similar objection applied to Dickson's proposal that the south be compensated for its large contributions to general revenue through land sales. Dickson, *ibid.*, pp.727-728. C f., Hemmant (East Moreton), *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, p.529. McIlwraith and Macrossan pointed out that, since land revenue had always formed part of the colony's general revenue, the great bulk had, in fact, been spent in the south where it was raised; indeed the inordinate proportion of general revenue devoted to the southern district was a prime reason why northerners pressed financial separation. McIlwraith, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.737; Macrossan, *ibid.*, p.742.

109. Douglas (Maryborough), *ibid.*, p.733. Douglas believed that separation of north Queensland was inevitable and desirable, partly because in a tropical climate coloured labour was necessary for economic development. *QPD*, Vol. 19, 1875, p.1080.

110. *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.741.

111. *Ibid.*, p.737.

principle of treating customs revenue as local.<sup>112</sup> This attack "struck at the root of Financial Separation",<sup>113</sup> for if customs were taken as general revenue the bill would be worthless, even detrimental to the north. Dickson had calculated that if customs was treated as local revenue, the northern division would have had a credit balance of £25,565 in 1876; if customs were categorized as general revenue, there would have been a deficit of £5,750.<sup>114</sup>

In response to determined opposition from some of his political supporters the Premier declined to press the measure further.<sup>115</sup> The trend of the divisions had indicated that a majority could be rallied to the bill, but Douglas was unwilling to proceed with a measure "distasteful to his supporters" who could "make themselves very uncomfortable".<sup>116</sup> The bill was sacrificed to the exigencies of party government.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Royal Commission was appointed to keep northern members quiet while effectively shelving the financial separation question;<sup>117</sup> for this reason the government could afford to be conciliatory in deciding the composition of the Commission. No member of the Douglas ministry was an advocate of financial separation and at no time did they exhibit any warmth towards the bill that was formulated. Once again McIlwraith's prescience was demonstrated: he had hesitated to join the Commission, suspecting that it would be used to shelve the issue.<sup>118</sup> Many north Queenslanders regarded it in the same light - as a device for tiding the Douglas government over one more session.<sup>119</sup> The bill which followed was considered a "very attenuated measure", which

---

112. Stewart (Brisbane), *QPD*, Vol. 24, 1877, pp.1215-1216, p.1228; Garrick (East Moreton), *ibid.*, p.1230; Groom (Toowoomba), *ibid.*, p.1231; Grimes (Bulimba), *ibid.*, p.1232; Fraser (Bandanba), *ibid.*, p.1234.

113. McIlwraith, *ibid.*, p.1229.

114. Dickson, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.727.

115. Douglas, *QPD*, Vol. 24, 1877, p.1235.

116. *Ibid.*, p.1237.

117. C f., C. Clark, *The Royal Commissions of Queensland 1859-1901* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1962), pp.38-39.

118. McIlwraith, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.734.

119. *CH*, 11, 18 April 1877.

failed to carry out the Commission's recommendations in their integrity.<sup>120</sup> There was no mourning over the demise of the Financial Districts Bill of 1877.

The righteous indignation in which Macrossan indulged when the bill was withdrawn rests uneasily with his lack of determination on the question when in 1879 he became Secretary of Works and Mines in the McIlwraith ministry.<sup>121</sup> In May 1879 he brought in a financial separation bill<sup>122</sup> which though introduced early in the session, did not progress beyond its initial stages. Placed at the bottom of the business paper,<sup>123</sup> the order for the second reading was discharged from the paper in September 1879.<sup>124</sup>

As a concept, financial separation commanded much support in northern Queensland.<sup>125</sup> The *Cooktown Courier* presented the typical argument for financial separation and decentralization. The north, it asserted, did not suffer so much from distance from the capital as from the centralized system of government; districts within two hundred miles of Brisbane were also neglected. Wherever the capital was placed, outlying districts would suffer neglect and mismanagement so long as this system prevailed; if there was territorial separation only the new capital would benefit. Therefore the primary need was for a decentralized system of government, which would have the additional advantage of smoothing the way for federation. With a vision remarkably similar to that which inspired Griffith's proposal for a United Provinces within Queensland in the 1890s, the *Courier* described a system

---

120. *CC*, 8 August 1877.

121. See H. Bryan, *The Political Career of John Murtagh Macrossan* (M.A. University of Queensland 1954), pp.123-124.

122. *QFD*, Vol. 29, 1879, p.116.

123. *QV&P*, 1879, Vol. 1, p.325.

124. *Ibid.*, p.385.

125. *CC*, 11 November 1876; *CH*, 26 January 1876, 2 June 1877; *RM*, 9 December 1871, 16 March, 4 May, 20 July 1872; *CBE*, 23 February 1876; *MM*, 22 April 1876.



based on what we believe is the true principle of government for Australia, and the only one which will make Federation possible: local details managed by local men, broad principles of legislation settled by assemblies of representatives from the whole colony, or, if possible, the whole continent. 126

On the other hand, schemes formulated by governments in the south evoked mixed reactions. For instance, the *Mackay Mercury* was confident that the Macalister government's District and Shire Councils Bill, which proposed a system of local government as in Victoria and South Australia, could be implemented successfully in Queensland.<sup>127</sup> The *Port Denison Times*,<sup>128</sup> *Cleveland Bay Express*<sup>129</sup> and *Northern Miner*,<sup>130</sup> on the other hand, were doubtful about its viability; the *Townsville Times* doubted not only its practicability but its fairness.<sup>131</sup> The *Mackay Mercury* and *Northern Miner*<sup>132</sup> tended to support the various schemes for financial separation, but Townsville newspapers were dubious, about their merits as well as their chances of ever becoming law.<sup>133</sup> The *Port Denison Times*, true to its objective of territorial separation pure and simple, maintained that the whole financial separation idea was a sham, a device for keeping the north in bondage.<sup>134</sup> The financial separation bills of the 1870s failed to gain general support in northern Queensland, partly because they fell short of northern demands, partly because of doubts about their passing through the southern-dominated parliament; the feeling was that the north would be refused even that small instalment of justice which the bills represented.

---

126. *CC*, 25 November 1876.

127. *MM*, 4 November 1876.

128. *PDT*, 19 August 1876.

129. *CBE*, 3 June 1876.

130. *NM*, 23 June 1877.

131. *TT*, 17 May 1876.

132. *NM*, 12 January 1876, 11 July 1877.

133. *TT*, 17 May 1876. *CBE*, 3, 21 June 1876. *TH*, 18 September 1878. *NS & TA*, 28 May 1878.

134. *PDT*, 5 February, 18 March 1876, report of public meeting, 10 June 1876.

Concurrent with northern attempts to achieve financial separation, territorial separation attracted support in some quarters. Throughout the 1870s there was debate over the relationship between the two and their respective merits. Though seldom entirely consistent in editorial stance, northern newspapers generally placed themselves on a continuum ranging from the *Port Denison Times*, the unfailing advocate of territorial separation and denigrator of financial separation, to the *Northern Miner* which accepted the need for decentralization of administration but refused to countenance territorial partition.

In northern Queensland there was a great variety of opinion on the relative merits of financial and territorial separation. Some favoured financial separation, reasoning that it would be easier to achieve because less challenging to the south.<sup>135</sup> Others, while preferring territorial separation, would accept financial separation as a temporary expedient more easily attainable.<sup>136</sup> Financial separation was also advocated as a step towards territorial separation, both by those who would have preferred immediate territorial separation<sup>137</sup> and by those who saw a new colony as a distant, though inevitable goal.<sup>138</sup> That territorial separation was the ultimate, and inevitable end was a view widely held. Agitating for territorial separation if financial separation was refused was a threat often held out to the south;<sup>139</sup> the *Port Denison Times* deprecated this tendency of other northern editors to employ territorial separation as a mere "bogey" without any intention of backing up their threat.<sup>140</sup>

Except in Bowen, the idea of territorial separation never developed beyond the realm of discussion. Separation had never ceased to be advocated in Bowen where, as U.R. Ellis says, "the embers always glowed".<sup>141</sup> Through

---

135. Letter to the Editor, *CH*, 21 October 1876. *CC*, 25 October 1876.

136. Letter to the Editor, *CH*, 29 November 1876. Fyfe, *QPD*, Vol. 14, 1872, p.532.

137. E.g., Beor, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.745.

138. Letter to the Editor, *CH*, 21 October 1876. *CH*, 3 March 1875.

139. E.g., Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, pp.743-744.

140. *PDT*, 25 May, 1 June 1878.

141. Ellis, *New States*, p.95.

the 1870s editorials in the *Port Denison Times*, letters to the editor, and discussions at public meetings underscored the community's single-minded commitment to territorial separation. In early 1876 the *Port Denison Times* began to advocate a separation league.<sup>142</sup> In June a public meeting was called to decide the best method of securing separation. Despite opposition from some who would have preferred to revive the Bowen District Association to direct the movement, a resolution was carried for the formation of a separation league; a committee of twelve was appointed.<sup>143</sup>

An elaborate programme setting out the objects of the league and a plan of action was drawn up and submitted to residents of other northern towns. The aim was to secure the return at the next general election of northern representatives pledged to act in concert. If other northern constituencies desired, the committee was willing to try again for financial separation, though convinced that nothing short of territorial separation would suffice. If other constituencies concurred, or if the attempt to obtain financial separation failed, efforts would be made to commit northern representatives to bring before parliament resolutions in favour of territorial separation. These they were to support unanimously, with a view to petitioning the Queen after their inevitable rejection. All northern electorates were invited to join the separation league and form branches, communicating through their committees. A rather complex organizational structure was proposed to achieve these aims.<sup>144</sup> This programme was published in many northern newspapers in mid-1876; the northern press was relied on as the main vehicle for spreading the word of separation.<sup>145</sup>

The *Port Denison Times*, and the Bowen community which it mirrored, had by this time evolved a self-contained interpretation of the separation question. When Queensland was created, it was argued, northern areas were entrusted to the guardianship of the Queensland government on the express condition that territorial separation would be granted the north immediately

---

142. *PDT*, 1 January, 1 April, 3 June 1876.

143. *Ibid.*, 10 June 1876.

144. *Ibid.*, 17 June 1876.

145. *Ibid.*, 8 July 1876.

it was capable of self-government;<sup>146</sup> the Constitution Acts guaranteed freedom to the north prospectively, the Imperial government providing for Queensland's subdivision into three states.<sup>147</sup> Misguided as it was, this view, or a version of it, involving the "rights" of the north, promises of Imperial statesmen and statutory enactments, was to dominate northern separatist thinking until the turn of the century, with significant effects on the conduct of the movement.

There can be no doubt that Bowen's interest in separation stemmed, at least in part, from ambitions to be capital of the new colony.<sup>148</sup> Separation was to be the salvation of Bowen, that "City of Great Expectations",<sup>149</sup> whose economic decline continued while its rivals surged ahead under the impetus of gold discoveries and sugar cultivation.<sup>150</sup> The grass growing in the main street of Bowen, likened by some wit to the "uncut hair of graves",<sup>151</sup> had become a standard taunt throughout the north.<sup>152</sup> To rescue Bowen from threatened oblivion, the *Port Denison Times* looked forward to a time "when some Mr. Mulligan finds an incredibly rich goldfield in our neighbourhood or when we get Separation",<sup>153</sup> reflecting the materialistic, parochial attitude to separation which prevailed in Bowen.

Receiving no support from other centres, the new separation league in Bowen ceased operations within weeks of its inception. Judging from the tone of the Townsville newspapers, opinion there was gradually moving towards territorial separation;<sup>154</sup> the increasing importance of the port of Townsville, whose imports and exports had risen to more than half a million

---

146. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1876.

147. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1876.

148. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1876. C f., *ibid.*, 25 March 1876.

149. *RM*, 24 May 1873.

150. Letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 17 June 1876.

151. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1876.

152. E.g., *RM*, 1 June 1872; Eden, *My Wife and I in Queensland*, p.183. C f., E.C. Creaghe Diary, entry of 1 January 1883. Mitchell Library.

153. *PDT*, 1 April 1876.

154. E.g., *TT*, 17, 31 May 1876; *CBE*, 21 June 1876.

pounds a year, was set against government neglect of public works in the town.<sup>155</sup> Yet although the people of Townsville held little hope of justice from the southern parliament,<sup>156</sup> separation was not considered urgent. No notice was taken of Bowen's initiative.

The *Mackay Mercury* was by no means opposed to territorial separation,<sup>157</sup> though it inclined more towards financial separation.<sup>158</sup> The *Mercury* would have preferred to try Macalister's District and Shire Councils Bill rather than join the Bowen campaign. Some Mackay residents considered that northern Queensland was not yet sufficiently advanced to bear the expense of a separate government.<sup>159</sup> The Ravenswood papers, the *Ravenswood Miner* and *Ravenswood Times*,<sup>160</sup> and the *Georgetown Courier*<sup>161</sup> came out in favour of separation, but gave the Bowen group no positive assistance.

In Cooktown the *Herald* supported the Bowen Committee<sup>162</sup> and a public meeting expressed opinions decidedly in favour of territorial separation.<sup>163</sup> Initially the *Cooktown Courier* also gave its blessing,<sup>164</sup> but withdrew it after second thoughts about the cost of an army of civil servants and a new capital. Recalling Rockhampton's sudden loss of ardour in 1872, it questioned the disinterestedness of advocates of separation in Townsville and Bowen.<sup>165</sup> The *Courier* believed that Australians should avoid placing obstacles in the way of one of its favoured goals, federation, by erecting lines of customs houses along the Australian coast:<sup>166</sup> "advocating

---

155. *TT*, 15 January 1876. Willmetts and Co., *Cooktown Almanac, Northern Queensland Directory, and Miner's and Settler's Companion for 1876* (Townsville 1876), p.32.

156. *CBE*, 21 June 1876. *TT*, 17 May 1876.

157. *MM*, 1 July 1876.

158. *Ibid.*, 4 November 1876. C f., report of public meeting in Mackay, *PDT*, 10 June 1876.

159. *MM*, 4 November 1876. Report of public meeting in Mackay, *MM*, 23 December 1876.

160. *Ravenswood Times*, 6 May 1876. *PDT*, 18 March 1876.

161. *Ibid.*, 8 July 1876.

162. *CH*, 30 September 1876.

163. *CC*, 11 October 1876.

164. *Ibid.*, 24 June 1876.

165. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1876. C f., *ibid.*, 15 June 1878.

166. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1876.

Australian Federation, we fear from Separation the creation of a fresh centre of colonial jealousy".<sup>167</sup> Moreover the *Courier*, anticipating the arguments used to great effect by Sir Samuel Griffith in the 1880s, expressed doubts about the social foundations of the proposed new colony:

a self-governing colony formed in the far North of Queensland, and cut off from all control by the South, would form itself - probably in less than a generation - into a community resembling those of Georgia, South Carolina, and the Slave States before the Civil War in America - it would become the plague spot of Australia. 168

Small selectors and farmers, the surest foundation for a community, were discouraged from settling in the north by the tropical climate, the *Courier* argued. Furthermore the distinctive social structure which the northern climate would encourage must hinder federation of the Australian colonies.<sup>169</sup> No attempt was made to form a branch league in Cooktown.

In 1878 Bowen again tried to initiate a separation movement, this time with assistance from Townsville. Bowen's scepticism about financial separation was undiminished: in 1877 the local member had voted for the Financial Districts Bill, but only as an instalment of justice and a step towards territorial separation; in parliament he made clear his opinion that nothing short of territorial severance would satisfy the north.<sup>170</sup> In early 1878 the *Port Denison Times* again made the initial moves to revive agitation, partly through Richard Talbot of Don River.<sup>171</sup> Long resident in New Zealand, Talbot had taken upon himself the task of educating the northern public on separation, referring especially to parallels with the struggle between north and south in New Zealand.

In June the Bowen Committee resumed work, circulating a manifesto which they suggested might become the basis for a separation petition.<sup>172</sup> It outlined a separationist interpretation of Queensland's history,

167. *Ibid.*, 20 November 1876.

168. *Ibid.*

169. *Ibid.*

170. Beor, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.745.

171. *PDT*, 21 January, 23 March 1878. Talbot's letters to the Editor, *ibid.*, 26 January, 2 February, 6 April 1878.

172. Reprinted in *Territorial Separation* (Townsville 1884), pp.23-28.

explaining the south's domination of colonial politics and how the spread of settlement to the north, especially after the discovery of gold, had given rise to separatist agitation.<sup>173</sup> North Queensland's gold resources, and the consequent expansion of population and revenue, played a central part in the argument. Gold discoveries had laid the foundation of a new colony and assured its future; confiscation of the revenues produced was a principal grievance against the colonial government; separate government was necessary to foster the mining industry and develop mineral resources to the full.<sup>174</sup>

The case for separation rested on the south's monopoly of public revenues; unfair retention of customs duties paid in Brisbane on goods consumed in the north; the unjust refusal of essential public works, although northern revenues would cover interest payments on loans required; and the impossibility of obtaining redress due to the preponderance of southern representatives in the Queensland legislature. Specific grievances were enumerated, including the government's refusal to transfer ownership of public docks and wharves to local municipal corporations, and the lack over a period of four years of adequate communications between Cooktown and the Palmer goldfield.<sup>175</sup> The manifesto complained about the niggardliness of the Brisbane Treasury, particularly its refusal to fund a bridge across the Burdekin, despite the north's increasing contribution to revenue. The precarious financial position of municipal corporations in Queensland was contrasted with that of counterparts in Victoria, New Zealand and Great Britain, where rent from town lands, wharfage fees, publican's licences and government subsidies, all denied Queensland corporations, supplemented revenues.<sup>176</sup> Following the example of New Zealand in 1864, the Bowen Committee suggested that the petition request the appointment of a Royal Commission, composed of the Speakers of the

---

173. *Ibid.*, pp.23-24.

174. *Ibid.*, pp.24-25, p.27.

175. *Ibid.*, pp.25-26.

176. *Ibid.*, pp.27-28.

Legislative Assemblies of Victoria, New Zealand and Tasmania, to select a site for the future capital. This, they were confident, would eliminate a bone of contention, and exonerate promoters of the movement from any suggestion of interested motives.<sup>177</sup>

The Townsville newspapers, the *Northern Standard and Townsville Argus*<sup>178</sup> and *Townsville Herald*<sup>179</sup> gave considerable space and editorial support to the Bowen moves. According to the *Standard* north Queensland's separation was a "foregone conclusion".<sup>180</sup> The opening of the northern goldfields had laid the foundations of a new colony, comprising men accustomed to the more advanced laws of Victoria and New Zealand. Rapidly colonized by the discovery of gold, this new territory, distinct from the southern parts of Queensland, lacked adequate representation while its revenues were seized by the "Brisbane government". Separation was the only remedy.<sup>181</sup>

The *Mackay Standard* did not favour territorial separation<sup>182</sup> and the *Mackay Mercury*,<sup>183</sup> like the Mackay District Association,<sup>184</sup> set its hopes on some system of decentralization. The issue received little attention in the 1878 election in Mackay; Amhurst, an advocate of financial separation who deprecated territorial separation, was returned.<sup>185</sup> In Charters Towers the *Herald*,<sup>186</sup> deterred like the *Northern Miner* by the cost of a new government, did not favour territorial separation, preferring financial separation. Generally the people of Charters Towers stood aloof from separation of any

177. *Ibid.*, p.28.

178. *NS & TA*, 8 February, 5 April, 20 August 1878. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 28 May 1878.

179. *TH*, 5 June, 18 September 1878.

180. *NS & TA*, 11 June 1878.

181. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1878.

182. *PDT*, 26 January 1878.

183. *MM*, 17 April, 29 June, 27 July 1878.

184. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1878.

185. *Ibid.*, 19 October 1878.

186. *PDT*, 15 June 1878.



kind until railway connection with the coast was definitely granted.<sup>187</sup>

Of the Cooktown newspapers, the more favourable to separation was the *Herald*, identified as the more conservative, stigmatized as "pro-squatter" by its rival; the more radical *Courier* was professedly the voice of the mining population. Thus in 1876 and 1878 the *Herald's* more conservative allegiances heightened its dissatisfaction with the southern government: a specific reason for its ardour on separation was opposition to legislation in 1877 restricting Chinese immigration.<sup>188</sup> However by 1879 the *Courier*, disenchanted with financial separation, the McIlwraith government and the Northern Combination,<sup>189</sup> was also a convert to territorial separation.<sup>190</sup>

Once again the Bowen initiative had failed to elicit any concrete support from other centres. One reason was the persistent belief in reforms short of territorial separation: financial separation, a parliamentary combination of northern members, increased representation, greater energy on the part of local members, or a change of government. Moreover, northern townships lacked unity of purpose. The *Northern Miner*, itself no stranger to the sentiment, deplored the "wretched localism that is so rampant everywhere in the North prevent[ing] the possibility of any patriotic combination for the benefit of the whole".<sup>191</sup> Throughout the north every proposal, including separation, was assessed in terms of its probable effect on the local community.

Several issues fuelled inter-town rivalries in the 1876-78 period, tending in particular to alienate Townsville and Bowen, whose co-operation

187. *NM*, 7 February, 11 July, 24 October 1877. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 14 February 1877.

188. *CH*, 12 September 1877.

189. Macrossan's concept of "self help" for the north was the formation of a "Northern Combination" in parliament to vote together to promote northern interests, and possibly to obstruct parliamentary business if concessions were refused. Only one northern member, F.H. Stubley of Kennedy, refused to join the "Combination" formed after the general election of 1878.

190. *CC*, 2 July, 29 October 1879.

191. *NM*, 24 October 1877. C f., *CC*, 1 January 1878.

was essential to any movement for separation. In 1876 the Anglican Bishop of Sydney, who as Metropolitan of Australia had charge of the territory north of Mackay, visited north Queensland to elicit support, especially monetary donations, for a new Bishopric in the north.<sup>192</sup> It is indicative of the extent to which the Cape Palmerston line had become entrenched in popular thinking that the Bishop of Brisbane, when consulted about the southern boundary of the new diocese, had consented to surrender that portion of his diocese north of Cape Palmerston.<sup>193</sup> The question then arose as to where the new Bishop would reside. Townsville, Bowen and Charters Towers laid claim to the honour. Bowen indicated a disinclination to aid the Northern Bishopric Endowment Fund unless it was chosen.<sup>194</sup> The *Townsville Herald* was candid about the reasons for Townsville's intense interest in the question:

should it be arranged that the Bishop will make Townsville his head-quarters *en-permanence*, we shall, in due course, become a cathedral city, and, by reason, the future capital of the North. 195

Another bone of contention, which heightened jealousies between Bowen and Townsville for the next decade or more, was the site of the Northern Supreme Court. In 1874 when the government decided to establish a separate Court in the north, northern members of parliament agreed to support Bowen as its site, mainly in order to prevent the selection of Rockhampton.<sup>196</sup> Almost as soon as Bowen was confirmed as the site of the Court there were proposals for its transfer, Townsville arguing with justice that it was more central to the population of the north. Again the *Townsville Herald* was not secretive about Townsville's motives:

Another necessary step towards the confirming of our local importance, as aspiring to be the future capital of a future colony, is the removal of the Supreme Court from Bowen to Townsville. 197

---

192. Papers of Reverend Stanley Howard, Item B. Mitchell Library.

193. *MM*, 21 October 1876.

194. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1878.

195. *TH*, 16 October 1878.

196. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p.676.

197. Quoted by *PDT*, 9 March 1878.

Other centres took sides according to their geographical position, Charters Towers and Cooktown supporting Townsville,<sup>198</sup> Mackay backing Bowen.<sup>199</sup>

Every other northern town was jealous of Townsville's public works which included a jetty, waterworks, hospital, Magistrate's Court, gaol, immigration barracks and the Ross River bridge.<sup>200</sup> Bowen also feared that if the Townsville-Charters Towers railway was approved, its hopes of a line to Bowen River would be dashed.<sup>201</sup> As always the question of the new capital produced bitter competition. Bowen clung to its dreams of grandeur. Townsville and Cooktown<sup>202</sup> each made strong claims. Mackay, according to the *Mercury*, considered the benefits of separation negligible since it had no hope of being selected as capital.<sup>203</sup> The *Cooktown Courier* similarly doubted the advantages if Cooktown was not to be made capital.<sup>204</sup> The *Townsville Herald* in its first number of 1 August 1876 stated bluntly that Townsville would press for separation and become capital when the time was right, that is when Townsville was ready for it.

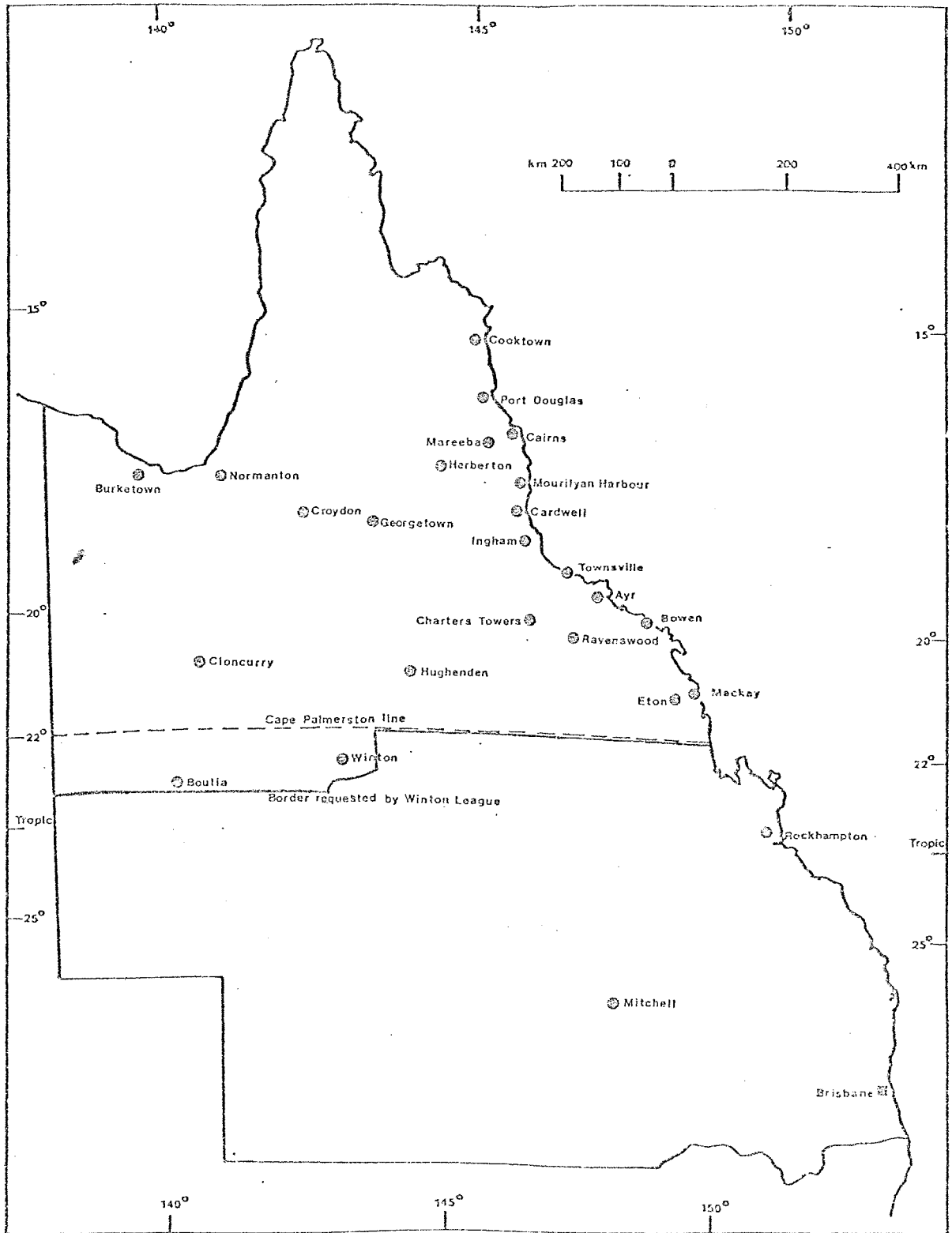
Class issues also intruded into the separation question. Some members of the northern community, notably squatters, feared control of the new colony's politics by miners.<sup>205</sup> Asked the reason for his opposition to separation, one squatter replied that "we should be under the dominion of the 'digger'", for whom he expressed a profound aversion.<sup>206</sup>

- 
198. Petition to Legislative Assembly from Charters Towers Committee, *QV&P*, 1878, Vol. 1, p.338. *CC*, 2 February 1878.
199. *MM*, 11 February, 13 September 1878.
200. E.g., *PDT*, 18, 25 March 1876, 26 January 1878. Report of public meeting, *CC*, 27 April 1878.
201. *PDT*, 5 January 1878. *NM*, 27 January 1877.
202. S. Browne, *A Journalist's Memories* (Brisbane 1927), p.3. *CH*, 11 October, 18, 29 November 1876.
203. *MM*, 29 June 1878.
204. *CC*, 11 October, 20 November 1876.
205. E.g., letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 19 August 1876.
206. *Ibid.*, 11 March 1876. Two possible solutions were suggested: to request a Crown Colony, or raise the franchise in the new colony. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 19 August 1876. The possibility of a Crown Colony was also raised by Macrossan, in connection with the large Chinese and alien population in the north. *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.744.

In consequence, Bowen's attempts in the 1870s to initiate a separation movement proved abortive. During the decade the concept of financial separation dominated, though by no means monopolized, northern separatist thinking. Only during brief periods in 1876 and 1878 did the aspiration to territorial separation reassert itself, and then only in certain localities. However financial separation also proved elusive. Success attended only the attempt to create a system of local government in Queensland: in 1878 Griffith had introduced the Local Government Bill, an amended form of the previous municipal act founded on the local government system in Victoria. Yet the passage of this measure caused little jubilation in the north, where financial separation and local government were regarded as complementary, each of little value without the other.<sup>207</sup> The decade closed, northern problems unsolved, discontent unabated; it was not surprising that few years passed before the separation cry was revived.

---

207. E.g., *CC*, 25 May 1878; *MM*, 20 October 1877.



MAP NO.4 NORTH QUEENSLAND 1890

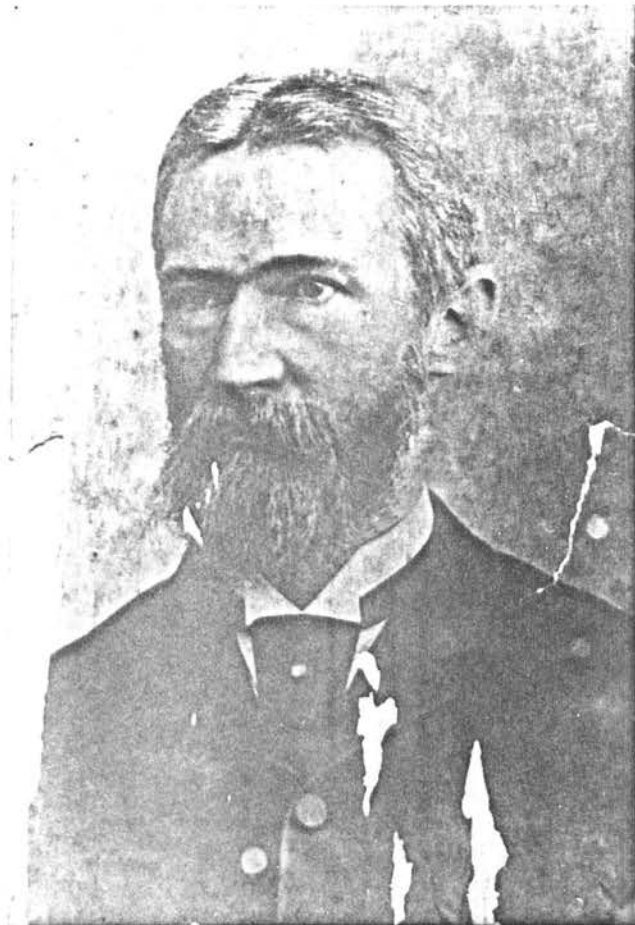
## CHAPTER 6

### ORGANIZING

Macrossan's presence in the McIlwraith ministry as Minister for Works and Mines failed to assuage northern dissatisfaction; as he later admitted, the McIlwraith government found it impossible to distribute revenue fairly between north and south, because "no Government [could] exist in the House supported by Southern members if it attempt[ed] to do justice to the northern portion of Queensland".<sup>1</sup> Although Townsville had been favoured with relatively large public expenditure under both the Douglas and McIlwraith governments - for jetty works, the Townsville-Charters Towers railway, completed in 1882, and a new gaol, hospital and Court House - separatist sentiment was vented at several public gatherings in early 1882. The reasons are not precisely known; the absence of local newspaper files or other suitable records leaves an unfortunate lacuna in the history of northern separatism. Nevertheless one significant factor can be identified - the influence of the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* which was begun in September 1881 as a vehicle for separatist propaganda, the proprietors later claiming credit for initiating the separation movement.<sup>2</sup>

The first public move in the new campaign of which evidence survives came at a banquet in Townsville in February 1882 for S.W. Griffith, leader of the Liberal Opposition, and his colleague W. Miles, member for Darling Downs.<sup>3</sup> Local Liberals used the occasion to expound northern grievances, dwelling on injustices in the distribution of public funds and the unequal incidence of taxation between north and south, and arguing that remoteness from the seat of government denied northerners equal participation in or access to government. Miles sympathized with members representing constituencies distant from the

- 
1. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 441. Apart from a few single editions, no files of Townsville newspapers survive for the period 1880- July 1886. However, events in Townsville were recorded in other sources, especially newspapers from other northern towns.
  2. *TH*, 24 December 1887. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 6 May 1891. Dodd S. Clarke, Edward Rhode and J.K. Mehan were the proprietors.
  3. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 383. T. Willmett to the Editor, *TH*, 2 April 1887.



SAMUEL GRIFFITH



THOMAS McLWRAITH

capital and, according to the *Townsville Bulletin*, said he would support separation; later when he became Minister for Works in Griffith's government, Miles was embarrassed to find his name included among advocates of separation, and tried to qualify the remarks he made in 1882.<sup>4</sup> Griffith wisely kept his own counsel.

Thus the separation question was first aired publicly at a Liberal junket, when well-known Griffith supporters such as George Simpson and P.F. Hanran, then Mayor of Townsville, committed themselves to the movement.<sup>5</sup> H.B. Hubert, a prominent Liberal who became Mayor in 1885, also supported separation at this time,<sup>6</sup> though three years later he would lead anti-separationists in Townsville. In order to channel growing separatist sentiment into a formal organization, a provisional committee was formed in July to arrange for a public meeting. Though by no means an exponent of separation, a Townsville correspondent of the *Northern Miner* conveyed the enthusiasm of the preliminary meetings:

The bankers, merchants, and shopkeepers, rolled up and spoke, and acted with a unanimity which I have not seen displayed over any other question in Townsville, and it is evident, whatever may be the motive power, that they are in earnest in the matter.<sup>7</sup>

The principal organizer was the diminutive but dynamic George Simpson, a Liberal alderman who later styled himself father of the separation movement.<sup>8</sup> On 21 July Simpson convened a large public meeting which launched the Northern Separation League and appointed a working committee comprising over 30 local storekeepers and businessmen.<sup>9</sup>

It was no accident that both occasions were held under Liberal auspices: well-known Townsville Liberals were prominent among the initial leaders and a majority of the early members were probably Liberals.<sup>10</sup> But there were also significant numbers of McIlwraithians in the movement. Robert Philp, for example, who in 1885 stood as McIlwraith's

---

4. *PDT*, 6 February 1886.

5. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 383.

6. *NQTTS*, 12 May 1885.

7. *NM*, 22 July 1882.

8. *NQTTS*, 5 November 1885.

9. *TH*, 24 December 1887. See Appendix 1. *First Annual Report of NQSC* (Townsville 1886), QSA GOV/A14, p. 161.

10. *Ibid.*



candidate for the Musgrave electorate, took part in all the early meetings and was considered a possible president of the League.<sup>11</sup> The *Bulletin* was both strongly pro-McIlwraith and strongly in favour of separation. Macrossan's rejection of separation in March 1882<sup>12</sup> did not dampen the enthusiasm of the *Bulletin* or McIlwraithian supporters of the movement in Townsville.

The committee of the Northern Separation League wrote to leading citizens in every northern town appealing for assistance, with disappointing results. Only in Cooktown was the response favourable: on 17 July a well-attended public meeting carried resolutions in favour of separation and twelve prominent townsmen were elected as the committee of the Cooktown Separation League.<sup>13</sup> More typical was Mackay's indifference, heightened by reluctance to jeopardize local claims to government expenditure on a breakwater, the Pioneer River bridge and a railway to Hamilton and Eton.<sup>14</sup> The *Mackay Mercury* could see in separation no local advantage, especially if Townsville or Cooktown in the far north became the new capital.<sup>15</sup>

In Charters Towers the volatile editor of the *Northern Miner*, Thadeus O'Kane, greeted the movement with all the invective at his command; an elderly Irishman, O'Kane had founded the *Miner* in 1873 after a period as sub-editor of the *Rockhampton Bulletin*, and had soon become notorious for his trenchant prose style and frequent involvement in libel actions.<sup>16</sup> O'Kane accused Townsville of ambitions to be the capital, asserting the claims of Charters Towers instead.<sup>17</sup> He identified the movement with sugar planting interests seeking to introduce coolies - indentured Indian labour.<sup>18</sup> In the same article he also

- 
11. *NM*, 22 July 1882. For biographical information on Philp, see H.C. Perry, *Memoirs of the Hon. Sir Robert Philp KCMG 1851-1922* (Brisbane 1923).
  12. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 383. Macrossan certainly did not inspire the moves of 1882, as has been suggested. See Ellis, *New States*, p. 97. It was not until April 1886 that Macrossan publicly announced his conversion to territorial separation. *NQTS*, 21 April 1886.
  13. *NM*, 22 July 1882.
  14. *NM*, 16 August, 30 September, 21 October 1882.
  15. *Ibid.*, 19 August 1882.
  16. For biographical details, see Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p. 67.
  17. *NM*, 22 July 1882.
  18. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1882.

charged, inconsistently, that the real object of the agitation was the removal of the Northern Supreme Court from Bowen to Townsville; that accomplished the movement would subside.<sup>19</sup> In fact O'Kane seemed to grasp any available argument to attack separationists; what he said is not evidence of what was true, or even what he believed to be true, but of what he considered would be damaging charges against the movement; his attacks consisted of a barrage of assertions made with utter disregard of evidence or of consistency. At a time when the anti-coolie movement, protesting at the McIlwraith government's plan to introduce Indian coolies, was sweeping north Queensland,<sup>20</sup> O'Kane's cry of coolie was calculated to arouse opposition to separation on the goldfields and among working men in coastal towns. The prominence of Liberals in the movement in Townsville, the entire absence of references to coolies at separation meetings in Townsville and Cooktown, and the indifference of Mackay sufficiently dispose of this accusation; although the increasing difficulty of recruiting sufficient Pacific Islanders for the plantations had turned the attention of sugar growers to coolie labour,<sup>21</sup> Mackay residents did not regard this as any reason to join the separation movement.<sup>22</sup>

O'Kane's reasons for striking at the separation movement probably lay in party political differences between the Liberal *Miner* and the McIlwraithian Townsville electorate; thus he asserted that Townsville Liberals had been gulled by conservative elements favourable to coolies.<sup>23</sup> It was easy for O'Kane to assume that party politics were involved in the separation issue because the McIlwraithian paper at Charters Towers, the *Herald*, supported the movement. In addition O'Kane distrusted separation movements, harbouring a sense of betrayal since the early 1870s when some members of the Rockhampton Separation Committee, of which he had been a member, dropped separation when promised an

---

19. *Ibid.*

20. Bolton, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

21. Minutes of meetings 1 February 1881, 30 March 1882, *Mackay Planters' Association Minute Book*. *MM*, 2 August, 6 September 1882. Large withdrawals of labourers, to meet the demands of rapid expansion of the sugar industry in the early 1880s, were exhausting the Pacific Islands as a source of plantation labour.

22. *MM*, 19 August 1882.

23. *NM*, 20 July 1882.

extension of the Central railway line.<sup>24</sup>

O'Kane was not alone in his suspicions that Townsville (and perhaps Cooktown also) was motivated by ambitions to be capital; they were shared in Bowen and Mackay and accounted in part for the lack of enthusiasm shown there.<sup>25</sup> Bowen had grounds for suspicion in recent moves of the Townsville Chamber of Commerce to transfer the Supreme Court to Townsville.<sup>26</sup> There was no such concrete basis for Cooktown's antagonism towards Townsville; nevertheless the public meeting which formed the Cooktown Separation League insisted that it should be an independent body rather than a branch of the Townsville organization.<sup>27</sup> Inter-town rivalry was a major source of weakness in the 1882 movement.

In 1882, as at other times of separatist activity, supporters were at pains to avoid entanglement in party politics, insisting that their aims cut across party lines. Support initially attracted in Townsville in 1882 gave a measure of plausibility to this claim, but it became increasingly difficult to avoid entanglement as political animosities intensified later that year. In January 1883 the organizers judged it expedient to suspend activities until the political crisis had cooled down;<sup>28</sup> a separation petition, already drafted for presentation to the Legislative Assembly, was abandoned.<sup>29</sup>

The principal issues in dispute between the McIlwraith ministry and its Liberal opponents under Griffith were coolie labour and the transcontinental railway. In a bitterly-fought general election in September 1883 the Liberals gained a land-slide victory. McIlwraith's attachment to the scheme for a land-grant railway across Queensland from Mitchell to the Gulf of Carpentaria certainly lost him the

---

24. *Ibid.* Cf., *ibid.*, 10 November 1885.

25. *MM*, 19 August 1882. *PDT*, 22 July 1882.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *NM*, 22 July 1882.

28. *Report of NQSC*, QSA GOV/A14, p. 161.

29. *PDT*, 27 September 1884.

support of squatting representatives;<sup>30</sup> but he was convinced that the coolie issue had cost him the Premiership.<sup>31</sup> Since 1881 McIlwraith had been negotiating with the Indian government to allow Indian coolies to enter Queensland.<sup>32</sup> The Liberal Party campaigned in 1883 on an anti-coolie platform, calculated to appeal to working class voters who anticipated that competition from cheap imported labour would reduce wages and restrict employment.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Griffith feared the social and political consequences of introducing into Queensland a "servile race" who could never be given a share of political power, but who would probably "by degrees monopolise all branches of industry";<sup>34</sup> he feared that the introduction of large numbers of unenfranchised aliens would imperil Queensland's democratic tradition.<sup>35</sup> The majority of electors in northern Queensland as in the south voted for candidates pledged to oppose coolie labour.<sup>36</sup>

The new government acted at once to break off negotiations with

- 
30. W. Fielding, *Australian Trans-Continental Railway* (London 1882). Mitchell Library. B. Scott, *The Governorship of Sir Anthony Musgrave, 1883-1888* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1955), p. 1. Squatters publicly objected to the "land-grant" principle, on which the Canadian Pacific had previously been constructed, on the ground that it would place large tracts of land along the line in the hands of a foreign syndicate. E.g., E. & O. de Satge, *Pages from the journal of a Queensland Squatter* (London 1901), pp. 338-339. McIlwraith claimed that squatters would have supported the scheme if the government had been willing to give them a preemptive right over lands which were to go to the railway company; this McIlwraith refused. McIlwraith to Sir Julius Vogel 27 July 1885, McIlwraith Papers, Letterbook 1884-1886, pp. 142-144.
  31. McIlwraith to H. Kimber 6 October 1884, *ibid.*, pp. 4-5. McIlwraith to Dawes 23 November 1885, *ibid.*, p. 184.
  32. *QV&P*, 1882, Vol. 2, pp. 543-560. *QV&P*, 1883-4, pp. 429-441. It is possible that McIlwraith, recognizing the growing unpopularity of coolies, deliberately stipulated conditions known to be unacceptable to the Indian government. See "Queenslander", "Six Years of Queensland Politics" *Victorian Review*, Vol. 8, May 1885, p. 167.
  33. G.C. Craig, "The Griffith Policy" *Queensland Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3, June 1886, p. 202. The Anti-Coolie League was very active at this time.
  34. Griffith to Musgrave 1 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, P. 379.
  35. *QPD*, Vol. 41, 1883-4, p. 133.
  36. *BC*, 14 April 1885.

the Indian government<sup>37</sup> and to repeal the Indian Immigration Acts.<sup>38</sup> Griffith then turned his attention to the Pacific Island labour trade which from the 1860s had been the principal source of field labour for the sugar industry: by June 1883 there were 13,697 Islanders employed in Queensland.<sup>39</sup> Griffith had always hoped that sugar would be cultivated by small farmers using only white labour. Assisted by a series of scandals in 1884 over blackbirding practices in New Guinea waters, and the damning report of a Royal Commission into the labour traffic, the government imposed stringent conditions on recruitment of Pacific Islanders in 1884, and in 1885 brought down legislation providing that no licence to recruit Islanders would be issued after 1890. As Islander labour was indentured for a term of three years, its legal use would have ended in 1893.<sup>40</sup>

Griffith's policy had been framed, like McIlwraith's plans for coolie labour, at a time of high prosperity and rapid expansion in the sugar industry; by the time he took office the industry had entered a depression which was to prevail for the next decade.<sup>41</sup> Stimulated by temporarily high sugar prices, sugar cultivation had spread rapidly along the northern coast in the early 1880s, but by late 1883 the industry had run into difficulties. Heavy production of beet sugar under government subsidy in Europe put pressure on world sugar prices.<sup>42</sup> At the same time the supply of Pacific Island labour fell short of growers' rapidly-expanding demands. The slump

- 
37. Griffith to Secretary to the Government of India 13 December 1883, *QV&P*, 1883-4, p. 1423.
38. This legislation had been passed in 1862 to provide for the introduction and protection of Indian labourers. See Moles, "Indian Coolie Labour Issue", pp. 1348-1349. The attempted repeal was blocked in the Legislative Council, but the government's determination to carry out its election promises was clear. In 1886 another attempt to repeal the Indian Coolie Acts was successful.
39. *QV&P*, 1883-4, pp. 1425-1426.
40. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, pp. 148-153.
41. For statistics on depression in Mackay district, see C. Moore, *Kanaka Maratta: A History of Melanesian Mackay* (Ph.D. JCU 1981), pp. 291-293.
42. According to Arthur Neame of Macknade plantation in the Herbert River district, prices had fallen from £34 a ton in 1873, to a "very paying price" of £28 a ton in 1881, to £12 a ton in 1883. *Diary of Arthur Neame 1870-1897*, p. 56, p. 100. Mitchell Library.

in prices having reduced profits, and with competition in southern Australian markets from cheaply-produced Chinese and Javanese sugar, a supply of cheap labour seemed crucial, as J.E. Davidson, a large sugar investor in the Mackay district, stressed: "At the present time, with beetroot competition, sugar growing, even with coloured labour, is a hazardous undertaking, but, without it, it is absolute ruin".<sup>43</sup> After trying other sources of labour without success,<sup>44</sup> sugar growers determined to obtain coolies from India.<sup>45</sup> Griffith's restrictive labour policies therefore appeared to sugar planters as harassment of a valuable industry at a time when government support would have been more appropriate.<sup>46</sup> They censured the government for breaking faith with capitalists who had invested three million pounds in the industry in the belief that adequate supplies of cheap labour would be available.<sup>47</sup> Labour problems on top of price falls discouraged southern investors, and banks became more cautious about loans to sugar growers.<sup>48</sup>

These combined pressures were especially acute in Mackay, which by the late 1870s had established its position as the "Sugaropolis" of Queensland.<sup>49</sup> R.J. Jeffray, a large southern investor in the

- 
43. Davidson to Derby 25 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 389. Cf., Jeffray to Griffith 29 November 1884, *QV&P*, 1884, Vol. 2, p. 939. *Mackay Planters' Association Minute Book*, meeting of 21 January 1884.
44. For example, the Mackay Planters' Association had considered Cingalese, Chinese coolies, and Maltese labourers.
45. Petitions were sent to the Queensland government to allow coolies to enter Queensland. E.g., Labour on the Sugar Plantations (Petition) *QV&P*, 1884, Vol. 2, pp. 941-942. The planters also took the initiative of asking the Colonial Office to intercede on their behalf with the Indian government to allow coolies to come to Queensland without special regulations being enacted by the Queensland government. Davidson and Jeffray to Derby 9 July 1884, *QV&P*, 1884, Vol. 2, pp. 927-928.
46. E.g., Sir Alfred Cowley's Cutting Book, No. 2, p. 15, p. 18. *MM*, 6 August 1884. Sugar planters believed Griffith to be motivated primarily by the political need to woo the working class. E.g., Messrs Long and Others to Musgrave 13 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 388.
47. *Ibid.* Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p. 145.
48. Craig, "The Griffith Policy", pp. 200-201. D.H. Dalrymple to the Editor, *MM*, 20 August 1884.
49. Bolton, *op. cit.*, p. 78. In 1879 the Mackay district accounted for two-fifths of Queensland's sugar growing area.

industry, drew a picture of Mackay during the boom of the early 1880s:

the town and district of Mackay have by means of the sugar industry alone, risen from the condition of a very primitive settlement, with the well-known characteristics of such rudimentary communities - a small group of mean houses and the unreclaimed bush behind - into a populous and well-ordered town, ranking in importance fourth in the colony, with spacious streets and good buildings - churches, schools, banks, shops, and foundries, suburban residences, and all the signs of an active municipal, mercantile and industrial life;- exceptionally well laid-out roads lead in numerous directions through the valley of the Pioneer River, with highly cultivated fields on every side; while far and near may be seen the homesteads and factories of the planters - many of these establishments making each almost a village in itself. 50

A good crop cushioned Mackay from the depression developing in the industry in 1883, but in 1884 the season was highly unfavourable. Then all the problems of the industry settled on Mackay at once, leading to a reduction of wage levels in the district, local unemployment and commercial depression.<sup>51</sup> Resentment against the Griffith government was intense. In late 1884 separation was advocated with increasing force in the midst of forebodings about the impending collapse of the sugar industry.

The *Townsville Bulletin* was partly correct when it predicted in August 1884 that Griffith's labour policy would "hasten Separation, by binding Northern centres of population together to protect themselves against being robbed of their right to develop [sic] the natural wealth of North Queensland."<sup>52</sup> The Committee of the Northern Separation League, which had never been dissolved, took this opportunity to resume work, reassembling on 23 September in response to the first of a series of letters in the *Bulletin* by Committee member Thankfull Willmetts, urging separation on the same grounds as in 1882.<sup>53</sup>

The revival of the movement in Townsville was not directly caused by Griffith's labour policy. Townsville was not dependent on the sugar industry for its prosperity and had yet to feel the

---

50. Jeffray to Griffith 29 November 1884, *QV&P*, 1884, Vol. 2, p. 938.

51. *MM*, 6, 16 August, 10, 13 September 1884.

52. Quoted *ibid.*, 9 August 1884.

53. *Report of NQSC*, QSA GOV/A14, p. 161. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 384.



#### A SEPARATION RALLY

This cartoon was a skit on the separation movement by H.G. Rimstead, a Dutch artist who visited Townsville in 1884. The figures represent: in the top left hand corner, Sir Arthur Palmer, John Macrossan, M.L.A., holding up the placard, and behind his arm Dodd S. Clarke of the "Bulletin". In the middle of the photo, from the left there is the artist, Rimstead, then A.M. Rheuben, E.U. Roberts (first Government Surveyor in Townsville), and Walter Hays, a pioneer pastoralist. P.F. Hanran is shown sitting down, and the genial face of R. Rollwagen is next. Further to the right, with a shield on which a hairbrush is shown, is H. Bolton, a politically-active barber. The figure farthest to the right could not be identified. Bottom row from left to right: W. Clayton, S.F. Walker, H. Bartels and J. Snell. The latter, who was a baker, was a spiritualist, and the table in his left hand indicates his weakness for table-rapping. In the centre is the vice-president of the Northern Separation League, Thankfull Willmet, with his spear. Then comes T. Enright bearing a shield and P. Larsen. Another side-face showing a beard is that of Dempsey, editor of the *Northern Standard*, then owned by J. Hodel. Above Dempsey appears the head of A. Rodgers of Brodziak and Rodgers and next to him the bearded face of R. Abraham. At the bottom of the picture is J. Knapp, a solicitor, and above him with moustache and side-whiskers is W.P. Morgan, also a solicitor who later became a member of the House of Commons. In the extreme right is Leonard, a well-known local politician. From *Townsville Bulletin Jubilee Souvenir 1863-1913*, 27 August 1913.



side-effects of depression in northern sugar districts. The labour issue was mentioned at Committee meetings, notably by Liberal secretary of the League John Marshall, as one of many northern grievances against the southern government; it was not given particular emphasis.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, several Committee members, such as George Simpson, W.T. Morris and George Deane, vehemently opposed coloured labour.<sup>55</sup> The separationist *Bulletin* certainly disapproved of Griffith's labour policy; but from early October 1884 the *Daily Northern Standard*, Townsville's Liberal newspaper which opposed coloured labour, advocated separation as strenuously as the *Bulletin*.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless the resuscitation of the Northern Separation League was indirectly related to the labour issue: the Committee moved to take advantage of the unifying effect in northern sugar districts of a common grievance, to achieve what had proved impossible in 1882 - a cohesive northern separation movement. Apprehensive at first lest the fiasco of 1882 be repeated, the Townsville Committee were encouraged by promises of support from Mackay and indications of interest from other centres.<sup>57</sup> Griffith's labour policy affected the timing, not the substance, of the separation case; but by this political opportunism the movement ran the risk of being saddled with a charge of seeking coloured labour.

In October the Committee issued a circular, asking residents in every town north of Cape Palmerston to call public meetings to consider separation and appoint two delegates to attend a Separation Conference;<sup>58</sup> it was later decided that the conference would meet in Townsville in April 1885.<sup>59</sup>

- 
54. Report of meeting of Northern Separation League, *MM*, 18 October 1884.
55. Report of meeting of Northern Separation League, *PDT*, 17 October 1885.
56. *Ibid.*, 18 October 1884.
57. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1884.
58. *Ibid.*, 18 October 1884. Report of meeting of Northern Separation League, *MM*, 18 October 1884. It is noteworthy that Cape Palmerston was taken from the first as the southern boundary line of north Queensland.
59. *PDT*, 10 January 1885. In December 1884 an Executive Committee of the Northern Separation League had been elected, comprising William Kirk (president), P.F. Hanran and T. Willmetts (vice-presidents), J. Marshall (secretary), W.T. Morris (treasurer), Dr J. Abearne, W.P. Walker, G. Simpson, R.A. Goldring, W. Hayes, R.B. Taylor, J. Macintosh, G. Deane and R. Abraham. *Ibid.*, 13 December 1884.

In Mackay the *Standard* espoused separation in August 1884,<sup>60</sup> the *Mackay Mercury* after the movement was formally launched in the town. In mid-October a meeting of about 40 citizens heard William Coote, who for the next decade would be the chief organizer of the separation movement, recount how he had realized the necessity for dividing Queensland while sojourning in the north for his health.<sup>61</sup> Born in London in 1822 and trained as an architect and civil engineer, Coote had come to Queensland from Victoria by 1862, as general manager of the shortlived Moreton Bay Tramway Company. In following years he was highly acclaimed in Brisbane as a political writer, and compiled a two-volume history of Queensland from 1770 to 1881. After failing twice to obtain a seat in the Legislative Assembly, Coote reconciled himself to the idea that he could influence politics most effectively as an organizer and propagandist. While in Brisbane he cast aside his former radical sympathies to become an influential supporter of the McIlwraith party; personal animus towards Samuel Griffith may have been one reason for this change.<sup>62</sup> In October 1884 he was en route to Townsville, where he would take up journalism, helping to establish the *North Queensland Telegraph and Territorial Separationist*. Local supporters of separation had invited Coote to break his voyage in Mackay, and give his views on the question.

Of the merits of territorial separation the meeting needed little convincing; there were no dissentients when a separation motion was put. A league was formed with Michael J. Fay, Mayor of Mackay and a vocal opponent of coloured labour, as president.<sup>63</sup> The committee was dominated by local businessmen rather than sugar planters.<sup>64</sup> In

---

60. *Ibid.*, 23 August 1884.

61. *MM*, 22 October 1884.

62. A.A. Morrison, "William Coote, the Man and his Writings" *JRHSQ*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1956, pp. 1219-1225. *Idem*, "William Coote" in D. Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (Melbourne 1969), Vol. 3, pp. 456-457. In 1873 Coote had applied to be examined for admission to the Bar, and blamed Griffith for his rejection.

63. *MM*, 22 October 1884. The Committee comprised Lloyd, Harney, E.V. Reid, Pearce, Ellis, Fay, H.B. Black (editor of the *Standard*).

64. By November 1884 the Committee numbered 33, of whom only three were planters. *MM*, 15 November 1884. Nevertheless it may safely be presumed that a number of these Mackay businessmen had investments in sugar. See Appendix 2 for list of members of Mackay Committee in December 1884.

following weeks branch leagues were formed at Walkerston<sup>65</sup> and Eton,<sup>66</sup> small townships near Mackay.

Local speakers at separation meetings in Mackay and district raised general grievances against the southern government, referring among other complaints to the Griffith government's labour policy and the depression it appeared to have produced in Mackay.<sup>67</sup> Other causes of dissatisfaction were conflict with the government over construction of the Pioneer River bridge, improvement of river navigation, formation of a deep water port, and neglect of requests for public works to increase local employment.<sup>68</sup> Separation was assumed to be the only remedy for these problems. Some believed that a reversal of popular opposition to coloured labour was more probable in north Queensland, where people could not avoid the economic repercussions of their decision; the south, on the other hand, was insulated by distance and industrial diversification.<sup>69</sup> So desperate were sugar growers that even this slender hope made separation more attractive. There was a general feeling that any change in the status quo could only improve the hopeless situation facing the industry.<sup>70</sup> Desperation probably also accounted for the strong expressions directed against the Griffith government at these meetings.<sup>71</sup>

In early 1885 E.S. Rawson and M.J. Fay were chosen by the Mackay League as delegates to the Townsville Convention, to be accompanied by D.H. Dalrymple and H. Kable from the Walkerston and Eton Leagues respectively.<sup>72</sup> These delegates represented some 1,300 people who had

---

65. *Ibid.*, 15 November 1884.

66. *Ibid.*, 29 November 1884.

67. *Ibid.*, 15, 29 November 1884.

68. Lewis, *Ports of Queensland*, p. 58. Report of separation meeting at Walkerston, *MM*, 15 November 1884. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 16 August 1884.

69. *Ibid.*, 30 August 1884. D.H. Dalrymple to the Editor, *ibid.*, 20 August 1884.

70. Minutes of meeting 16 September 1884, *Mackay Planters' Association Minute Book*.

71. *MM*, 15, 29 November 1884.

72. *Ibid.*, 4 April 1885. Dalrymple was a chemist; E.S. Rawson a commission agent, importer and auctioneer, with interests in cattle and sugar; Kable a sugar farmer.

already signed a separation petition drafted by the Mackay League.<sup>73</sup>

Since 1882 Mackay had come into the fold, but Cooktown, previously a promoter of the movement, was now hesitant. Jealousy of that "unscrupulously selfish community", Townsville, restrained former supporters of separation.<sup>74</sup> Townsville had induced the government and A.S.N. Company to shift the terminus of the Normanton mail line from Cooktown to Townsville, and had recently confirmed its treachery by having the *Platypus* dredge transferred to Townsville before work on the Cooktown harbour was completed. The *Cooktown Independent* suspected that Townsville was using the separation movement merely to extract favours from the government.<sup>75</sup> The separation question could not be considered apart from attitudes to the towns which led the movement.

After several false starts a Separation League was finally established at Cooktown, but the extent of popular support was open to doubt. In November a public meeting called to discuss separation drew only seven or eight residents, perhaps because it clashed with a meeting of the Cooktown Railway League, but even among those present there was such diversity of opinion on separation that the meeting was inconclusive.<sup>76</sup> In December William Coote addressed another meeting at Cooktown when, the *Mackay Mercury* reported, equal votes were given for and against separation; the coolie issue was then raised and the meeting broke up in disorder.<sup>77</sup> Newspaper policy reflected divided opinion in Cooktown: the *Independent* opposed separation, the *Courier* favoured it;<sup>78</sup> the *Palmer Chronicle*, the organ of the miners, supported the movement.<sup>79</sup>

Even earlier than the Northern Separation League in Townsville, the *Port Denison Times* had seen in Griffith's labour policy an opportunity to advance the cause of separation.<sup>80</sup> In October the

---

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Cooktown Independent*, quoted by *PDT*, 6 September 1884.

75. *Cooktown Independent*, quoted by *PDT*, 13 September 1884.

76. *CC*, quoted by *MM*, 15 November 1884.

77. *Ibid.*, 10 December 1884.

78. *NQTTTS*, 20 July, 17 August 1885.

79. *Ibid.*, 29 June 1885.

80. *PDT*, 9, 16 August 1884.

chairman of the Bowen District Committee, W.F. Tucker, a very political clergyman, successfully introduced a motion in favour of separation. Speaking to the motion Tucker and R.H. Smith, who later became parliamentary representative of the district, referred to the labour issue as one point, among others, in favour of separation.<sup>81</sup> In December a Bowen Separation League was formed.<sup>82</sup> In November a meeting in Ayr in the Burdekin district formed a Separation League. Like several other separation meetings during this period, this had a distinctly anti-Griffith tone: at the conclusion of the meeting Griffith was burned in effigy.<sup>83</sup>

Not only coastal centres joined the movement. There was strong support for separation in Hughenden, a bustling pastoral town about 250 kilometres south-west of Charters Towers, centre for a large traffic in wool for London and fat stock for Townsville.<sup>84</sup> Dissatisfaction centred on the Griffith government's Land Act, which prevented pastoralists gaining freehold title to their land;<sup>85</sup> another important issue was government neglect to provide for a water conservation scheme, for this was a period of severe drought.<sup>86</sup> The *Hughenden Ensign* vigorously promoted the separation movement. Leagues were also formed, though with far less popular support, in the inland centres of Herberton<sup>87</sup> and Cloncurry. However those with interests in Cloncurry were restrained by the possibility that the government would soon build a railway from Cloncurry to Normanton, providing an outlet for the mineral fields.<sup>88</sup> By early 1885 there were leagues at Ingham and Port Douglas.

Delegates from twelve separation leagues met in Townsville from 9 April to 11 April 1885 to decide the future strategy of the movement

- 
81. *Ibid.*, 14, 18 October 1884. See also report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 2 August 1884; letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 9 August 1884.
82. *Ibid.*, 25 December 1884.
83. *MM*, 22 November 1884.
84. For a contemporary description of Hughenden, see de Satge, *Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, p. 367.
85. Extract from *Hughenden Ensign*, quoted by *PDT*, 1 November 1884. Letter to the Editor, *Hughenden Ensign*, quoted by *MM*, 1 November 1884. Report of public meeting in Hughenden, *NM*, 11 April 1885. Veritas, *Queensland Our Home* (Brisbane 1886), pp. 14-23.
86. *NM*, 15 April 1885.
87. See below p.171.
88. O. de Satge † S. Dormer 14 April 1887, de Satge Letterbook, December 1885 - January 1888. Mitchell Library.

and to systematize its organization.<sup>89</sup> The Convention decreed the "fusion of all local leagues into one distinct League, to be called the 'North Queensland Separation League', the affairs of which should be administered by a representative Council".<sup>90</sup> In order to perform essential functions of organization and correspondence, the Separation Council was empowered to speak and act on behalf of the whole body of separationists, directly representing local leagues. The Convention appointed five members of the Separation Council and, in addition, each local league was to nominate two delegates. Provision was made for delegates from outlying centres to initiate business and to vote by telegram or letter. The several leagues were constituted branches of the North Queensland Separation League, each of which was to control its own local affairs and popularize the movement in its district. The Council was expected to keep branch leagues fully informed of all communications, sent or received, with the Secretary of State, Governor of Queensland and agents of the League in London.<sup>91</sup>

Although members of the Separation Council were pledged to oppose the return to parliament of any candidate who was not a separationist,<sup>92</sup> the Convention resolved that the separatist organization would eschew party politics. The choice of a site for the future capital was also excluded from the functions of the Convention and of any organization recognized by it.<sup>93</sup> Dr Ahearne of Townsville and E.S. Rawson of Mackay, soon to depart for England on private business, were appointed to promote the interests of the movement in London.<sup>94</sup>

The main business of the Convention was to adopt a petition to the Crown praying for separation. Two drafts were before the Convention: one, drafted by William Coote, had been laid before the Townsville executive on 6 January; the other, which expressly listed the coolie issue among reasons for separation,<sup>95</sup> had been accepted by

89. See Appendix 3.

90. *Report of NQSC*, QSA GOV/A14, p. 162.

91. *PDT*, 18 April 1885.

92. *Ibid.*

93. *Report of NQSC*, as above, p. 162.

94. *Ibid.*

95. *MM*, 17 January 1885. See enclosure in Musgrave to Stanley 3 December 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 436.

the Mackay League on 17 January and subsequently received strong popular support in the district.<sup>96</sup> The Convention agreed at first to incorporate the Mackay draft in a letter to the Secretary of State as an appendix, but after further deliberation it was withdrawn by E.S. Rawson, the delegate charged with presenting it.<sup>97</sup> Coote's draft, with amendments requesting responsible government in the new colony and emphasizing the need for north Queensland to have a voice in any Federal Council which might be established to promote Australian federation, was adopted as the movement's official separation prayer.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless the approval given the Mackay petition in passing gave opponents of separation plausible grounds for alleging that the movement was inspired by the quest for coolies.<sup>99</sup> Separationists later tried to obscure this part of the proceedings, implying that the Mackay petition had been rejected by the Convention.<sup>100</sup>

The first meeting of the Separation Council on 13 April 1885 appointed officers - Thankfull Willmetts as president, Dr Joseph Ahearne and Rev. W.F. Tucker as vice-presidents, and William Coote as paid corresponding secretary. Two outstanding features of the Council's composition led to criticism that it did not truly represent the people of north Queensland. First, followers of the McIlwraith party formed a majority in the Council.<sup>101</sup> This reflected disinclination on the part of many Liberals to join while Griffith held office rather than any deliberate policy of excluding Liberals. Second, Townsville men dominated the Council,<sup>102</sup> which was the creature of a Convention which sat in Townsville, was directed by Townsville

- 
96. *NQTTTS*, 29 May 1885. The petition had received nearly 1,300 signatures. Which draft was prepared first became a matter of contention between separationists and their opponents.
97. L.W. Marsland (President of Charters Towers (Anti-Separation League), "The Anti-Separation Petition: Rejoinder to the Separationist Reply" *NM*, 4 June 1885.
98. *Report of NQSC*, as above, p. 162.
99. Marsland in *NM*, 4 June 1885. Letter to the Editor from Charters Towers, *BC*, 28 April 1885.
100. *NQTTTS*, 21 May 1885.
101. Report of public meeting, *TH*, 21 September 1889. See Appendix 4.
102. See Appendix 4.



T. WILLMETT (President of Separation Council)



W. KIRK (President of Northern Separation League)



delegates,<sup>103</sup> and never questioned the assumption that the headquarters of the movement would be fixed at Townsville. Because leagues in outlying centres found it convenient to delegate Townsville men to represent their interests in Council, half its members were from Townsville. These characteristics of the Separation Council would impair its effectiveness as an organizing body. In mid-1885, however, it was busily engaged arranging for copies of the petition and signature sheets to be printed and distributed so that the huge canvass for signatures could begin.

While separationists congratulated themselves on the achievements of the Convention the local opposition to separation also rallied its forces. The *Northern Miner's* Thadeus O'Kane was no less emphatic than in 1882 in condemning the movement, nor more discriminating in choosing weapons to attack it. Typical of O'Kane's style of argument was an article announcing the first sitting of the Townsville Convention, and stressing the unrepresentative composition of the conference:

the people of Townsville, with a few broken-down sugar planters and their slave driving managers, assisted by a lot of toadies, used-up commission agents, and flunkey played-out journalists are holding a Convention. 104

Yet by all accounts the "curious mixture of wit, abuse, sarcasm, argument, nonsense, and pure Billingsgate"<sup>105</sup> which filled the columns of the *Northern Miner* exerted great influence on popular opinion on the mining fields. Several themes recurred in the *Miner's* reports on the separation movement: the close link between the movement and the planters' campaign for black labour;<sup>106</sup> rivalry between

---

103. Of 22 delegates seven were from Townsville. See Appendix 3. Moreover, Townsville men played leading roles at the Convention - Willmett performed the duties of President and Coote was Corresponding Secretary of the Convention.

104. *NM*, 13 April 1885. Cf., *ibid.*, 3, 9, 16, 18 April 1885.

105. *NQTTTS*, 31 December 1885.

106. *NM*, 27 March, 9, 15 April, 15, 27 May, 2 June, 28 July, 12, 18 September 1885.

the mining and sugar industries;<sup>107</sup> identification of the movement with the northern arm of the McIlwraith political party;<sup>108</sup> and strong anti-Townsville sentiment.<sup>109</sup> Whether O'Kane reflected opinions already held in the community or created that opinion by his argument and rhetoric, it is impossible to say; it is certain, however, that large numbers of Charters Towers people took a view of the movement very similar to his.<sup>110</sup>

Having in early 1885 undertaken on his own initiative to stump north Queensland in the interests of separation, Hume Black, the member for Mackay, spoke in Charters Towers in April 1885, attracting an audience of 700. After Black had been heard O'Kane moved a resolution against separation, which was supported by fellow-Liberal E.D. Miles and carried by acclamation:

That in the opinion of this meeting the Separation movement originated in Mackay and Townsville, should be opposed by all true Queenslanders on the grounds that it is premature, not justified by the circumstances of the colony, and conceals the real motive of the agitation, namely - the introduction of Indian Coolies into Queensland. 111

The cordial reception accorded both O'Kane and his motion at this meeting showed that his view of the movement harmonized with local opinion.

Not entirely unproductive, Black's visit encouraged local supporters of separation to organize. The Charters Towers Separation League was formed under the auspices of Edward Ayton, John Deane and Robert Russell.<sup>112</sup> An Anti-Separation League followed almost immediately; its office bearers were all leading Liberals.<sup>113</sup> The division

107. *Ibid.*, 30 April, 27 August, 15 October 1885.

108. *Ibid.*, 9, 13, 29 April, 17 July, 16 November 1885.

109. *Ibid.*, 25 May, 4 June, 18, 28 September 1885.

110. E.g., report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 27 August 1885; letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 3 June 1885; letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 28 April 1885.

111. *Ibid.*, 15 April 1885. See also *ibid.*, 16 April 1885.

112. *Ibid.*, 18 April 1885. John Deane was appointed president, H.R. Rutherford vice-president. For biographical information on Deane, a mining magnate, see Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p. 111; Black, *North Queensland Pioneers*, p. 38.

113. *NM*, 18 April 1885. The original members of the Anti-Separation League were L.W. Marsland, T. O'Kane (newspaper proprietor), E.D. Miles (mill owner), R. Sayers (mining investor), J. Rixon, L. McLean, Gordon (mill owner), Sayers, Moore (mine manager), Tubles (publican), Jones (mine manager), Kirkbride (mine manager), Rappel. Marsland was appointed president. See Black, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-35.

between separationists and anti-separationists in Charters Towers was very much along party lines. O'Kane identified the supporters of the movement as "the Macrossan crowd here, headed by John Deane, Buckland, Ross and others", and urged Liberals to counteract their efforts to promote separation;<sup>114</sup> a meeting of the local Liberal party in April 1885 formally rejected separation.<sup>115</sup> Many Liberals believed that the movement was merely a vehicle for mobilizing opposition to the Griffith government, spreading discontent by trading on the popular catchword of "separation".<sup>116</sup> The prominence of McIlwraith supporters in the separatist organization both in Townsville<sup>117</sup> and Charters Towers, and the anti-Griffith tone of some early separation meetings, gave weight to this suspicion. In part because party allegiance had some basis in class - working class voters generally supporting the Liberal Party - the division on separation also coincided to a certain extent with class lines. Businessmen in Charters Towers were as a group more inclined towards separation than the working miners, although business interests were predominant in the Anti-Separation, as in the Separation, League.<sup>118</sup> When the Dalrymple Divisional Board, which was dominated by local businessmen including several prominent supporters of separation, received in May 1885 a copy of a petition drawn up by the Anti-Separation League, John Deane, president of the Separation League, moved for it to be "consigned to the waste-paper basket"; the motion was carried.<sup>119</sup>

The anti-separation petition emphasized that the separation movement had originated in Mackay, promoted by those interested in the sugar industry in the hope of obtaining black labour in the new colony; because the majority of north Queenslanders were antipathetic to coloured labour, the promoters had concealed their real motives.

---

114. *NM*, 13 April 1885. See also Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 421.

115. *NM*, 10 April 1885.

116. L.W. Marsland to Stanhope 31 August 1886, report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 450.

117. See Appendices 4 and 5.

118. See above f.n. 113.

119. *NM*, 2 June 1885. Municipal Councils and Divisional Boards tended to view separation more favourably than the communities they served. When the Separation Council requested local authorities to make official statements on separation, several boards in communities generally averse to separation, such as Georgetown and Einasleigh, declared in favour of the movement. See Appendix to *Report of NQSC*, QSA/A14, pp. 171-175.

Asserting that a very large majority of the inhabitants of northern Queensland opposed the movement, the petitioners argued that just administration, fair allocation of expenditure, the system of local government implemented in 1878 and 1879 and, above all, the telegraph had overcome the problems of inadequate representation and distance which separationists complained of. Arthur Rutledge, senior member for Kennedy and Attorney-General in Griffith's ministry, had helped to organize the petition, which was endorsed by 1,442 residents of Charters Towers, Ravenswood, Townsville and other towns, and he presented it to the Governor for despatch to the Secretary of State at the end of 1885.<sup>120</sup> However the social status of the signatories failed to impress Colonial Office personnel, one official remarking that a surgeon was the most distinguished person on the list and there was not a single signature of any prominent person.<sup>121</sup>

Inspired by the Charters Towers Anti-Separation League, opponents of the movement in Ravenswood held a meeting in May 1885 to obtain an expression of opinion against separation. This could have been called an anti-Townsville, as much as an anti-separation meeting, for several speakers expressed animosity towards "selfish Townsville". The argument that the cost of a new government was prohibitive was also raised. Motions against separation and in support of the counter petition were carried; a separation motion was rejected.<sup>122</sup> Anti-separation, anti-Townsville sentiment was again evident in Ravenswood at another raucous meeting in June, when emissaries from the Townsville organization were greeted with groans and hisses.<sup>123</sup> The counter movement also achieved notable successes among miners on the Fanning<sup>124</sup> and Woolgar<sup>125</sup> goldfields.

Firmly established at Charters Towers and extending its influence to other centres, the Anti-Separation League, backed by the *Northern*

---

120. Enclosure in Musgrave to Stanley 3 December 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 436-438.

121. Bramston, minute 29 January 1886, on despatch No. 94, CO234/46. Bramston had lived in Queensland with Robert Herbert, and therefore wrote with some local knowledge.

122. *NQTTTS*, 11 May 1885.

123. *NM*, 16 June 1885.

124. *Ibid.*, 18 March, 16 May 1885.

125. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 7 May 1885.



H.B. HUBERT



A. RUTLEDGE

*Miner*, called on the Liberals of Townsville to reinforce the counter movement.<sup>126</sup> H.B. Hubert, probably Townsville's foremost Griffith supporter, responded by inviting opponents of separation to a public meeting, which was advertised as an opportunity to "Protest against Separation and Coolie labour".<sup>127</sup> By this time feeling between the separationists and the "antis" were running high, the conflict embittered by inflammatory propaganda issuing mainly, though not exclusively, from the counter movement. How inflammatory was illustrated by the *Miner*'s editorial comment immediately prior to Hubert's meeting:

The Coolie gang are using immense efforts to upset the meeting. People who sympathise with murderers and man-stealers cannot be expected to stand at trifles. The "Hopeful" crew will be mustered and they would think nothing of cutting a few throats in defence of slavery. We hope Hubert will rally round him tonight the bone and sinew of Townsville. 128

Confirming in part O'Kane's warning, separationists packed the meeting, on the advice of Townsville editors who argued that a motion carried against separation in Townsville would mislead outsiders about local feeling.<sup>129</sup> Howled down when he attempted to speak Hubert walked out of the meeting, followed by perhaps 100 of his disciples. 37 anti-separationists stayed in the Town Hall to raise their hands against a motion for separation, but it was supported by an overwhelming majority of those present.<sup>130</sup> Hence the meeting, the only attempt to organize a counter movement in Townsville, was hailed in the separationist press as a victory for the movement.<sup>131</sup> For promoters of the counter movement it was a galling embarrassment, much of the blame for which was put down

---

126. *Ibid.* Letter from E.D. Miles (secretary of Anti-Separation League) 25 April 1885. Townsville Municipal Library.

127. *NQTTS*, 19 May 1885. Hubert had staunchly supported separation in 1882; by the time of the 1888 elections he had rejoined the movement, suggesting that in 1884-87 party considerations were paramount in his opposition to the movement.

128. *NM*, 18 May 1885. In December 1884 the mate and boatswain of the *Hopeful*, a blackbirder working off eastern New Guinea, had been convicted of illegal recruiting and murder. See Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p. 148. P.M. Mercer, *An Analysis of Racial Attitudes Towards Melanesians Expressed in the Queensland Legislative Assembly and Newspapers, 1877-92* (B.A. Hons. JCU 1972), pp. 3-4, p. 120.

129. *NQTTS*, 12 May 1885.

130. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1885.

131. *Ibid.*

to Hubert's lack of moral fortitude;<sup>132</sup> the decision to abandon the meeting criticized by all sides as a tactical blunder, Hubert's authority as a political leader was severely impaired. Anti-separationists, intimidated presumably by the strength of their adversaries, attempted no further public action in Townsville, although a section of the Liberal party remained for some time a bastion of anti-separationism - in fact this was the only identifiable group opposed to separation in Townsville.

The by-election in Townsville in 1885 to elect an additional member of parliament demonstrated that party politics and separatism were inseparable despite pious hopes expressed at the Convention. To avoid splitting the separationist vote, a joint conference of the Northern Separation League and Separation Council endorsed a separation candidate - W.V. Brown.<sup>133</sup> This went beyond the earlier resolution of the Convention merely to oppose all anti-separation candidates. It proved both unnecessary and divisive. All candidates were avowed separationists,<sup>134</sup> and supporting only one of them alienated many adherents of the movement.<sup>135</sup> The danger had become apparent as soon as the step was proposed: the secretary of the Northern Separation League, himself a Liberal, objected that the motion dragged in party politics since it was initiated by McIlwraithians.<sup>136</sup> The warning was not heeded.

Even the Liberal candidate, E.K. Russell,<sup>137</sup> declared in favour of separation, though he gave higher priority to Liberal policy; he emphasized the "slavery" issue, condemning the importation of coloured

---

132. Report of meeting, *ibid.* Extract from *Cairns Chronicle*, 23 May 1885, *NQTS*, 25 May 1885.

133. *NQTS*, 1 August 1885. Born in Melbourne in 1843, Brown came to Townsville in 1868 as manager of the local branch of the Bank of New South Wales. In 1879 he became a partner in Clifton and Aplin's shipping firm, which flourished under his management. *TH*, 6 May 1891.

134. The separatist organization had moved early, before nominations were finalized expecting that at least one anti-separationist would run.

135. Letter to the Editor, *NQTS*, 4 August 1885. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 6 August 1885.

136. *Ibid.*, 1 August 1885. The secretary, John Marshall, inevitably drew the retort that it was he who introduced party issues.

137. Russell, a wholesale merchant, was selected by Griffith himself after factions within the local Liberal Party had failed to agree.

labour.<sup>138</sup> Brown also spoke against the introduction of coolies, but his addresses to electors gave separation pride of place. Politically Brown was an unknown quantity. Though Liberals tended to identify him as a McIlwraithian during the campaign, he stood as an independent, contending that no member could advocate separation as effectively as a representative, like himself, unfettered by party ties.<sup>139</sup> Though directed against a Liberal in this instance, this argument also applied logically to followers of the McIlwraith party. However, when Griffith's obstruction of the separation movement was recalled, the argument was more specifically anti-Liberal. Nothing more clearly emphasized the difficulty of keeping the questions of separation and party separate than the position taken in support of Brown by the *North Queensland Telegraph*, usually pro-Griffith:

it would be nothing short of prostituting the cause to a secondary consideration did we assist to Parliament a gentleman pledged to support those who would defame the Separation party, those who have misrepresented the motives of the agitators, and those who would blacken the character of the Northern colonists. 140

To northern separationists Griffith was "*ex officio* the leader of the Anti-Separationists" and "their solitary mouthpiece".<sup>141</sup> Censure of Griffith was mixed with advocacy of separation, even at times by Liberals, but coming from avowed McIlwraithians these arguments appeared merely as special pleading for political allies. Backed by the *Bulletin*, the *Telegraph* and the separatist organization, Brown defeated Russell by a sizeable majority - 415:258.<sup>142</sup> The conduct of the campaign fostered suspicions among Liberals that separation had been used as a "stalking horse" for attacking Liberals and returning a McIlwraithian.<sup>143</sup>

---

138. *NQTTTS*, 2 November 1885.

139. *Ibid.*, 26 September 1885. After being returned to parliament, Brown usually voted with the Liberals.

140. *Ibid.*, 5 November 1885.

141. H. Finch-Hatton, "North Queensland Separation" *National Review*, Vol. 6, February 1886, p. 797.

142. *NQTTTS*, 11 November 1885.

143. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 4 August 1885. Russell's address, *ibid.*, 2 November 1885. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 5 November 1885. Cf., *MM*, 22 September 1887.



It also called attention to the preponderance of McIlwraith supporters in the Separation Council.<sup>144</sup>

Cairns offered more fertile ground than Townsville for the spread of the counter movement. Cairns had placed itself in the anti-separation camp in November 1884, when a public meeting was organized by William Coote to discuss the separation question. R.A. Kingsford, soon to become the town's first Mayor, and Thomas Swallow of Hambleton sugar plantation approved the movement; but when a resolution in favour of separation was proposed, W.D. Hobson, general merchant and commission agent, moved an amendment that the time for separation had not yet arrived.<sup>145</sup> Fear of domination by Townsville lay behind Hobson's arguments against separation: asserting that Townsville espoused separation only in order to become capital, Hobson predicted that Cairns' rival, which was currently trying to capture its trade, would control the new parliament. His crowning argument was still more pragmatic. Hobson reasoned that it was in the interests of Cairns to uphold rather than disturb the political status quo since work was soon to commence on the Cairns-Herberton railway: "There was £600,000 voted to be spent here and in the present state of affairs he did not think separation would be beneficial".<sup>146</sup> Hobson's amendment was carried by a large majority.

Nevertheless those who supported separation at the meeting decided to form a league, and in December R.A. Kingsford was appointed as its president, T.C. Allen hon. secretary.<sup>147</sup> Local sugar-planting interests were well represented on the Committee: of twelve foundation members, eight had investments in sugar lands in the district.<sup>148</sup> From this

---

144. *NM*, 16 November 1885.

145. *PDT*, 6 December 1884. Hambleton was the principal plantation in the Cairns district, employing, according to W.R.O. Hill, 400 Pacific Islanders. W.R.O. Hill, *Forty-Five Years' Experiences in North Queensland, 1861-1905* (Brisbane 1907), p. 89.

146. *PDT*, 6 December 1884.

147. D. Jones, *Trinity Phoenix: A History of Cairns and District* (Cairns 1976), p. 234.

148. The Committee members were R.A. Kingsford, T.C. Allen, G. Adams, J. Jamieson, F.T. Wimble, E.B. Loridan, M. de Tourris, E.A. Milford, T. Swallow, E. Torazzi, E. Boden and G. Burns. *Ibid.* Kingsford, Allen, Adams, Jamieson, Wimble, Loridan, de Tourris, and Swallow had invested in sugar. *Ibid.*, passim.

small beginning the league grew so that by March 1886 it was 90 strong; the members then owned 200 square kilometres of land among them, showing that the planter influence, initially strong, had not waned.<sup>149</sup> The *Cairns Post*, edited by T.C. Allen, the secretary of the league, favoured separation; it also supported Pacific Island labour.<sup>150</sup>

However separationists were distinctly in the minority. On the other hand the counter movement, though it certainly reached Cairns, aroused little popular enthusiasm either, probably because the calibre of its promoters left much to be desired. The protagonist of anti-separationism in Cairns was Archibald Meston, a local politician - an egotistical, often impecunious opportunist who gradually fell in public estimation after his arrival in Cairns in 1882.<sup>151</sup> Prior to Hubert's abortive anti-separation meeting in Townsville, 42 residents of Cairns asked Meston to represent them at the meeting, but he was unable to attend.<sup>152</sup> Meston's lieutenant, Peter Aldridge, took his place. By his "flexibility" on the question, Aldridge later showed himself to be a mercenary in the field of separation, offering his services as a professional agitator to both sides in turn.<sup>153</sup>

In Cairns attitudes to separation were determined by the vital need to establish railway communication with the interior. Cairns

149. *CP*, 4 March 1886.

150. *Ibid.*, 14 May, 18 June, 16 July 1885, 22 April 1886. The *Cairns Chronicle* also advocated separation after A. Meston resigned as its editor in September 1885.

151. Jones, *op.cit.*, pp. 153-154, 177-178, 187-189, 193, 198, 203-204, 228-229, 240-241. Meston to McIlwraith 27 November 1885, McIlwraith Papers, p. 1075. Meston to McIlwraith 10 December 1885, *ibid.*, p. 1084. Meston to McIlwraith 20 August 1887, *ibid.*, p. 1696. Meston to McIlwraith 9 June 1892, *ibid.*, p. 2624. In September 1885 Meston was chairman of the election committee for C. Lumley-Hill, Griffith's candidate for Cook. *CP*, 10 September 1885. Although Meston was to stand for the Musgrave as a Liberal, and resigned the editorship of the pro-McIlwraith *Cairns Chronicle* in order to do so, he told McIlwraith only weeks later that when the time came for campaigning for the next election McIlwraith would find him "taming the fierce democracy with floods of the 'fire lava of eloquence'" in support of McIlwraith's party. Meston to McIlwraith 10 December 1885, McIlwraith Papers, p. 1084. Meston had actually joined the separation league in Townsville in 1882. *NM*, 22 July 1882.

152. *CP*, 28 May 1885.

153. E. Reddin to the Editor, *NQTTS*, 6 August 1886.

had been founded in 1876 as an outlet for the Hodgkinson goldfields more convenient than Cooktown. In the following year an easier route was discovered from the fields to Port Douglas, to which much of the trade of Cairns was diverted.<sup>154</sup> Cairns was saved from extinction by the extension of sugar growing to the district during the sugar boom of the early 1880s,<sup>155</sup> only to stagnate again when the boom subsided. The initiative for a railway to the coast from the Herberton tin fields, which had been opened in 1880, came from Herberton but when the government proved amenable Cairns, Port Douglas and, belatedly, Mourilyan Harbour entered into a bitter struggle for selection as the terminal port:<sup>156</sup> the railway promised a secure base for future prosperity to the port chosen as the terminus. Consequently there was bitter competition at the time the separation movement was revived. Cairns was finally selected in September 1885, but the decision could have been reversed until building was well underway; moreover each short section of line required individual approval. Since delay would retard the development of the town, Cairns during this period was heavily dependent upon the government in Brisbane. Having tirelessly courted government officials and politicians since 1882, the people of Cairns considered it injudicious to countenance separation, which the Griffith government so strenuously opposed.<sup>157</sup>

- 
154. J.W. Collinson, "The Rise and Decline of Port Douglas" *JRHSQ*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1951, pp. 559-564. From 1877 to 1879 the value of exports from Cairns fell from £184,324 to £2,328 and imports from £24,108 to £812. G.C. Bolton, "The Founding of Cairns" *JRAHS*, Vol. 45, part 1, 1959, p. 34.
155. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. J.W. Collinson, "The Origin and Growth of the Sugar Industry in the Cairns District" *JRHSQ*, Vol. 3, No. 4, February 1945, pp. 260-264.
156. Jones, *Trinity Phoenix*, pp. 176-204. S. Swanwick (ed.), *The Premier's "Fairplay"; or, How Cairns Got the Railway* (Brisbane 1886). Mitchell Library.
157. C.P. Anderson to the Editor, *ibid.*, 21 May 1885. T.C. Allen to the Editor, *ibid.*, 4 March 1886. Macrossan accused the government of allowing the railway to dangle before the Cairns and Port Douglas constituencies to ensure their allegiance to the Liberal Party. *QPD*, Vol. 46, 1885, p. 676. Nevertheless Port Douglas, unlike Cairns, strongly supported separation from the time of the movement's revival in late 1884. Perhaps the fact that the first indication that Cairns would be chosen came in early 1884 influenced residents of Port Douglas. Certainly after the decision was finalized, there was strong resentment against Griffith and his government. E.g., Swanwick (ed.), *op.cit.*

Consequently the railway dominated discussion of the separation question in Cairns for almost a decade, until the line finally reached Mareeba on the Atherton Tableland in 1893.<sup>158</sup>

In addition, there was animosity towards Townsville which was thought to be motivated solely by ambitions to be capital of the new colony. If separation was postponed, Cairns with its railway was expected in time to surpass Townsville, when it could assert its own claims to be capital with more hope of success.<sup>159</sup> Competition with Townsville for the trade of the Etheridge district heightened rivalry between the two towns.<sup>160</sup> For Cairns, and to a lesser extent Herberton, these issues dominated the campaign for the Musgrave election in late 1885. As well as giving Townsville an extra member, the Additional Members Act of 1885 had created the large inland electorate of Musgrave, extending from the Cairns-Herberton district to Ayr. Cairns opposed Robert Philp's candidature because as chairman of the Townsville Chamber of Commerce he advocated a railway line from Hughenden to Georgetown, which would have tied the Etheridge into the railway system based on Townsville.<sup>161</sup> The election campaign evoked open hostility to Townsville, and since Townsville was closely associated with the separation movement even former supporters in Cairns grew cautious towards it. Professing to be staggered by Townsville's blatant attempt at aggrandizement, the *Cairns Post* counselled delay, to allow "other centres" to muster strength to challenge Townsville and prevent its dominating the new colony.<sup>162</sup> Nevertheless Philp, on a separation platform, was returned for Musgrave with a majority of over two to one, drawing support mainly from the southern portion of the

---

158. The line did not reach Herberton until 1910, the depression of the 1890s having for a time halted its progress.

159. C.P. Anderson to the Editor, *CP*, 21 May 1885.

160. Townsville's parliamentary member, Municipal Council and Chamber of Commerce were pressing for a branch line to Georgetown from the nearest point on the Hughenden line. This created ill-feeling against Townsville at Georgetown and Herberton as well as Cairns. *Ibid.*, 29 October, 19 November 1885. There was also competition for the highly-prized services of the *Platypus* dredge, for harbour improvement was considered urgent in view of commencement of work on the Cairns railway. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 17 December 1885. Report of public meeting, *Telegraph* 12 August 1886, CO 881/7 (confidential prints), Australian No. 114, p. 77.

161. *CP*, 26 November, 24 December 1885.

162. *Ibid.*, 19 November, 31 December 1885.

electorate.

In Herberton, at the other end of the proposed railway, similar considerations prevailed, as reactions to Hume Black's proselytizing speech on separation in March 1885 showed. Charles O'Loan, a member of the Tinaroo Divisional Board, urged residents to join the separation movement at once, but the reaction of W. Bonar, chairman of the local Progress Association, was more typical, indicating a constant constraint on Herberton's attitude to separation: Bonar was emphatic that if there was separation Herberton would have no railway for at least ten years.<sup>163</sup> The future of the Tinaroo mineral fields was thought to depend on cheap and speedy communication with the coast: without it, mining would not be sufficiently profitable to attract the necessary developmental capital. The cost of a new government, on top of interest payable on existing railways, would force suspension of building on the costly Cairns-Herberton line for at least a decade; long before then the Tinaroo field would have been deserted.<sup>164</sup>

Nevertheless in April 1885 about 40 residents of the district, mainly representing business interests, met to form a separation league. An executive committee including the chairman of the Tinaroo Divisional Board, J.A.J. Macleod, was chosen, with Charles O'Loan as chairman.<sup>165</sup> The League met for only a short period,<sup>166</sup> probably because local opposition to separation was so strong.

Following the lead of Charters Towers, an Anti-Separation Committee was formed in Herberton in June 1885.<sup>167</sup> Anti-separation agitators were active in the surrounding tin fields, and the counter petition attracted many signatures.<sup>168</sup> The *Wild River Times* supported the counter movement, associating separation with coolie labour.<sup>169</sup> The *Herberton Advertiser*

163. *Herberton Advertiser*, 1 April 1885.

164. *Ibid.*, 11 December 1885.

165. *Ibid.*, 15 April 1885. The members were C. O'Loan (chairman), D. Garvey (secretary), W.C. Little (treasurer), H.C. Wilson, C.O. Garbutt, C.G. Hurrey, J. Collins, J.A.J. Macleod, P. Casey, C.M. Heath. Macleod had been involved in early separationist activity in Bowen. See above pp. 48-50.

166. *Ibid.*, 13 May 1885.

167. *Ibid.*, 19 June 1885. The members were J.P. Newell (president), Stansfield (secretary), W. Bonar, Archer, White, Cairns, Dr Myers, Dr Bowkett.

168. *Ibid.*, 24 July 1885.

169. Extract from *Wild River Times*, *NQTS*, 25 May 1885.

was unmoved by the black labour cry, but took what it described as "a common-sense, local view of the subject":<sup>170</sup> the problems of distant government, neglect of the north and unequal expenditure of funds were real, but such was the overriding importance of communication with the coast, that only when the railway reached Herberton should its inhabitants take up separation.<sup>171</sup> In Herberton as in Cairns, the *Brisbane Courier's* warning that loan expenditure in the north might be curtailed until the separation question was resolved caused great consternation.<sup>172</sup>

By late 1885 there was evidence of defection among anti-separationists in Charters Towers, the head-quarters of the counter movement; even O'Kane's attitude to separation gradually mellowed! Several factors contributed to this change: dissatisfaction with certain policies of the Griffith government; the combined effect of repeated assurances from separationists that black labour was not the basis of the movement and growing confidence in the ability of the anti-coolie party to carry the point in a new northern parliament; and finally, recognition that the separation movement was not a political ploy to discredit the Liberal government.

The first show of general dissatisfaction with the Griffith government followed the decision to tax imported machinery, including mining machinery. Facing budgetary problems because their Land Act produced less revenue than expected, the government placed a 5% *ad valorem* duty on machinery.<sup>173</sup> In the House Isidor Lissner, junior member for Kennedy, expressed the general northern reaction when he complained that the tax was imposed to benefit the machinery - manufacturers in Brisbane and Maryborough at the expense of consumers.<sup>174</sup> At once the newly-established Charters Towers Stock and Mining Exchange prevailed on the Mayor to call a public indignation meeting. Significantly it was L.W. Marsland, a leading member of the Charters Towers Liberal League and president of the Anti-Separation League, who moved the principal resolution protesting against the duty.<sup>175</sup>

---

170. *Herberton Advertiser*, 11 December 1885.

171. *Ibid. Ibid.*, 18 December 1885.

172. *Ibid.*, 25 April 1885.

173. Dickson (Colonial Treasurer), *QPD*, Vol. 46, 1885, p. 367, p. 380.

174. *Ibid.*, p. 478.

175. *NM*, 26 August 1885.

According to O'Kane the imposition of the duty showed that Griffith was too orthodox a politician to grasp the real solution to the problem of taxation, as posited by Henry George - a tax on the use of the public lands.<sup>176</sup> Georgian doctrine had formed the basis of the bill prepared in 1884 by C.B. Dutton, Griffith's Minister for Lands,<sup>177</sup> but the bill had been emasculated in committee by Griffith under pressure from conservative, land-holding supporters, valued defectors from the McIlwraith party.<sup>178</sup> To this mistake O'Kane traced the financial difficulties which now made the unpopular import duty necessary. The Griffith government had also disappointed radical Liberals in Charters Towers by laying aside the Payment of Members, Triennial Parliaments and Local Government Act Amendment Bills.<sup>179</sup> Growing dissatisfaction with the government gave a stimulus to local separation agitation.<sup>180</sup>

However, fear of inundation by coolies still made many standoffish; the propaganda of the counter movement had closely linked separation and coolie labour. Proponents of separation missed no opportunity to deny this accusation.<sup>181</sup> The Separation Council reminded sceptics that the popularly elected parliament of the new colony, in which the miners' voice would be

---

176. *Ibid.*, 9, 21 September 1885. Henry George in *Progress and Poverty* had advocated nationalization of the land and a Single Tax on its use.

177. For Dutton's views on the land question, see C.B. Dutton, Memorandum, 1884. Mitchell Library.

178. *NM*, 24 October, 19 November 1885. For a discussion of the provisions of the Land Act, the concessions it made to squatters, and the depressing effects it caused on government revenue, see "Financier", "Financial Result of Eighteen Months of Griffith Administration" *Queensland Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2, September 1885, pp. 105-107.

179. W.H. Doonan to the Editor, *NM*, 11 December 1885. Another important issue at Charters Towers was government neglect to provide for a scheme to conserve the waters of the Burdekin and its tributaries for irrigating the whole area, a project which remains central to the case of the present north Queensland new state movement. *Ibid.*, 2, 14 September, 8 December 1885.

180. *Ibid.*, 22 September 1885. *Townsville Bulletin*, 2 September 1885, quoted *ibid.*, 3 September 1885.

181. E.g., Coote to the Editor, *ibid.*, 17 September 1885. Editorial on counter petition, *NQTS*, 11 May 1885.

strong, would decide policy on coloured labour.<sup>182</sup> In September 1885 the Charters Towers Separation League asked the Northern Separation League for an assurance that it would not promote the introduction of coloured labour into the new colony. After several speeches in vehement opposition to coolies, a resolution was passed unanimously:

The members of this Executive, speaking on behalf of the members of this League, emphatically deny that they are favourable to the introduction of coolies or any other form of colored labor into the proposed new colony, and further state that no action of this Executive or League can be construed into favouring such a view. 183

Circulation of the resolution had an immediate effect in Charters Towers. O'Kane relented and joined the movement; after signing the petition he stood with it in the street urging passers-by to follow his example.<sup>184</sup> Explaining his conversion he said there was no inconsistency, for when contesting an election in Bowen four years earlier he had declared that if the seat of government was not shifted to a central place he would adopt territorial separation as a final resort.

The apprehension of a Coolie invasion and of Northern Queensland being turned into a slave state has, since then, caused us to oppose the movement for Separation; but that apprehension has been removed, in a great degree, by the declaration of the Townsville Central Separation League [sic]. 185

---

182. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 385.

183. *NQTTTS*, 7 October 1885. See also *ibid.*, 6 October 1885. A similar declaration was made in early November 1885 after several speakers at a meeting in Sydney linked separation with the need for coloured labour. The Separation Council telegraphed to Sydney: "Re report in *Herald*, all Northern Leagues and Council pledged not to support colored labour. If you want that as a condition of assistance, cannot accept it". Organized by Dr Ahearne in conjunction with the Sydney Chamber of Commerce in order to form a North Queensland Separation Committee, this meeting had attracted about 50 people with interests in north Queensland. Despite the Council's admonition, the Sydney Committee continued its work, with James Burns of Burns, Philp and Co. as president, and Sir Edward Strickland and L.F. Sachs as vice-presidents. *Ibid.*, 4, 7, 18 November 1885.

184. *NM*, 20 November 1885.

185. *Ibid.*



Opposition to coolies in Britain and in southern colonies were extra safeguards against their introduction into north Queensland, he believed.<sup>186</sup>

The views of Isidor Lissner, the McIlwraithian member for Kennedy, underwent a similar change. Strongly anti-coolie, Lissner had rejected separation in early 1885;<sup>187</sup> by the end of the year he had publicly declared his conversion to separation<sup>188</sup> and was advocating a northern parliamentary party to press for it. As he explained in the House:

[In early 1885] I was neither a separationist nor an anti-one. I believed in the same old clap-trap, that at the bottom of the movement was this everlasting nigger. I think the gentlemen now on the Treasury benches have had some very fair innings out of this nigger, and it is just about time to give the poor nigger a spell...If we get separation, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the voting power of the North is sufficient guarantee to our parental Government that we will not have black labour. 189

By 1886 protestations from separationists that they espoused no party<sup>190</sup> had eroded the belief that the movement was engineered by McIlwraithians to embarrass the Griffith government. Mollified by the "satisfactory explanation offered by the promoters of the separation movement in answer to the charges of political motives made against them", the Charters Towers Anti-Separation League disintegrated - even before the counter petition was sent to the Governor.<sup>191</sup> Except perhaps for one or two members of the large committee who may have signed it individually as members of the public, the counter petition was not signed by the president or committee of the League which had originally organized it.<sup>192</sup>

The duty on machinery a constant irritant Griffith put additional strains on his popularity in Charters Towers when in December 1886, at the height of a speculative mining boom, he instructed the

186. *Ibid.* Cf., *ibid.*, 7 December 1885. The exception was South Australia.

187. *Ibid.*, 15 April, 20 October 1885.

188. *Ibid.*, 29 December 1885.

189. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 559.

190. E.g., Coote to the Editor, *NM*, 17 September 1885. Separationists pointed out that the movement was begun in Townsville in 1882 when McIlwraith was in power.

191. Marsland to Stanhope 31 August 1886, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 450.

192. *Ibid.*

Agent-General in London to arrange for publication of a warning against "wild cat" ventures in Queensland:

Press telegrams report attempts are being made to float in England several gold mining companies, Queensland. There is reason to fear some not altogether *bona fide*. Caution should be given to investors. 193

People in Charters Towers attributed the following slump in mining investment to the government's failure to name the suspect companies.<sup>194</sup> Recent converts in Charters Towers took this opportunity to announce their commitment to the separation movement. At a public meeting Marsland said that the actions of the government during the past year had persuaded him to reverse his opinion of separation. He moved:

That in consequence of the hostile action of the Brisbane Government against the interests of North Queensland generally, and particularly by the imposition of the unjust tax on mining and other machinery, combined with the recent attempt to deprecate Northern mining property the sympathies of this meeting are now entirely in favour of Territorial Separation. 195

After Lissner and O'Kane had also approved the movement, the motion was carried, a "forest of hands" raised in favour.<sup>196</sup>

These notable conversions partly reflected, partly produced a change of opinion favourable to separation in Charters Towers.<sup>197</sup>

The separation petition, which up to mid-September 1885 had been signed by a total of 23 people in the town,<sup>198</sup> was endorsed by another 564 signatures in the period to December 1885.<sup>199</sup> Opinion was now more

193. Extract from *Economist*, *TH*, 8 January 1887.

194. Report of public meeting, *NM*, 22 December 1886. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p. 127. Griffith's telegram to the Agent-General identified the Mount Morgan West and Electron Companies as suspect, but this part of the telegram was not published, probably for legal reasons. See *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 2, p. 935.

195. *NM*, 22 December 1886.

196. *TH*, 25 December 1886.

197. Letter to the Editor from Charters Towers, *NQTTS*, 30 November 1885.

198. *NM*, 16 September 1885.

199. Appendix A, NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 439.

evenly divided,<sup>200</sup> though miners and working men still formed a solid core of the counter movement.<sup>201</sup> As Thadeus O'Kane, who had done most to arouse their suspicions, acknowledged, it was difficult to erase the impression created by the counter movement that the separation agitation was merely a planters' move to secure black labour.<sup>202</sup> In February 1887 a successful anti-separation meeting was conducted,<sup>203</sup> and Rutledge organized another anti-separation petition, emphasizing again that the new colony would probably be "overrun with coolies and South Sea Islanders, to the entire detriment of the working classes". This was signed by 2,065 inhabitants of Charters Towers and the electoral district of Kennedy.<sup>204</sup>

O'Kane was a welcome convert because of his acknowledged influence on the mining fields, but some of his ideas on separation did not accord well with those of other leading separationists. Conservative in outlook, they were content to press for separation alone, envisaging a new colony with virtually the same political system as the old.<sup>205</sup> For O'Kane, on the other hand, one of the attractions of separation was the opportunity it would give to experiment with radical political notions including nationalization and non-alienation of the land; taxes on property, capital and income; republican institutions, and especially eliminating the upper chamber and the Governor.<sup>206</sup> Moreover, O'Kane retained an embarrassing fondness for provincial councils as a form of local government, which in 1886 was promoted as an alternative to separation by a strange alliance of the Rockhampton Provincial Councils League, Archibald Meston of Cairns, the *Brisbane Courier* and

---

200. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *ibid.*, p. 421.

201. *Ibid.* NM, 7 December 1885. Report of anti-separation meeting, *ibid.*, 7 February 1887.

202. *Ibid.*, 7 December 1885.

203. *Ibid.*, 7 February 1887.

204. Musgrave to Holland 4 March 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 436.

205. E.g., extract from *Charters Towers Herald*, NQTS, 23 October 1885.

206. NM, 21, 23, 25, 30 November, 2 December 1885.

O'Kane.<sup>207</sup> Other sources of friction were O'Kane's continual criticism of arguments for separation presented in Townsville newspapers; his disparagement of the London Committee and especially its president, the aristocratic Harold Finch-Hatton; his insistence that separation would have to be sought in the Queensland parliament rather than from the Crown as orthodox separatist ideology dictated; and his advocacy of an obstructionist northern party in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>208</sup> Though a welcome convert, O'Kane proved to be a highly disruptive element within the separation movement, emphasizing by contrast the conservatism of the movement as a whole.

In Townsville also there was a significant swing of opinion among Liberals in late 1885, leading to the formation of the Ross Island Separation League. A predominantly working class suburb where railwaymen and wharf labourers lived close to their places of work, Ross Island was a stronghold of the Liberal Party. In January 1886 Edward Reddin, Liberal editor of the *North Queensland Telegraph and Territorial Separationist* and member of the Northern Separation League, convened a public meeting in Ross Island to consider separation.<sup>209</sup> The president of the Ross Island Liberal Association voiced a common Liberal view of separation, giving precedence to party considerations: he admitted that there seemed to be a general desire for separation but affirmed that he had every confidence in the Griffith government as the only ministry that had attempted to do justice to the north.<sup>210</sup> In contrast Reddin, though also a Liberal, subordinated party issues to separation: he said he had no desire to cast reflections on the government, but, no matter how generous the south might become, northerners would persist in demanding separation which alone would give them control over their destinies. A Committee including several well-known Liberals was elected.<sup>211</sup> The efforts of the Ross Island

---

207. E.g., *ibid.*, 7 December 1885. O'Kane drew much of his inspiration on this from the Victorian Decentralization League, which was especially active at this time. *Ibid.*, 9 November, 15, 18 December 1885.

208. *Ibid.*, 7, 29 December 1885.

209. *NQTTTS*, 5 January 1886.

210. *Ibid.* William Martin was president of the Ross Island Liberal Association.

211. *Ibid.* The Committee were E. Reddin (president), J.A. Richardson, T. Page, J.C. Martin, H. Martin, Brown, Piegrome, Wales, Collinson.

Separation League accelerated the swing towards separation among Townsville Liberals,<sup>212</sup> although a core of the local Liberal Party continued to regard it from a party perspective.

At the same time there was a growing acceptance of separation in mining centres. In late 1885 leagues were formed at Georgetown, where resentment at Griffith's machinery duty was as strong as in Charters Towers,<sup>213</sup> Ravenswood, and Cumberland, a mining centre on the Etheridge field.<sup>214</sup> Nevertheless it was doubtful whether the leagues represented majority opinion on these fields. In the Etheridge and Burke districts separation was not a pressing issue; plans for a separation meeting in Normanton in May 1885 lapsed for want of interest.<sup>215</sup> Normanton held aloof from the movement because of jealousy of Townsville,<sup>216</sup> although there was no direct competition for trade between the two, and because, like Georgetown, Croydon and Cloncurry, it had hopes of a railway from the Queensland government.<sup>217</sup> It was only when the editor despaired of getting a railway to the Croydon goldfield that the *Norman Chronicle* even considered the advantages of separation,<sup>218</sup> although the *Carpentaria Times* supported the movement from late 1884.<sup>219</sup> In early 1886 the member for Burke, Edward Palmer, aligned himself with separationists,<sup>220</sup> organizing the ceremonial presentation of the separation petition to the Administrator of the Government in June.<sup>221</sup> Palmer had earlier obtained a return detailing revenue and expenditure

---

212. *Ibid.*, 6 May 1886.

213. *NM*, 17 September 1885.

214. *Report of NQSC*, QSA GOV/A14, p. 163. *NQTTTS*, 27 February 1886.

215. *NM*, 21 May 1885.

216. *TH*, 17 July 1886.

217. *NQTTTS*, 18 February 1887. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p. 183.

218. *Norman Chronicle*, 3 February 1887, quoted by *NQTTTS*, 18 February 1887. The Normanton-Croydon line was approved by parliament in November 1888 and opened in July 1891.

219. *Territorial Separation*, p. 14.

220. Palmer to the Editor, *Hughenden Ensign*, quoted by *NQTTTS*, 15 February 1886. For biographical information on Palmer, see Black, *North Queensland Pioneers*, p. 79.

221. *NQTTTS*, 30 June 1886.

on public works in the Burke electoral district in the period 1864-83, which showed a gross discrepancy between £233,009 collected and £17,113 expended.<sup>222</sup> Yet the Burke district remained, on the whole, averse to separation. In mid-1886 an anti-separation meeting was successful; only eight people voted in favour of separation.<sup>223</sup> In January 1887 an anti-separation petition signed by 513 residents of Normanton and the Burke district was sent to the Secretary of State.<sup>224</sup>

Another area in which the drift of opinion was in favour of separation was the Winton-Boulia district, which lay just south of the proposed new boundary of approximately the 22nd parallel of latitude. In early 1887, when many believed that separation was imminent, inhabitants of this district expressed a desire to be included in the new colony because of established trade links with Townsville.<sup>225</sup> A meeting in Winton had declared against separation in mid-1885, but black labour was the only issue discussed; the resolution was effectively little more than a protest against alien labour.<sup>226</sup> In early 1887 the Winton *Herald* began to express fears that the northern colony would raise a border tariff between Winton and its supply centre of Townsville; longer distances between Winton and ports in southern Queensland would lead to delays and higher costs.<sup>227</sup> In February a large public meeting formed the Winton Separation League,<sup>228</sup> which gave the Separation Council authority to draft a petition to the Queen praying for the district's inclusion in the new colony.<sup>229</sup> The petitioners requested that the southern border of the new colony meet the South Australian border at 23 degrees south rather than 22 degrees, adding an area of about 47,000 square kilometres and a pop-

---

222. *QV&P*, 1883-84, Vol. 1, pp. 1241-1243.

223. Mayor of Normanton to Griffith 29 July 1886, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 450.

224. Musgrave to Holland (later Knutsford) 11 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, pp. 419-420. See also Appendix 6.

225. Winton had originated as a depot of the Townsville firm of Burns Philp. W.H. Corfield, *Reminiscences of Queensland, 1862-1899* (Brisbane 1921), p. 75. Perry, *Memoirs of Philp*, p. 112.

226. Winton correspondent to the Editor, *Hughenden Ensign*, quoted by *NM*, 4 June 1885.

227. Extract from *Herald*, *NQTTTS*, 7 February 1887.

228. *Ibid.*, 11 February 1887. W.H. Corfield was chairman of the League. For biographical details, see Corfield, *op.cit.*

229. *NQTTTS*, 19 February 1887.

ulation of about 700 to the proposed colony. The main argument was the injury which a border tariff would cause, since "nearly all the commercial and trading traffic of the district in the neighbourhood of Winton even now goes by way of Townsville, and comes from it, and ...the commercial interests of the residents are intimately connected with that port".<sup>230</sup> The closest alternative port, Keppel Bay, was 335 kilometres further than Townsville. As for Boulia, its natural outlet was Normanton or Burketown rather than any port in southern Queensland; on this ground it was argued that Boulia also should be attached to the northern colony.<sup>231</sup>

After despatching the separation petition in June 1886 northern separationists complacently awaited news of success. So confident were they of a favourable decision from the Secretary of State that questions such as the name of the new colony and the acceptability of various public men as Governor were debated.<sup>232</sup> The question of the new capital also arose, and with it much bitterness. It was generally assumed that the Crown would appoint a venue for the first sitting of parliament, which would then designate a permanent capital. In addition to the prestige, any town selected as capital would benefit from expenditure on public buildings, greater demand and hence higher prices for land, increased employment and perhaps an influx of population to staff the civil service. Competition for these advantages was intense. The Convention's resolution to avoid the question of the capital, to concentrate on securing separation and leave subsequent decisions to other authorities, had proved too sanguine.

The Reverend W.F. Tucker raised the issue in the *Port Denison Times*, stressing the danger of placing the capital in a strategically-vulnerable seaport, and advocating instead an inland site on the Bowen River.<sup>233</sup> The *Herberton Advertiser* agreed that a coastal sit-

230. Corfield to Holland 7 May 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 440.

231. *Ibid.*, p. 441.

232. In the Separation Council R.B. Taylor suggested "Alexandria", J.T. French of the Cairns League preferred simply "North Queensland". *NQTTTS*, 23 October 1886. Other suggestions included Carpentaria, Torresia and Coralia. *Ibid.*, 25 October 1886. See also *ibid.*, 27 October 1886.

233. *Ibid.*, 9 February 1887. Tucker was vice-president of the Separation Council and president of the Bowen Separation League.

uation was out of the question but considered the Bowen district too far south; reasoning that a fairly central position, good land, good water, and a mild climate were essential prerequisites, the *Advertiser* pronounced that this combination occurred only on the Atherton Tableland between Herberton and the coast.<sup>234</sup> John T. French, secretary of both the Cairns Progress Association and Cairns Separation League, produced a map purporting to show, "by an ingenious application of the compasses", that the "centre" of north Queensland was on the Atherton Tableland within 50 kilometres of Cairns.<sup>235</sup> Centrality was a major consideration in assessing sites for the capital, but it was not the only factor. The *North Queensland Telegraph* in Townsville pointed out in disparaging tones that if central position were the only consideration Georgetown would be the capital. It was more likely, it went on, that accessibility would also be taken into account,<sup>236</sup> and here Townsville, terminus of a trunk railway to the interior, came into its own. Complaining that Cooktown was not even considered in J.T. French's manifesto, the *Cooktown Independent* asserted its claims in terms of centrality.<sup>237</sup>

Townsville was undoubtedly the most closely watched contender for metropolitan honours. R.H. Smith as chairman of the Bowen District Council sounded out the Cairns Chamber of Commerce on the possibility of concerted action to prevent Townsville becoming capital.<sup>238</sup> The *Northern Miner* was adamant that unsanitary Townsville on "malarious" Ross Creek, exposed on the seaboard to naval attack, was not fit to be capital; O'Kane urged local separationists to establish a permanent committee in London to promote the claims of Charters Towers.<sup>239</sup> Though certainly no less ambitious than residents

---

234. Extract from *Herberton Advertiser*, *ibid.*

235. *Ibid.*, 7 March 1887.

236. *Ibid.*

237. Extract from *Cooktown Independent*, *ibid.*, 14 March 1887.

238. *Ibid.*, 12 March 1887.

239. *NM*, 24 November 1885. Cf., report of separation meeting, *Charters Towers Herald*, 7 February 1887. It was feared that if Townsville was chosen for the first meeting of parliament, inertia would give it an advantage in the final selection.



of other towns, people in Townsville realized that the jealousy of other centres practically eliminated their chances.<sup>240</sup> Moreover, the proposal for a new political capital built, as Canberra was later, on an unoccupied inland site was popular:<sup>241</sup> as well as avoiding local jealousies, there would be the additional advantage that revenue from the sale of public land on the new site would help defray the cost of setting up the new government.

Historians have generally followed contemporary opponents of separation in interpreting the movement as an attempt by sugar growers to protect their supply of cheap coloured labour.<sup>242</sup> R.G. Neale, undoubtedly the most influential analyst of northern separatism, has stated that "In the North from 1884 to 1893 the movement was dominated by sugar interests".<sup>243</sup>

The separation movement was certainly invigorated when Griffith gave notice of the cessation of a labour traffic which the sugar producers regarded as indispensable. Mackay, only lukewarm in 1882, was all afire by late 1884: Griffith's labour policy was clearly the crucial though not the only, reason for the change. Other sugar-growing areas, such as the Herbert and Burdekin districts, also produced many enthusiastic adherents of separation. Without their support the movement would not have assumed the proportions it did, possibly would not even have got off the ground. Yet the importance of sugar interests in the overall movement has sometimes been exaggerated. The movement was dominated by Townsville, which was not dependent on the sugar industry. It originated in Townsville in 1882, before the labour question had become a pressing political issue;<sup>244</sup> in

---

240. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 17, p. 442. *TH*, 28 August 1886. Cf., Black, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 57.

241. Macrossan, *ibid.*, p. 442; Black, *ibid.*, p. 57.

242. Neale, "New State Movement", pp. 210-211. Moles, "Indian Coolie Labour Issue", pp. 1362-1367. Shann, *Economic History of Australia*, p. 235, pp. 247-249. R. Cilento (ed.), *Triumph in the Tropics: An Historical Sketch of Queensland* (Brisbane 1959), p. 397. Sullivan, *Localism in North Queensland*, p. 46, p. 101, p. 103, p. 128.

243. Neale, *op.cit.*, p. 210.

244. Indeed Townsville had attempted to start a movement as early as 1878.

the Northern Separation League's programme of late 1882 coloured labour had no part. The movement was supported by stalwart Bowen, the original fount of northern separatism, whose residents had promoted separation since 1886; Bowen was situated in a dry belt unsuited for extensive sugar cultivation. Another hotbed of separation was Hughenden, with no conceivable interest in the sugar industry. From late 1885 the movement also received considerable support from Charters Towers and other mining centres, notably from some of the most vehement opponents of coloured labour. Moreover, on the most liberal estimate no more than one-third of the signatures on the separation petition came from sugar-producing or sugar-dependent districts,<sup>245</sup> although these were more easily canvassed than, for example, pastoral areas.

The persistence of separatism in north Queensland from the 1860s also suggests that Griffith's labour policy was not the sole cause of the movement of the 1880s, and that other grievances and aspirations were involved. It is true the coloured labour issue had played a part even in early demands for separation, though less prominently than in the 1880s.<sup>246</sup> Even in the 1880s, it was merely one of many reasons for the support given to separation, though no doubt it was more significant for some adherents than for others.

Even in sugar districts, it is doubtful whether the predominant motive was, as some historians have suggested,<sup>247</sup> to establish a new government more sympathetic towards the labour requirements of the sugar industry. Occasionally it was suggested that a reversal of popular opposition to coloured labour was more likely in northern

---

245. See Appendix 6. According to the Separation Council, 117 "Sugar Planters" and 466 "Agriculturists" signed the petition. See Appendix 7. Sugar planters possibly contributed generously to the Mackay League, but Mackay's financial assistance to the Separation Council was not large. Up to mid-1887 the Townsville league contributed £205 to the expenses of the Council, the Georgetown League £80, the Mackay League £50, the Bowen League £19, the Ingham League £16, and £326 was donated by private subscribers in Townsville. *TH*, 25 June 1887. See also Treasurer (Hays) at meeting of Separation Council, *NQITS*, 22 March 1886.

246. E.g., *PDT*, 14 March 1866, 25 September 1869. See above pp. 46-48.

247. E.g., Shann, *op.cit.*, p. 235. Moles, *op.cit.*, p. 1363. J.C. Vockler, Sir Samuel Walker Griffith (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1953), p. 206.

Queensland, where the consequences of the predicted collapse of the sugar industry would be felt more directly than in the south, but this was more a desperate hope than a confident expectation. Sugar producers were aware that in 1883 the majority of north Queenslanders had declared against black labour; they could not seriously have anticipated better prospects of securing coloured labour in a separated north, with its growing and vehemently anti-coolie labour movement.<sup>248</sup> Recognition that a change of public opinion was improbable had already led some sugar farmers to put their faith in the central mill system as a way of overcoming the need for cheap imported labour.<sup>249</sup> Representatives of the sugar interest would have been only a minority in a democratically-elected northern parliament, easily outvoted by members from mining districts;<sup>250</sup> clearly sugar growers had no hope of becoming a planter-aristocracy in a plantation society of the type sketched by E. Shann.<sup>251</sup> Misconceptions among southern capitalists about the political power of the planters fostered a general expectation that the value of sugar property would rise on separation;<sup>252</sup> this would have been an inducement for sugar growers to support the movement. Perhaps some planters saw in the threat of separation a means of pressuring the Queensland government to relax its labour policy.<sup>253</sup> More characteristic of planters' views was a strong sense of grievance, and hostility towards

---

248. Griffith and Musgrave, the Governor, admitted it was unlikely that the new colony would allow coolie labour. Griffith to Musgrave 1 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 377. Musgrave to Derby 13 April 1885, *ibid.*, p. 381. Cf., extract from *Queenslander*, *BC*, 5 June 1885.

249. *CP*, 25 June 1885. Deputation to Griffith in Mackay, *NM*, 26 August 1885. Central Sugar Mills Petition, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, pp. 1155-1156.

250. Even considered as an economic interest, sugar did not dominate north Queensland: capital invested in sugar, estimated by J.E. Davidson at £2,476,000, was far outweighed by the combined investment in the pastoral and mining industries - £4,486,453. Davidson to Derby 25 April 1885, *ibid.*, p. 389.

251. Shann, *op.cit.*, p. 235. In any case, within the industry itself the dominance of the planters was under challenge from a growing class of small farmers. See Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, pp. 145-146.

252. McIlwraith to W. Forrest 31 January 1887, McIlwraith Papers, Letterbook "C" January-March 1887, p. 15.

253. E.g., Jeffray to Griffith 29 November 1884, *QV&P*, 1884, Vol. 2, p. 939.

the government which, in their view, threatened to destroy the industry.<sup>254</sup> Griffith's labour policy alienated sugar growers from the government, pushing them towards the separation movement: separatism was an emotional reaction against an unsympathetic regime rather than a rational means of overcoming labour problems.<sup>255</sup>

The connection between the separation movement and the planters' campaign for coloured labour was exaggerated by the propaganda of the counter movement. To some extent this was a result of the separation movement's entanglement in Queensland party politics. In the early months of the movement a considerable number of prominent separationists happened to be McIlwraithians; naturally distaste for Griffith's government contributed to their enthusiasm for separation. Moreover some initial separation meetings, notably in sugar districts, were unmistakably anti-Griffith in tone. These facts aroused suspicion among Griffith's northern supporters that the movement was being manipulated by their political opponents. The Cooktown Working Men's Progress Association, for example, though implying a preference for separation in the long run, rejected it on party grounds:

[The W.M.P.A.] have faith in Mr. Griffith and his Ministry, and would rather shelve the question of Separation for a time than make it a lever with which to hoist them out of office, or even embarrass them before they have had a fair trial. 256

In reaction, anti-separation meetings were often as laudatory of the Griffith government as some early separation meetings had been critical.<sup>257</sup> Since separationists were identified as McIlwraithians, anti-separationist propaganda highlighted what Liberals considered most objectionable in McIlwraithian policy - support for coloured labour; O'Kane,

---

254. See Messrs Long and Others to Musgrave 13 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 388.

255. *Ibid.*

256. Extract from *Cooktown Independent*, *NQTS*, 29 June 1885. Cf., report of meeting of Cooktown Progress Association, *ibid.*, 25 May 1885; *MM*, 22 September 1887.

257. E.g., report of meeting in Cairns, *Telegraph* 12 August 1886, CO 881/7, Australian No. 114, pp. 75-78. Report of meeting in Charters Towers, *MM*, 7 February 1887.

for instance, habitually referred to McIlwraith supporters, separatists among them, as "coolie men". Thus the black labour charge of the counter movement was, to some extent, a symbol of party political differences with separatists. At a time when public opinion was incensed by exposures of brutal recruiting practices in the New Guinea area,<sup>258</sup> it was also a particularly damaging label, smearing the separatist cause with all the horrors of blackbirding and the slave trade.

Partly because party affiliations had some basis in class - working class voters tended to support the Liberal Party - attitudes to separation were to some extent related to class. Even after Liberal leaders began to join the movement in late 1885, the residue of suspicion left by anti-separatist propaganda was an enduring obstacle to a thoroughgoing mass conversion; shearers and pastoral workers shared with miners an indelible fear that black labour would flood the new colony.<sup>259</sup> Moreover the propaganda of the counter movement had given prominence to class issues,<sup>260</sup> portraying the planters in particular as an exploitative, capitalistic, would-be aristocracy;<sup>261</sup> accusations that employers had threatened to sack men who refused to sign the separation petition also played upon class divisions.<sup>262</sup>

On the other hand, the absence of representatives of the working class from northern separation committees, at least in this early phase of the movement, does not prove that they were uniformly hostile to separation; lack of time, money, education and social standing were among many restraints preventing working men from close involvement

---

258. Mercer, *Attitudes Towards Melanesians*, pp. 3-4, p. 120.

259. Letter to the Editor, *NQTTTS*, 13 September 1886.

260. Anti-Separation Petition, enclosed with Musgrave to Holland 4 March 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 436. *NM*, 12 September 1885. "Anti-Separatist" to the Editor, *NQTTTS*, 16 May 1885. Letter to the Editor, *MM*, 20 September 1887.

261. E.g., *NM*, 28 July 1885. Cf., report of public meeting, *ibid.* 7 February 1887.

262. *Ibid.*, 19, 22 May, 4 June 1885, 7 February 1887. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 421.

in the organization. All the evidence suggests that in Townsville at least the working class generally supported separation; as their political strength grew they put increasing pressure on the separatist organization for access to positions of authority.<sup>263</sup> Moreover the change of attitude in mining centres from late 1885 was significant; by 1886 opinion in Charters Towers, for instance, was about equally divided, showing that many working class opponents had transferred their allegiance to the movement. Throughout north Queensland the separation petition was signed by 10,006 out of an adult male population of 19,807,<sup>264</sup> despite problems of canvassing large areas with scattered population and attempts by anti-separationists to stir opposition to the movement; in this way the movement demonstrated its popularity.

Local loyalties were very important in determining attitudes to separation. Where local interests seemed to be jeopardized by adherence to the movement, this was a powerful constraint on community attitudes. In particular hopes for a railway, which, as the subsequent fates of Cairns and Port Douglas showed, was a life and death issue for local communities, hindered the movement in Cairns, Herberton, and to a lesser extent Normanton, Georgetown, Cloncurry and Croydon. Local rivalries, based on competition for trade or public expenditure, were also significant, notably in Cairns, Normanton and to some extent Cooktown, where antagonism towards Townsville, the head-centre of the movement, alienated people from the cause itself. Within the movement local jealousy was a divisive force, erupting especially in the bitter debate over the site of the capital; Townsville's domination of the separatist organization also aroused much ill-feeling.<sup>265</sup> On the other hand,

---

263. Doran, *Separatism in Townsville*, pp. 123-129.

264. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.1, p.421. 84 of the 10,006 signatures were those of people living outside north Queensland but with interests in the north; most of these were collected by the Sydney Committee. Civil servants were not asked to sign the petition. Hundreds of additional signatures were collected after the petition was sent. For a discussion of the validity and significance of the signatures, see below pp.262-264.

265. E.g., *Cooktown Independent*, quoted by *PDT*, 6 September 1884; *Cloncurry Advocate*, quoted by *TH*, 27 July 1889.

local considerations persuaded antagonists in Charters Towers, for example, to join the movement in late 1885-86.

Although localism was strong, there was a sense of regionalism in north Queensland in the 1880s. Regionalism had grown out of a sense of alienation from the south almost as old as northern settlement. A distinct territory, delimited by early separationists and followed in government decentralization measures, and even diocesan boundaries, gave northerners a concrete entity on which to focus their loyalties. The outward manifestations of this sense of regional identity were ubiquitous, immediately apparent to visitors to north Queensland:

Pick up the card of a merchant in the north, and you will find on it not "Queensland", but "North Queensland". Use a sheet of club paper, and it bears the "N.Q.". Every newspaper prints it; every man heads his correspondence with it; and there is a separate almanac compiled for "North Queensland", thus ignoring Pugh. 266

However the image of a distinctive northern region was filled out according to local perspectives. To Mackay and other sugar districts the distinctive feature of north Queensland was its tropical climate and its potential for tropical agriculture;<sup>267</sup> the *Mackay Mercury*, for instance, wrote of "our district and its industry, which is northern to the back-bone..."<sup>268</sup> Thus destruction of the sugar industry would mean the end of north Queensland as a distinct entity.<sup>269</sup> Sugar producers complained of neglect from a government dominated by representatives of the temperate south, who did not understand the special conditions of

---

266. G. Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia* (Sydney 1892), p.275. Cf., A.J. Ivimey, *Mining and Separation in North Queensland* (Brisbane 1888), p.30.

267. Davidson and Lawes to Derby 14 January 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol.1, pp.375-376. Mackay Separation Petition, quoted in Anti-Separation Petition, enclosed in Musgrave to Stanley 3 December 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol.1, p.436. *MM*, 15 November 1884. In the 1884-85 season 21,840 tons of sugar were produced in north Queensland, compared to 10,170 tons in the south. *QV&P*, 1885, Vol.2, p.519.

268. *MM*, 23 March 1893.

269. Smith's address, *PDT*, 31 March 1894. Report of separation meeting at Walkerston, *MM*, 15 November 1884.

the tropics where white men were incapable of sustained manual labour.<sup>270</sup> This view was strengthened by the persistent belief, of British origin, that there was a natural opposition between tropical and temperate climes.<sup>271</sup> The agrarian ideal was also among its underpinnings, despite the prevalence of the plantation system of sugar cultivation: the ideal of the agriculturist whose produce was the only reliable basis for economic growth, his moral sturdiness the only solid foundation for social development.<sup>272</sup>

Mining districts had a different view of the north: "the mining industry has built our towns, created our commerce, peopled the country, and established and still upholds our credit in the London money market".<sup>273</sup> Yet mining was discriminated against by the government in Brisbane:<sup>274</sup> "North Queensland will be a mineral colony like Victoria as soon as it gets out of the grip of Brisbane lawyers, shopkeepers and 'soft goods' men".<sup>275</sup> By separation northern miners could establish a government for themselves and by themselves.<sup>276</sup> In mining districts and the outback the moral fibre, as much as the economic foundation, of north Queensland was to be found:

The North is not to be built up into a nation by these coast town *homunculi*. There are men - true grit, on the gold fields and in the pastoral districts of the west who have ideals higher than any dreamt of by the dwellers by the sea....<sup>277</sup>

- 
270. *Ibid.* Davidson and Lawes to Derby 14 January 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol.1, pp.375-376. *MM*, 6 August 1884. Sir Alfred Cowley's Cutting Book, No.2, p.15.
271. F. Lugard (nee Shaw) *Letters from Queensland* (London 1893), pp. 96-97, p.101. P.P. Courtenay, "The White Man and the Australian Tropics: A Review of Some Opinions and Prejudices of the Pre-War Years" *Lectures in North Queensland History. Second Series* (Townsville 1975), pp.57-61.
272. Memorandum on Employment of Coloured Labour in Connection with the Sugar Industry, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol.2, pp.1001-1003. Davidson and Jeffray to Derby 9 July 1884, *QV&P*, 1884, Vol.2, p.927. Labour on the Sugar Plantations (Petition), *ibid.*, p.941. Lewis, *Ports of Queensland*, pp.86-88.
273. W.H. Doonan to the Editor, *MM*, 11 December 1885. Cf., report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 27 August 1885.
274. *Ibid. Ibid.*, 4 December 1885.
275. *Ibid.*, 20 November 1885. Cf., *ibid.*, 28 November 1885.
276. *Ibid.*, 4 December 1885.
277. *Ibid.*, 18 September 1885.



As its commercial centre, Townsville had its own concept of north Queensland as a functional region in which the products of the three great northern industries - mining, sugar, and pastoralism - converged on the port of Townsville.<sup>278</sup> Perceptions of Townsville as a nodal centre were reinforced by its position as terminus of the northern trunk railway, and head-quarters of several extensive northern business houses such as Burns Philp, Samuel Allen, Brodziak and Rodgers, and Aplin and Brown's shipping company.<sup>279</sup> This conception endured, notwithstanding the fact that with a string of ports along the northern coast Townsville's dominance of the trade of north Queensland was less pronounced than that of Rockhampton in central Queensland or Brisbane in the south.<sup>280</sup> Identifying its interests with those of the region as a whole, Townsville saw itself as a microcosm of north Queensland;<sup>281</sup> it seemed to its inhabitants to epitomize all the qualities of enterprise and progressivism attributed to the people of north Queensland as a whole.<sup>282</sup> Even if it was not chosen as the new political capital, separation would boost the prestige of Townsville as the commercial capital of the north.<sup>283</sup>

One underlying reason for the indifference to separation of settlers in the Gulf country was their inability to identify with any of these concepts of a distinctive northern region. Instead, there had developed a notion of western Queensland as a region, of an

---

278. Philp's election speech, *TH*, 12 May 1888. Philp's speech, *ibid.*, 3 May 1890. Brown's election speech, *ibid.*, 6 May 1891. *Ibid.*, 24 December 1887, 21 July 1888, 12 April 1890.

279. See G.C. Bolton, "The Rise of Burns, Philp, 1873-1893" in A. Birch & D.S. Macmillan (eds.), *Wealth & Progress: Studies in Australian Business History* (Sydney 1967), pp.111-127. For details of Samuel Allen and Sons' trading interests, see Ivimey, *Mining and Separation*, pp.14-15.

280. Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp.113-114.

281. For a fuller discussion of Townsville's perception of its unique position in north Queensland, see Doran, *Separatism in Townsville*, pp.57-66.

282. *Ibid.*

283. E.g., Philp's address in Townsville, *TH*, 3 May 1890.

opposition between the outback and the east coast,<sup>284</sup> so that the people of the Gulf felt greater affinity with those of south-western Queensland than with settlers on the north-eastern coast.<sup>285</sup> The idea of an identifiable western personality was part of this ethos:

The great distances, the open plains, and the loneliness and monotony which is generally characteristic of the western country, even in these days of comparative closer settlement, have formed the western character. It is a character hard, shrewd, and impatient in good times, but strangely patient and resourceful in times of floods, droughts, or difficulty. Invariably maintaining a certain reserve, yet hospitable and generous towards strangers, and ready to give help without question where needed, the western-born man and woman carries a dignity and presence easily recognised....<sup>286</sup>

This sentiment was later expressed, in 1893, in claims for a province of north-western Queensland extending south to the 26th parallel of latitude. Westerners protested that proposals for northern and central separation<sup>287</sup> involved carving up the west so that eastern ports could usurp its trade, to the detriment of the Gulf ports of Normanton and Burketown:

The back country of Queensland should not be regarded as existing wholly and solely for the benefit of the ports on the eastern coast. The settlers of the west claim consideration as well as the businessmen, the lawyers, bankers and others dwelling in the eastern coast towns. It is the back country men - the squatters - who have opened up the country, who have made it possible for others to live in the eastern coast towns.<sup>288</sup>

Nevertheless, with this reservation, a sense of regional identity was growing in the 1880s, notwithstanding different images of "the

---

284. E.g., E. Palmer, *Early Days in North Queensland* (Sydney 1903), p.227. Cf., de Satge, *Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, pp. 272-273, p.368, p.383.

285. Thus in 1893 George Phillips, member for Carpentaria, claimed that inhabitants of the Gulf country would prefer to be attached to central Queensland rather than the north if separation was granted. Extract from *Northern Argus, Mackay Standard*, 24 July 1893.

286. Corfield, *Reminiscences*, pp.141-142.

287. For a discussion of the central Queensland separation movement, see below pp.324-325.

288. Phillips, *QPD*, Vol.70, 1893, p.772. Cf., *ibid.*, p.569.

north" and notwithstanding local loyalties. Localism was not incompatible with regionalism, nor did it retard regionalism.<sup>289</sup> Certainly when local and regional interests clashed, local loyalties often proved the stronger; but this was equally true of state and federal loyalties after 1900. Local, state and national loyalties are not different in kind: if local loyalties were to prevent regionalism, it might equally have been expected that state loyalties would preclude federal loyalties: if so, the states could never have been brought together in federation in 1900, still less have remained federated down to the present. Though aware of continuing local jealousies, separationists had no reason to think them insuperable; in the growing sense of regional identity they could reasonably see a major source of support for their movement.

---

289. Cf., Sullivan, *Localism in North Queensland*, p.101, p.115, p.126.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE CASE FOR SEPARATION

Arguments for separation were accumulated and developed during the whole period from the 1860s to the end of the century. There is no *locus classicus* to which the reader can be referred for a mature exposition of the entire case: exponents tended to present at a particular time arguments and assumptions selected to suit the situation in which they found themselves. Underlying these arguments, there is nevertheless a body of coherent propositions which it is the purpose of this chapter to expound and illustrate. Both grievances, which have been emphasized by previous writers on northern separatism,<sup>1</sup> and aspirations, hitherto largely neglected, are examined. A special section has been devoted to statistical arguments, both because of the weight attached to them by separationists and their opponents and because they are in principle capable of objective evaluation.

Northern grievances were innumerable, touching virtually every aspect of social and political life in colonial Queensland. For the converted, as the *Townsville Herald* observed, "every political occurrence tend[ed] to show that North and South must be made separate colonies"<sup>2</sup>; newspaper reports of events capable of being construed as showing conflict between northern and southern interests were commonly emblazoned "Another Argument for Separation". Nevertheless the many, diverse grievances rested on a few broad arguments. These may be divided into geographical, political and financial arguments; though logically separable, they are closely connected.

Perhaps the most fundamental and most incontrovertible arguments for separation were based on geographical factors, among which distance was the most important. Mackay near the southern boundary of the proposed colony was about 850 kilometres from the capital,

- 
1. E.g. Lugard, *Letters from Queensland*, pp. 93-110; Neale, "New State Movement in Queensland", pp. 198-213.
  2. *TH*, 12 October 1839.

Normanton on the Gulf of Carpentaria more than 3,200 kilometres away:

it would be regarded as very absurd if we were to attempt to govern Victoria from Brisbane, and yet it is no more absurd than governing Northern Queensland from Brisbane; the distance to some portions of my constituency [of Cook] from Brisbane is 1,400 miles, 400 more than Brisbane is from Victoria. 3

The seat of government was situated in the extreme south-east corner of a territory of 1,715,000 square kilometres, and not even the strongest opponent of the movement tried to deny that this made administration more difficult. Opponents claimed however that the extension of the telegraph throughout the colony had, for practical purposes, largely overcome this problem.<sup>4</sup> Separationists replied that many important matters could not adequately be transacted by telegraph<sup>5</sup>, receiving support from John Macrossan, whose experiences as Minister for Works and Mines in 1879-82 had convinced him that "the colony was too large and could not be governed by telegraph from Brisbane".<sup>6</sup> The problem was exacerbated by centralized decision-making, even the smallest details being referred to Brisbane, which increased delay, expense and annoyance.

The departments in Brisbane are chiefly occupied now in "bluffing of" pressing questions from the remote districts, in compiling elaborate telegrams "O.H.M. Service" touching the necessity of a padlock or slip rail for Normanton police paddock, or an additional telegraph pole at a street corner in Townsville or Hughenden. 7

- 
3. Hamilton, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1087.
  4. Griffith to Musgrave 1 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 377. The telegraph was pushed on rapidly in Queensland partly because, for reasons of prestige, Queensland governments wished the system to reach the Gulf of Carpentaria to connect with a submarine cable linking Australia and Britain. M. Cook, *Cables and Co-operation? A Study of the Development of Submarine Cables to Australia and the concomitant expansion of land telegraphy within the Continent between 1859 and 1910 with special reference to Queensland* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1969), p. 246.
  5. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 385.
  6. Speech in Townsville, *TH*, 12 May 1888. Cf., Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, pp. 447-448; Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 986.
  7. *NM*, 23 September 1885.

Centralization was undoubtedly intensified during Griffith's term of office, 1883-88, by his unwillingness to delegate authority.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, according to A. G. Stephens the pamphleteer of the Townsville Separation League, the situation was in many respects unaltered in 1893:

The Government, the officials, the public buildings, everything is in Brisbane...the management of Northern railways as far up as Carpentaria is vested in Brisbane, not a paling can be put on a Government fence, or a policeman decorated with a new uniform, North of Cape Palmerston, but the particulars must go to Brisbane, for blame or approval. 9

Complaints about northern defence were related to the problem of distance. In 1885, fearing that Russian ambitions in Afghanistan would precipitate war with Britain and her possessions, northerners assessed their preparedness critically:

There is not a single port...that is not entirely defenceless against the most insignificant piratical attack...The distance of any of them from Brisbane would render co-operation thence impossible, while the absence of skilled direction - concentrated on the capital - would paralyse voluntary effort. 10

Northerners took advantage of the Separation Convention in April 1885 to register anxiety with united voice, calling on the government

- 
8. See R. B. Joyce, "S. W. Griffith: towards the biography of a lawyer" *HS*, Vol. 16, No. 63, 1974, pp. 244-246.
  9. A. G. Stephens, *Why North Queensland Wants Separation* (Townsville 1893), p. 8. Cf., Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 986.
  10. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 443. Fear of Russian ambitions in Afghanistan has a familiar ring in 1981. The "torpedoes" asked for would have been fixed defensive mines. During the Second World War similar conditions fostered popular fears that in the event of Japanese invasion districts north of the "Brisbane line" would be abandoned to the enemy. See Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p. 336.

to supply torpedoes, small arms, ammunitions and stores to northern ports.<sup>11</sup> The formation of a voluntary Defence Force with headquarters in Brisbane failed to allay concern:

The management of the Defence Force in North Queensland is a notable instance of the never-ending "blundering and plundering" by the South where Northern interests are concerned. The North has been consistently defrauded of its fair share of expenditure on defence; its officers and men have been systematically discouraged by neglect, and it is now no more really prepared for its own defence than it was before the Force was formed by Colonel French. 12

Grievances about irregular steamer services and mail deliveries, and delays in dealings with government departments, especially the Lands Department, also reflected the problem of distance. The administration of justice in the north was an especially sore point, hindered, separationists contended, by the complexity of appeal (despite the appointment of a Northern Supreme Court judge most business had still to be taken to Brisbane<sup>13</sup>), lack of resident judges in the various districts, and heavy costs as a result of distance.<sup>14</sup> Complaints came to a head in early 1887 when Judge Cooper of the Northern Supreme Court announced that because his travelling allowance was exhausted, he would be forced to close

- 
11. Separation Convention to Griffith 10 April 1885, QSA COL/A420, No. 2463 enclosed with No. 2609. A cannon on the Cooktown waterfront is inscribed as follows: The Cooktown Municipal Council on 10 April 1885 carried a motion requesting the Premier to supply "arms ammunition and a competent officer to take charge of same as the town is entirely unprotected". This gun, cast in Carron, Scotland in 1803, and two rifles were sent.
  12. *TH*, 1 June 1889. Cf., *ibid.*, 23 November 1889; *TES*, 15 January 1890.
  13. Chubb, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 460.
  14. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p. 167. Cf., *PDT*, 8 April 1871.

the court and discharge untried prisoners unless the government gave an assurance that his cheque would be honoured; this Cooper had previously requested, receiving no reply. He then received an assurance from the Colonial Treasurer that all reasonable expenses would be met, immediately followed by a reprimand for his undignified conduct. Northern opinion solidly backed Cooper during the altercation, the Separation Council sending a telegram to the London press stating "Northern Justice being attacked by action of Brisbane authorities", and protesting at the temporary interruption to justice.<sup>15</sup>

What separationists perceived as irreconcilable differences between the interests of north and south also owed much to distance. As a Colonial Office official observed:

The colony is no doubt at present too big, because the rational links of mutual interest which bind the several parts together are too slender, and the administrative and legislative union is therefore apt to fail. 16

Disparity of interests was attributed, to some extent, to the fact that the Tropic of Capricorn divided Queensland into two climatic regions, for tropical and temperate climes were widely believed to foster markedly dissimilar industrial and social milieux, a notion probably derived from experiences of British colonizers in tropical "colonies of exploitation" in Africa, India, the West Indies and south-east Asia: 17

South Queensland lies almost wholly within the temperate zone: North Queensland lies wholly within the Tropics. To those who will think what this fact implies, there must come conviction that the system of government which is suitable for the one can never be good for the other. The natural opposition is too great. Radical differences of soil,

- 
15. *MM*, 30 April 1887. *TH*, 7 May 1887.
  16. Anderson, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No. 105, CO 234/62.
  17. Courtenay, "White Man and the Tropics", pp. 57-65. G. Taylor "Geographical Factors Controlling the Settlement of Tropical Australia" *Queensland Geographic Journal*, Vol. 32-33, 1918, pp. 1-67. English newspapers generally placed great emphasis on the climatic basis of the separation case, reflecting perhaps the British origin of the concept of "natural opposition" between tropical and temperate regions. See Lugard, *Letters from Queensland*, pp. 93-110.



of vegetation, of climate, of rainfall, of physical contour, of natural resources, of artificial products, must cause corresponding differences in the character of pursuits of the inhabitants of the two territories, and in the laws and customs by which they should be governed. 18

More often conflict of interests was attributed to a combination of climatic and geological factors making for a pattern of resources unique to northern Queensland. According to Thankfull Willmetts the natural transition coincided with the proposed boundary line:

North of the twenty-second degree of south latitude the character of the country rapidly changes. The climate and the soil on the coast become more suitable for tropical agriculture of every kind; the mineral wealth expands over enormous areas, and often over rugged and difficult country. Hence wages are higher, labor of most kinds becomes more remunerative, consumption is increased, and the Customs returns and the revenue generally are larger in proportion to the number from whom they are derived. 19

Disagreement over fiscal policy, and in particular the need for reciprocity treaties with southern colonies, was regarded as a

- 
18. Stephens, *Why Separation*, p. 19. Cf., report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 445. Cf., Gray, *Reminiscences*, p. 248 - "a tropical country cannot be run on the same lines as one semi-tropical, and the mistake is made of thinking that it can be done by legislation". Cf., report of public meeting, *MM*, 15 November 1884. There was a proposal to form a tropical colony comprising northern Queensland and the northern part of South Australia, now part of the Northern Territory. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1 p. 445. W. E. Adcock, "The Separation Movement in the North" *Victorian Review*, February 1885, pp. 433-437. Letter to the Editor, *The Times*, 15 October 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 432-433.
  19. Willmetts to the Editor, *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P*, 1886 Vol. 1, p. 427. The Cape Palmerston line was identified as a natural boundary, "separating the waters flowing north into the Burdekin and Gulf of Carpentaria from the waters flowing south". Davidson and Lawes to Derby 14 January 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 375.

manifestation of a fundamental clash of interests.<sup>20</sup> Some sugar planters regarded the curtailment of coloured labour in the same way, although a majority of north Queenslanders, like southerners, had rejected coloured labour at the 1883 general election.

On the other hand, southern opponents of separation tried to minimize geographical differences between north and south, discounting the alleged distinctiveness of northern districts:

The character and resources of the various parts of Northern or Tropical Queensland differ almost as widely from each other as those of the extreme southern and northern portions of the Colony. It is quite erroneous to suppose that the whole of this territory is to be considered as subject to the ordinary incidents of tropical countries as commonly understood. The rich lands fit for tropical agriculture are confined to narrow and not continuous strips on the coast, rarely extending more than twenty miles inland, and forming a very small and inconsiderable portion of the whole territory, so far as area is concerned. The area of mineral lands already known is of much greater extent... But by far the greatest area consists of pastoral lands, differing in no important particular from the rest of the pastoral lands of Australia... Moreover, in some parts of this territory - notably, in the Herberton District, in lat. 17° to 18° - the ordinary products of temperate regions can be grown with success. 21

- 
20. NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 438. Black, *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, pp. 474-475. Cf., *MM*, 9 July 1876, 18 January 1887. To encourage the sugar industry northerners advocated reciprocity treaties with South Australia and Victoria; southern wheat interests opposed this, exerting pressure for high customs barriers. In general northerners favoured intercolonial free trade for as one separationist remarked, "so far, we have practically nothing to protect". *TES*, 15 April 1893. See McIlwraith to Sir Julius Vogel 31 August 1886, McIlwraith Papers, Letterbook "A", July-October 1886, pp. 34-35.
21. Griffith to Musgrave 1 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 378. Reporting on a central Queensland separation petition in 1890, B. D. Morehead argued similarly, emphasizing the similarity of climate, resources and interests in central and southern Queensland. Morehead to Norman 22 May 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1160. However, when introducing his scheme for a tripartite division of Queensland in 1892, Griffith stressed the peculiar geographical conditions and homogeneity of interests of each province. *QPD*, Vol. 67, 1892, p. 787.

Separationists' second major argument was that the north was deprived of effective political representation by the preponderance of southern members in parliament, a handicap likely to persist indefinitely.<sup>22</sup> Willmetts comment in 1885 conveyed the resulting political frustration:

with all the apparent freedom and power of what the Premier calls "Constitutional Government", [northerners] have left to them not the slightest real control over their own political affairs, their public loans, or other public works ...for almost all practical purposes, they might as well leave the electoral right unemployed. And, whether they petition or protest, they are met with the reply that Queensland is under responsible Government, against whose dicta, however mischievous, they have no appeal...they see, with a just and natural bitterness of feeling, that their participation in Parliamentary institutions only renders themselves, as it were, accessories to their own wrongs. 23

In 1885 the north returned eight members to a Legislative Assembly of 55. Although Griffith's redistribution bill of 1885 gave two additional northern members and two southern, this only slightly reduced the north's disadvantage in parliament. In 1893, after several measures to increase northern representation had been passed, there were still only 16 northerners in an Assembly of 72. In the nominated Legislative Council the disproportion was still greater: in 1885 the ratio was one to 36, William Aplin of Townsville being the sole northern member; by 1893 there were still only three northern men out of 42 Councillors. Moreover, northern electors were consistently under-represented in comparison with southern electors. At the end of 1883 there was one member for every 1,170 northern electors, compared to one member for every 1,078 electors in the south.<sup>24</sup> This disparity in favour of the south increased during the period to 1887 as northern population grew relative to that of southern Queensland: in 1885 the south had one member for every 834 voters, the north one for every 1,205;<sup>25</sup> by 1887 the

---

22. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 443.

23. Willmetts to the Editor, *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1., p. 427.

24. At the end of 1883, 50,664 southern electors returned 47 members whereas eight northern members represented 9,361 electors. *Ibid.*

25. W. Coote, "Proposed New Colony of Northern Queensland" *Victorian Review*, Vol. 12, 1885, p. 63.

north sent one member for every 1,230 electors while the south had one for every 1,000.<sup>26</sup>

Northern members were too few to carry any real weight in parliament: this reflected the fact that, even in 1893, northern residents numbered only 81,000 in a population of 410,000, for seats were generally allocated on the basis of total white population. Northerners contended that adult male population rather than total white population should be the basis since only adult males were deemed fit to vote,<sup>27</sup> complaining that "the system of basing representation on total population was not meant for any other purpose than to maintain the supremacy of the Southern districts of the colony over the North".<sup>28</sup> Some also argued, along somewhat contradictory lines, that the large Chinese and Pacific Islander component of northern population should be included in electoral calculations because they represented wealth-producing power.<sup>29</sup>

In any case, separationists usually compared northern representation not with population but with the north's contribution to the colonial economy; they reasoned that power to influence political decisions affecting northern industries should be consonant with productive capacity, reflecting the liberal notion that political power was the right of those with a stake in the country, as opposed to the concept of popular representation. As early as 1864 settlers in the northern districts had pleaded that revenue contributed be taken into account, pointing out that if representation was based solely on population, residents of sparsely-populated areas like northern Queensland would be virtually disfranchised.<sup>30</sup> Presenting the separation case in 1893, *The Times'* special correspondent in Queensland argued that:

---

26. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.1, p.447.

27. Philp, *QPD*, Vol.49, 1886, p.563.

28. Palmer, *QPD*, Vol.23, 1877, p.141. A frontier society, northern Queensland had a higher proportion of adult males than the south. Cf., Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.1, p.424.

29. Beor (Bowen), *QPD*, Vol.23, 1877, p.144.

30. *QV&P*, 1864, p.375.

communities in which the conditions are so dissimilar that it is within the power of 50,000 individuals in the one to produce more surplus wealth for export than can be produced by 279,000 individuals in the other evidently call for a different basis of representation. 31

Lack of numbers did not end northerners' problems in securing effective representation, for it was difficult to find local men willing to sacrifice personal financial interests to attend parliament in distant Brisbane:<sup>32</sup> of eight northern members in 1885 only four resided in northern Queensland.<sup>33</sup> Some northern constituencies were constrained to elect southern men, separationists complaining that the north was "prey to a regular staff of political adventurers sent up from Brisbane to contest the northern elections, and misrepresent the northern constituencies".<sup>34</sup> Moreover, for convenience, northern members like Robert Philp<sup>35</sup> often moved to Brisbane when returned to parliament; by loosening their ties with the north, however, this practice could endanger their ability to represent northern interests.<sup>36</sup> Thus payment of members was always an issue of particular importance to the north, for an assured income might persuade local men to stand as parliamentary candidates.<sup>37</sup> To compensate for these handicaps, some northerners believed that "the outside electorates should have even a larger proportional

---

31. Lugard, *Letters from Queensland*, p.101.

32. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol.1, p.447. Cf., Fitzgerald, *QPD*, Vol.6, 1867-8, pp.799-800.

33. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol.1, p.445.

34. Messrs Long and Others to Musgrave 13 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol.1, p.388.

35. Perry, *Memoirs of Philp*, p.139.

36. Black, *QPD*, Vol.62, 1890, p.997. *Cooktown Independent*, 8 March 1890. Willmetts to the Editor, *TH*, 15 November 1890.

37. Bowen's "Political Platform", *PDT*, 5 August 1871. *MM*, 9 July 1870. *PDT*, 16 July 1870. *MM*, 22 April 1876. *NQH*, 16 September 1891, 31 August 1892.

representation than the capital",<sup>38</sup> as Macrossan argued in parliament:

It would be admitted, he had no doubt, that the more remote districts of the colony were the portions which should be better represented if any difference existed... They knew that even if the districts about the capital had fewer members they would still be better represented than more distant districts, owing to the easiness with which those residing in or near the capital could bring public opinion to bear upon the Ministry, and the influence which they brought to bear upon members of the House who were living amongst them and heard their opinions daily.<sup>39</sup>

Problems of representation were compounded by the supposed disparity between northern and southern interests; separationists were convinced that southern representatives could not understand the special needs of the north.<sup>40</sup> Even so, north and south might have been deemed compatible had not so great a reliance been placed on government activity to promote settlement and industry, and to provide essential economic infrastructure; but government had a large role in the economic development of the colony, and it seemed to northern separationists that distance, conflicting interests, and inadequate representation resulted in neglect to develop northern resources.<sup>41</sup>

Financial injustice was another major argument for separation: separationists were convinced that north Queensland's contributions to revenue exceeded public expenditure in the region. Certainly northerners consistently contributed nearly twice as much per head as southerners to customs revenue, which was distributed on the basis of population, four-fifths to the south:

Under these circumstances it is obviously to the interest of the South to encourage high Customs taxation, since the greater the tax the less the proportion of it which is paid by the South, and the greater the sum which is drawn from Northern pockets for Southern benefit.<sup>42</sup>

---

38. Beor, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p. 144.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

40. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 443.

41. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, pp. 447-448. Willmetts to the Editor, *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 427. NQSC to Derby, *ibid.*, p. 447.

42. Stephens, *Why Separation*, p. 14.

Hence the popular outcry when the McIlwraith government increased tariff duties in October 1888.<sup>43</sup> Northerners saw this as a classic case of "taxation without representation".<sup>44</sup>

Public expenditure was distributed broadly in proportion to population. Separationists were not satisfied with this, demanding greater expenditure in recognition of northerners' greater average revenue contributions,<sup>45</sup> "a very questionable position, and quite opposed to the growing principle that the whole revenue should be allocated equally for the benefit of the whole population",<sup>46</sup> a Colonial Office official noted. Northern interests were also sacrificed, according to separationists, in distribution of loans; they complained that most loan money was spent in the south instead of being used to develop the colony's resources, especially in frontier areas like north Queensland, and demanded that loan expenditure be "proportioned to resources, which may be taken as synonymous with area",<sup>47</sup> rather than to population. Northerners also complained that when loans were allocated on the basis of population, some of that intended for northern projects was in fact surreptitiously diverted to the south.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, they objected that although most loan money, which was raised on the credit of the whole colony, was spent in the south, northern revenue contributed largely to interest payments; moreover the north would be forced to accept liability for the full extent of the public debt in the event of separation.

Northern Queensland produced a greater value of exports than

- 
43. Reports of public meetings, *TH*, 18 August 1888, 9 March, 17 August 1889.
44. *Ibid.*, 14 June 1890.
45. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, pp.166-167. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol.49, 1886, p.642. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.1, p.446. Extract from *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol.1, p.427.
46. Mercer, minute 1 February 1894, on despatch No. 215, CO 234/58. Mercer added that the movement was certainly not entitled to the sympathy evoked by cases of poverty and oppression.
47. Stephens, *op. cit.*, p.18.
48. They deduced this from the fact that the total of loan funds was usually expended although some of that allocated to the north was not.

either the southern or central divisions, whereas most imports went to the south:

TABLE 3: Exports and Imports 1892<sup>49</sup>

<u>Division</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Value of Exports</u> (£)	<u>Value of Imports</u> (£)
North	81,000	2,626,222	1,200,059
South	279,000	2,032,196	2,956,406
Centre	50,000	2,232,446	666,418
Queensland	410,000	6,890,864	4,592,357

This trade pattern was interpreted as northern production paying for southern consumption. From the entire financial relationship between north and south separationists concluded that north Queensland was being exploited as a "milch cow":

When, as in the case of Queensland, a considerable portion of the colony has, by the accident of earlier settlement, obtained an overwhelming preponderance in numbers, it is not to be wondered at that a minority which produces most finds its surplus taken from it by a majority which, in proportion to its numbers, produces less. 50

Northern complaints were often directed specifically against the metropolitan dominance of Brisbane, reflecting a long-standing "rankling feeling of discontent with everything Brisbane".<sup>51</sup> From the beginning of northern settlement Sydney rather than Brisbane was regarded as "our commercial capital";<sup>52</sup> many goods could be landed more cheaply direct from Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and even London than from Brisbane;<sup>53</sup> postal communications were often more regular with Sydney than Brisbane;<sup>54</sup>

49. Lugard, *Letters from Queensland*, p. 99.

50. Willmetts to the Editor, *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P* 1886, Vol. 1, p. 427.

51. *MM*, 6 August 1870. Cf., *PDT*, 20 February 1869, 6 January 1872, 5 February 1876, 14 December 1878; *CC*, 1 June 1878.

52. *PDT*, 18 March 1876. Cf., *ibid.*, 29 January 1870; Palmer, *QPD* Vol. 49, 1886, p. 535.

53. *CC*, 29 October 1879.

54. *PDT*, 8 July 1871.



the southern colonies, especially Victoria, were looked upon as the source of capital and enterprise for northern development.<sup>55</sup> Paucity of commercial contacts with Brisbane discouraged a sense of common interest.<sup>56</sup>

Both the supremacy of the south in population, and the problem of distance from the seat of government were related to Brisbane and its historically-determined dominance of the colony. Thus separationists identified their enemy, more often than not, as the "Brisbane government" or "Queen-street government". Anti-Brisbane sentiment was seldom evinced in official statements of the separation case, but in pamphlets intended for distribution in the north, in newspapers and at public meetings it was freely expressed.

Northerners resented large public expenditure in the capital, convinced that "nearly all the immense sum expended on General Account is disbursed in Brisbane".<sup>57</sup> Brisbane's success was attributed to its position as capital and a "centre of undue expenditure":<sup>58</sup> "Built on the banks of a winding river which, in spite of large expenditure, is still dangerous for shipping, it possesses no pre-eminent natural advantages".<sup>59</sup> "Inordinate expenditure of public money", it was reasoned, provided an artificial advantage. For instance, to June 1891 £695,603 had been spent on public buildings in Brisbane, while in the rest of the colony during the same period only £998,617 was spent; that is, 41% of total expenditure on public buildings from 1859 to 1891 was concentrated in Brisbane.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, during 1891 56% of total expenditure by the Works Department on public buildings was in Brisbane.<sup>61</sup> Similar analyses dealt with other items of

55. Palmer, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 535.

56. *NM*, 29 August 1891.

57. *TH*, 5 October 1889. In the government's accounts, "general expenditure" was a sum supposedly spent on the general administration of the colony, which could not be attributed to any of the three divisions - North, Centre and South.

58. *Ibid.*, 11 January 1890.

59. Stephens, *Why Separation*, p. 6.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

61. *Ibid.*

expenditure. Consequently separationists felt that northern revenue was "swallowed up by cormorant Brisbane",<sup>62</sup> which was seen as "a sponge, which soaks up the wealth of the colony through fifty pores at once... Brisbane always gets the lion's share of whatever is going."<sup>63</sup> Northerners realized the self-perpetuating nature of Brisbane's supremacy:

when we place the seat of Government in the extremity of a colony, we might expect to find all the wealth of the colony attracted to the capital, and the capital enriched at the expense of the rest of the colony. Population would be drawn to the capital because more money was spent there than elsewhere; it would be necessary to spend still more money to feed the new population; more population would be attracted by the new expenditure; and so we should travel round in a vicious circle. 64

This process was recognized as the basis of the "Brisbane Monopoly".<sup>65</sup>

That grievances against the existing administration were an element in the demand for separation there can be no doubt: every statement of the separation case, from petitions to the Crown to the emotional outpourings of individual north Queenslanders at public meetings and in local newspapers, recounted northern complaints against the "Brisbane government". But other more positive aims were also present. Separationists wished not only to escape a regime they considered oppressive, but to found a new system in accordance with their own needs and interests.

Townsville's Northern Separation League, which initiated the movement in the 1880s, produced its first pamphlet in 1884 to inspire co-operation from all northern districts in launching an active separation campaign. The nature of its appeals was positive, the pamphleteer, Thankfull Willmetts, developing the theme that north Queensland had reached a stage in its evolution where self-government was the logical next step:

---

62. *TH*, 12 May 1888. Cf., *TES*, 4 February 1890.

63. Stephens, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

I take it for granted that the various changes brought about during the last twenty-five years have been such that it is only natural that we should think the time had come when we would be called upon to ask for self Government, and that the NORTH should be independent of the SOUTH. 66

Entitled, significantly, *Territorial Separation: Southern Queensland in 1859-60 and Northern Queensland in 1884, showing the relative position between North and South*, this first pamphlet argued that the north, undeveloped and largely unexplored when Queensland was created, had reached at least that stage of development at which Queensland was deemed fit for self-government. By comparing statistics for population, production, trade and revenue, Willmetts showed that in these significant indicators of growth north Queensland had by 1884 already surpassed the position of Queensland in 1859; this, he argued, justified separationists in their contention that "the time has arrived when we should petition for, and have, the privileges of self-government extended to this once unknown portion of Her Majesty's dominions".<sup>67</sup>

William Coote, probably the most important individual influence on the conduct of the movement of the 1880s and 1890s, also emphasized that the economic development of northern Queensland and its capacity for independence were essential aspects of the case for separation.<sup>68</sup> From the outset, then, separationists emphasized northern growth and progress as reasons for territorial separation.<sup>69</sup> Comparing north

---

66. *Territorial Separation*, p. 6.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

68. E.g., letter to the Editor, *TH*, 18 August 1888; letter to the Editor, *NQH*, 20 April 1892.

69. It may well have been that the increasing attention given to financial grievances after 1885 was the result of a deliberate tactical decision. Opponents of the movement had criticized the appeals made by early propagandists as vague and emotive, challenging separationists to produce hard facts and figures demonstrating the disadvantages of the status quo. McIlwraith, for instance, advised separationists that success would depend upon their proving injustice to the north. *NM*, 26 March 1885. Moreover, opponents of separation had countered that the progress of northern Queensland under the existing regime was an argument for maintaining the unity of the colony, rather than for dismemberment. E.g. remarks of T. O'Kane at public meeting, *ibid.*, 16 April 1885. Rutledge, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 554.

Queensland, not only with Queensland but with Victoria and Western Australia at the time they achieved self-government, and with other self-governing dependencies of the British Empire, was a constant element of the northern case.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1860s, at the time of north Queensland's first settlement, an assumption that the newly-opened districts would one day form a separate colony was shared by pioneer settlers and British and colonial officials alike. As Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Newcastle had referred to the likelihood that new colonies would be created as settlement spread, fostering expectations and ambitions among northern colonists.<sup>71</sup> Moreover northerners believed that the clauses of an Imperial Act of 1855, which they wrongly interpreted as providing for the subdivision of Queensland,<sup>72</sup> gave tacit encouragement to northern separatism:

There is one thing very certain, viz., that Separation of North from South will be had, for it was upon the express stipulation of further separation that Queensland separated from New South Wales, this being provided for by the Act of Separation; and it has been upon this legal provision, which may be regarded in the nature of a treaty, that the Northern part of Queensland has been settled. 73

It was predictable therefore that as time passed, settlement spread, and the northern districts became productive, the ideas of separation and self-government would assume an important place in the thinking of northern colonists; "Settlement and civilization

---

70. E.g., *TH*, 20 July 1889, 14 February 1891. *PDT*, 17 June 1876. *CBE*, 21 June 1876. Letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 23 March 1878. *PDT*, 26 October 1878. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 442. Chubb, *ibid.*, p. 459. Hamilton, *ibid.*, p. 626. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1., pp. 440-441.

71. Newcastle to Bowen No. 39, with despatch No. 51, 14 December 1861, CO 234/4.

72. See below p. 275.

73. *PDT*, 1 July 1871. Cf., Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 438. Chubb, *ibid.*, p. 460.

will naturally demand separation [sic], from Queensland",<sup>74</sup> they believed. Indeed many Queenslanders, including leading southern opponents of particular moves for northern autonomy, believed that separation was inevitable, though they might wish to postpone it as long as possible.<sup>75</sup> As early as 1871 it was noted that the emphasis of separatist agitation had shifted from complaints about financial injustice to an expression of confidence that the time for northern independence was drawing swiftly nearer; even at this time the editor of the *Port Denison Times* was "by no means prepared to say that even the absolute removal of all the remediable difficulties would be sufficient reason for abandoning the movement".<sup>76</sup> The belief was that separation alone offered a permanent remedy. Macrossan's motion of 1886 reflected the view that what had long been considered ultimately desirable was now necessary:

in consequence of the increase of population, the difficulty of administration, and other circumstances, in the Northern portion of the colony, this House is of opinion that the time has arrived which was contemplated by his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, in his despatches of the 18th August 1859, and 14th December 1861... 77

As C. E. Chubb argued in support of the motion,

the North has sufficient population and has sufficient revenue to enable it to go alone. I think the time has arrived when the northern part of the colony is entitled to be trusted to mind its own business and manage its own affairs. 78

- 
74. *MM*, 22 May 1878. Cf., *CH*, 16 January 1875. *CC*, 15 June 1878. Extract from *Hughenden Ensign*, *NQTTTS*, 15 February 1886 - separation, "a natural sequence of the progress of the colony".
75. Mackenzie, *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1876-8, p. 799. Macalister, *ibid.*, p. 923. Rutledge, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 554 - "The great objection that I have to this separation movement is that it is premature to consider the question. There can be no doubt that the time will come when the population will have become so large in the northern parts of the colony, as well as in the southern portion of it, that the interests of the far North can no longer be subordinated to the will of the central government directing the affairs of the colony from Brisbane...". Macfarlane, *ibid.*, p. 562. Sheridan, *ibid.*, p. 639. Groom's views, *MM*, 26 March 1887. Nelson's views, *TH*, 22 March 1890.
76. *PDT*, 4 March 1871. Cf., *TH*, 24 March 1888.
77. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 437. Cf., Brown, *ibid.*, pp. 551-553.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 459. See also p. 462. Cf., Black, *ibid.*, p. 541.

A speaker at a Mackay meeting concurred: "They were now justified in asking for Separation, and they had the means, brains and determination to govern themselves."<sup>79</sup> Southern disparagement of northerners' capacity for self-government was bitterly resented:<sup>80</sup> William Brookes' comment in 1884 that "the North had not the materials out of which they could be separated. They had neither money nor brains...",<sup>81</sup> was not forgotten for many years, and was regarded as indicative of southern contempt.<sup>82</sup>

Separationists always emphasized the idealistic aspirations of the movement, the *Townsville Herald* writing of its exalted aims:

In this movement are the highest considerations - the instincts of a distinct and separate community to administer its own affairs in the wisdom that can only be obtained by local experience and local habitation. 83

"The secret of separation", opined one member of the Townsville Separation League in 1892, "was that they wanted the privilege of free men - the right of self-government".<sup>84</sup> Robert Philp regarded the desire for self-government as the main impulse behind the initiation of the movement in Townsville in 1882, in which he had taken a leading part, at a time when no particular grievance disturbed northern colonists:

when there was a full supply of black labour; when a little loan money was being spent in the North; when that which was proved the greatest boon ever granted

---

79. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 29 October 1884.

80. E.g., Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p. 161.

81. Brookes (North Brisbane), *QPD*, Vol. 43, 1884, p. 278. Cf., extract from *Brisbane Telegraph*, *TH*, 17 May 1890, saying northern separationists were penniless ruffians.

82. Reports of public meetings, *MM*, 16 August, 15 November 1884. Chubb, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 462. *TH*, 8 January 1887. Hamilton, *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p. 485. Little, *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1639. *NQH*, 1 June 1892.

83. *TH*, 23 March 1889.

84. *NQH*, 4 May 1892.

to the North - the British-India mail service - was established, and when apparently we had not much to complain of. But, sir, underneath all this there was a great desire in the North that we should govern ourselves. It is a natural desire, which we see in other countries. 85

D. H. Dalrymple, member for Mackay, offered a similar view of the motive forces of the separation movement:

We want territorial separation, not so much because we have grievances, but because we consider we have arrived at that stage of national existence when we are perfectly fit to govern ourselves. It is no more an indication of our dislike to the south, than it would be in the case of a son who, having reached the age of manhood, determined to set up in business for himself. 86

Use of the parent-child metaphor was characteristic.<sup>87</sup>

The desire for self-government was reinforced by notions that this was an inborn impulse among those of British stock and an hereditary right shared by all British colonists. At a public meeting in Bowen during the abortive moves in 1876 a separationist declared that "We want, as Englishmen, to govern ourselves";<sup>88</sup> this sentiment was echoed in Mackay in 1884: "As Britons they wanted the management of internal affairs in their own hands".<sup>89</sup> According to Hume Black separation would give scope for this peculiar forte of the Anglo-Saxon race:

---

85. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 563.

86. *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1642.

87. Cf., *TH*, 8 January 1887; *MM*, 8 January 1887; Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p. 468. Coote, "Proposed New Colony of Northern Queensland", p. 62 - "the Northern people have, so to speak, grown into the maturity contemplated by the original donors of the country they now occupy, and they ask freedom to exercise the rights accruing from that completed growth. It may be unpleasant for a master to give up the power and emoluments of his position; but is that feeling ever allowed to stand in bar of the just right of the heir to enter into possession?"

88. Report of public meeting, *PDT*, 10 June 1876.

89. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 29 October 1884. Cf., *TH*, 21 May 1887.

they are so specially adapted to self-government. They have never abused the right of self-government when it has been conferred upon them, and I take it that that is the reason why our race have proved themselves better colonists than any other nation. We cannot point to any other nationality - the French, or the Germans, or any other - as having acquired anything like the grand results in local self-government that our race has, and so it will always be. 90

Thus separation was linked with the progressive spirit of the English people:

This separation is only like the swarming of a hive of bees. The English nation has done this over and over again - repeating itself - and I do not see that it is anything out of the natural and usual course of events. 91

Indeed separation was associated with the idea of progress itself, which exerted so powerful an influence on British colonists during the Victorian era. Separation was expected to touch off a "separation boom", ushering in an era of general prosperity. Separationists were convinced that the northern economy would surge ahead when relieved of the burden of the south, which drained off its revenue and deprived it of essential public works. In addition an immediate flow of investment funds from both Australian and overseas sources was expected to follow separation; the *Townsville Herald*, for example, wrote of "the augmented revenue that would immediately result from the certain increased flow of capital and population to North Queensland which the creation of a new colony would cause".<sup>92</sup> This expectation was based on the experience of previously separated colonies, especially Victoria and Queensland, where separation had inaugurated a period of rapid growth and

---

90. Black, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 538. Cf., report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 445.

91. Lumley-Hill, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 559.

92. *TH*, 5 October 1888. Cf., *ibid.*, 8 November 1890; report of public meeting, *MM*, 15 November 1884; *ibid.*, 8 January 1887.



prosperity:<sup>93</sup> "the history of Victoria and Queensland is referred to as striking examples of the phenomenal prosperity which in these instances attended the declaration of colonial independence".<sup>94</sup> Economic growth was expected to follow naturally when local enterprise, guided by local knowledge, was given free rein:

North-Eastern Australia will become far wealthier - far more powerful - from such freedom being granted. A vigorous and prosperous State will be substituted for a discontented, because burdened and impeded section... 95

Separationists generally had enormous faith in the economic potential of northern Queensland, "that end of the colony which has the surest and most certain elements of growth and expansion."<sup>96</sup> Northern resources, especially mineral resources, guaranteed the viability of the proposed new colony:

In pastoral country [the northern districts] are relatively equal to the South of Queensland, and in favourable seasons perhaps superior; in mineral resources they are beyond comparison greater; and in tropical and semi-tropical agriculture have already gone beyond the South ... 97

- 
93. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 445-446. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 447. Chubb, *ibid.*, p. 460. Black, *ibid.*, p. 538, p. 543. Hamilton, *ibid.*, p. 626. Coote, "Proposed New Colony of Northern Queensland", p. 62. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 440. *TH*, 8 November 1890. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 29 October 1884. Smith, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1065. Paul, *ibid.*, p. 1074.
94. Mackay Separation League to the Editor, *BC*, quoted by *MM*, 15 November 1884.
95. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 448. Cf., *MM*, 8 January 1887.
96. *MM*, 26 October 1885. Cf., report of public meeting, *MM*, 29 October 1884.
97. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 447.

These concepts were expressed in a verse of the "Separation Song", which emphasized the importance of gold in the northern economy and in the separation case:

Over all the sunny North  
 Let the cheering cry go forth -  
 We are fighting for the exercise of Right:  
 For we claim to rule and hold  
 As our own this land of gold -  
 We have brought its boundless riches to the light.<sup>98</sup>

Because of the extent and diversity of northern resources, as O'Kane put it in a variation of the recurrent parent-child metaphor, "We shall not start as a colony like Queensland, a 'pastoral baby'...we shall step into our inheritance with the abilities and ambitions of full-grown men..."<sup>99</sup> The extent of northern resources and the development already achieved by these industries made their effective direction from Brisbane difficult;<sup>100</sup> separation was therefore essential to ensure further progress.

In correspondence with the Colonial Office the Separation Council drew attention to the broad social aspirations of the movement. As capital of the colony, it was claimed, Brisbane had attracted "the best social elements of the colony", while society in the north was subject to "constant disintegration".<sup>101</sup> Despite a higher cost of living in the north, salaries of government officials were no larger than those for similar positions in the south, while hardships were greater and the comforts of life fewer;<sup>102</sup> there was an assumption in the civil service that promotion meant transfer to the south, so that the best officers were sent to Brisbane.<sup>103</sup> Northerners were not favoured with official patronage

98. *TH*, 29 January 1887.

99. *MM*, 25 November 1885.

100. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 15 November 1884.

101. NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 438.

102. E.g., on disadvantages of northern teachers, see *TH*, 17 January 1891.

103. *Ibid.*, 21 September 1889. Cf., *RM*, 23 December 1871.

and northern offices were often filled by southern favourites,<sup>104</sup> so that families who wished to promote their sons' careers gravitated towards Brisbane; in the north young men debarred from offices of state lost interest in citizenship. Separation was expected to cure these social ills:

We desire to strengthen our social stability by retaining its best elements, and to foster patriotism in our children by the exhibition of a Government in their midst mindful of their wants, and opening its avenues freely to those whose exemplary citizenship may desire its regard. 105

Separation was seen as the next step in the social evolution of north Queensland:

Our purpose rises beyond mercenary aims...[We] have surrounded ourselves with educational institutions until State schools and schools of art adorn all the townships of the North. Hospitals for the sick poor exist everywhere. Churches and chapels have been built by the voluntary contributions of the people. North Queensland is the seat of an Anglican Bishopric endowed by the people. Our aspirations have been high, but our constructive work stops short below its climax...We cannot inspire the people with the sentiment and ambition of true citizens: we are only the convenient appendage of an authority too distant to see and too absorbed in its own circle to feel sympathy with our aspirations. 106

John Marshall, secretary of the Northern Separation League, succinctly summed up these aspirations at a public meeting in 1889: "Down south they had society. They wanted society in the North".<sup>107</sup> Some expected self-government itself to have an uplifting effect on northern society: the Anglican bishop of north Queensland, Dr. G. H. Stanton, for instance, could "plainly see the supreme advantage that we should derive from Separation, by the training which our higher qualities would receive from the task of self-government".<sup>108</sup>

---

104. *TH*, 30 April 1887. Castling, *QPD*, Vol. 77, 1897, pp. 945-946.

105. NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 438.

106. *Ibid.*

107. *TH*, 9 March 1889.

108. *Ibid.*, 5 February 1887.

Hence decentralization measures were never really alternatives to separation: "the North does not want legislation, however admirable; it wants freedom".<sup>109</sup> Among separationists decentralization was regarded not as an alternative to separation but as an inferior solution, almost an irrelevant palliative; it was not that its efficacy in mitigating economic grievances was doubted, but northerners believed that it would not touch upon other considerations central to the separationist ethos. Decentralization exerted no significant appeal in the north while separation movements were active; it was only during the movements' phases of decline that administrative reform attracted any popular support. Even then, interest in decentralization was always partly attributable to the idea that separate administrative machinery could act as a "stepping-stone" to separation, easing the way to complete severance at a later date by promoting an *esprit de corps* in local government institutions, and providing an opportunity to acquire administrative experience.<sup>110</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s separatism was founded on north Queenslanders' growing sense of community.<sup>111</sup> Clearly the fact that many people had lived in the north for over a decade, while a new generation had been born there, contributed to this sentiment. In 1876 one northerner in six was Queensland-born; by 1891 it was one in three, including many born in northern Queensland itself.<sup>112</sup> The unstable conditions of the pastoral and mining frontiers had now passed, allowing a settled community to develop:

In North Queensland the nomadic days were over for the gold-miners; the squatters were building and improving on land they hoped to leave to their sons; the coastal lowlands were dotted with the holdings of those who chose the settled routine of planter and farmer. 113

---

109. Stephens, *Why Separation*, p. 31. Cf., *TH*, 25 October 1890.

110. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1888. *MM*, 13 December 1887. Letter to the Editor, *TH*, 22 November 1890. *TES*, 10 August 1892.

111. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, Chapter 8.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Improved communications eased social and business intercourse. From the 1870s the telegraph had linked all northern townships; roads were gradually defined, and by 1880 the first coaches serviced the mining communities; during the 1880s railways progressed inland from Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Normanton, and Cooktown. Steamers plied regularly between northern ports, the coastal services still dominated by the A.U.S.N. Company.<sup>114</sup>

A sense of community also arose to some extent from a feeling of alienation from the south. Northerners felt they represented merely an economically-exploited appendage or dependency of the south,<sup>115</sup> which contributed to "a separateness in feelings and in interests, between us and Queenslanders, which demands separate representative institutions".<sup>116</sup> More positive elements were also present. Loyalty to the north grew from a sense of pride in having conquered a distant and difficult country, despite the rigours of the tropical environment:<sup>117</sup>

we have as much interest in, and love for the land of our adoption, which we have reclaimed for Civilization and Progress, as ever felt by older and more advanced communities. 118

Associated with this were convictions about the superiority of those called to "tame the wilderness" and extend the boundaries of European civilization,<sup>119</sup> "people who...left all the refinements, elegancies and pleasures of civilized life to make North Queensland what it is..."<sup>120</sup> It was believed that this was achieved by

---

114. Lewis, *Ports of Queensland*, p. 95.

115. E.g., *PDT*, 22 July 1876, 13 April, 22 June 1878.

116. *TH*, 8 January 1887. Cf., Burns, *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 769 - "They do not know us or feel with us. They do not sympathise with us or our aspirations. Our aspirations are entirely different from theirs, our products are different, and our climate is different in every way. What suits them cannot possibly suit us; you might as well argue that the laws of England are suitable for South America".

117. *TH*, 26 July 1890.

118. *CC*, 1 January 1878.

119. E.g., Palmer, *Early Days in North Queensland*, pp. 1-3, p. 8, Chapter 5, Chapter 10.

120. *PDT*, 22 June 1878.

northern pioneers without southern assistance, even in spite of southern hindrance. This pioneering ethos, evident as early as the 1860s on the pastoral frontier, appropriated and modified by miners in the 1870s, contributed to the growing sense of community in the 1880s and 1890s. It fed a mythology of a distinctive "northern type", moulded by the environment into a physically hardier, psychologically more resilient "North Queenslander".<sup>121</sup> The early delimitation of the area of north Queensland, comprising districts north of the Cape Palmerston line, also encouraged a sense of separate identity. Its usual designations, "North Queensland" or "the North", implied the existence of a distinct territory, a recognized territorial division within the colony; it was for this reason indeed that Griffith, as an opponent of separation, objected to the term "the North", preferring the purely descriptive "northern portion of the colony", which avoided the normative content of the name.<sup>122</sup> All these factors played a part in the complex process which culminated in a consciousness of separateness. The outward manifestations of this sense of identity were ubiquitous, immediately apparent to visitors to northern Queensland during this period:

Pick up the card of a merchant in the North, and you will find on it not "Queensland", but "North Queensland". Use a sheet of club paper, and it bears the "N.Q." Every newspaper prints it; every man heads his correspondence with it; and there is a separate almanac compiled for "North Queensland", thus ignoring Pugh. 123

---

121. E.g., the theory of Dr Ahearne, president of the North Queensland Medical Society, on the distinctive characteristics of the "North Queenslander". *TH*, 26 July 1890.

122. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 455; Griffith's reply to deputation of Townsville Separation League, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1181. On the "correlation between accepting and using the name of a thing and recognizing its characteristic and distinguishing features", see C. Pletsch, "'The Socialist Nation of the German Democratic Republic' or the Asymmetry in Nation and Ideology between the Two Germanies" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1979, p. 324. Nevertheless separatists did not favour North Queensland as a permanent name for the proposed colony, not wishing it to be known forever as a "lopped off branch of Queensland proper". Letter to the Editor, *NQTTTS*, 25 October 1886.

123. G. Parker, *Round the Compass in Australia* (Sydney 1892), pp. 275-276. Cf., A.J. Ivimey, *Mining and Separation in North Queensland* (Brisbane 1888), p. 30.

Consciousness of identity as a community gave rise to a desire for political expression, a desire continually frustrated by the overwhelming southern majority.<sup>124</sup>

Whether this sense of community could be called regionalism depends in part at least on definition. Geographers have recognized two types of region - formal and functional;<sup>125</sup> in a strict geographical sense, north Queensland did not, and does not,<sup>126</sup> meet either set of criteria. However a case can be made for a more subjective kind of regionalism - for recognizing as a region an area whose inhabitants over a period of time consider it a region. It seems that in the eyes of northerners, especially during the 1880s and 1890s, north Queensland had an existence as a separate region, severed from the rest of the colony by its tropical climate, drainage system, distinctive terrain, and economic conditions;<sup>127</sup> as has been seen, the concept of the northern region was filled out according to local perspectives.<sup>128</sup>

Positive aspirations are quite as important as grievances against the south in understanding the motives of separationists. They have been neglected by most writers on the subject who have concentrated upon grievances, and especially upon economic grievances, thus inevitably presenting a one-sided picture. This in no way minimizes the importance of grievances in promoting separatism, but it suggests that community loyalty and regionalism, together with the quest for political expression through self-government, should

---

124. Willmetts to the Editor, *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 427.

125. See R. Symanski & J.L. Newman, "Formal, Functional, and Nodal Regions: Three Fallacies" *Professional Geographer*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1973, pp. 350-352. McCarty, "Australian Regional History", p. 91.

126. See Northern Regional Study Policy Committee, *Northern Region: Basic Investigation of Prospects and Problems* (September 1973), pp. 18-19.

127. See above pp. 188-199. Indeed north Queensland was believed to have more in common with Guatemala than with southern Queensland or the southern colonies. *TH*, 23 November 1889.

128. See above pp. 189-191.

be added to economic self-interest as factors impelling northern separation movements.

To some extent it was the positive, forward-looking approach to separation which helped to diffuse the force of the movements: separationists were motivated by a vision of the future, and internecine feuding over the precise details of this vision proved an important cause of the failure of the movements. Political groups vied for power in the anticipated new regime. Speculation about the effects of separation on prevailing power relationships was common - political parties, social classes, sectional and local interests competed for supremacy in the new colony. These conflicts contributed largely to the disintegration of the movements.

Whenever northern separation was discussed statistics, particularly financial statistics, had a place in the argument. Especially in the decade 1884-94 separationists and their opponents produced masses of statistics to support their respective views. To sort out these statistics and the tangled arguments based on them is a complex task, made no easier by the absence in many cases of appropriate, reliable official records. Records which were kept often gave insufficient detail about the sources of revenue and the direction of expenditure; it was only in 1871-73 and after June 1888 that separate accounts were kept of revenue and expenditure in the several financial divisions of Queensland. Not uncommonly official accounts were inaccurate and inconsistent: researching for his speech on separation in 1886, Macrossan was frustrated by disagreements between different Treasurers' reports, complaining that the government's accounts would be a disgrace to any Brisbane grocer!<sup>129</sup> What follows is an attempt to analyze the statistical case for separation, as presented in petitions, submissions and pamphlets, in parliament and in northern newspapers from 1886 to the 1890s.

The separation petitions of 1866 and 1871 were rather homely productions; points were made principally by assertion rather than statistical argument. The petitioners of 1866 simply gave a rough

---

129. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 445.



estimate of population north of the 25th parallel, comparing this with the population of Moréton Bay in 1859; a similar comparison was made with respect to revenue. It was reasoned that if Moreton Bay was entitled to and capable of independence in 1859, then the same was true of northern Queensland, now in a similar position as regards revenue and population.<sup>130</sup> This argument was employed in virtually every statement of the separation case until the end of the century.

The 1871 petition for separation at the Tropic of Capricorn presented a more careful estimate of population which, together with a livestock count, was evidently considered sufficient proof of the viability of the proposed colony.<sup>131</sup> However the Rockhampton League's petition for separation at Dawes Range included statistical appendices which, in the absence of any other, merit examination. An itemized account of revenue receipts north of Dawes Range was given, and it was calculated that the combined "Middle and Northern Districts" had a local surplus of revenue over expenditure of £52,407.<sup>132</sup> This surplus, it was asserted, "is absorbed in paying interest on Loans for Southern local works".<sup>133</sup> The customs revenue of districts north of Dawes Range was also calculated, including an estimate of duty paid in Brisbane on goods consumed in the north, estimated at 20% of Brisbane's total customs receipts.<sup>134</sup> Since this indirect tax was passed on in the price of the article, northerners contended that the duty was actually paid where it was consumed, rather than where it entered the colony. As no record was kept of the destination of dutiable goods, estimation was necessary. The addition of such an estimate became in later years a standard procedure in separationists' revenue calculations. Since the Palmer ministry declined to advise the Secretary of State on the movement, there was

---

130. Separation Petition, *PDT*, 17 October 1866.

131. Enclosure with Normanby to Kimberley 26 December 1871, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol. 1, pp. 660-662.

132. Appendix B, enclosed with O'Connell to Kimberley confidential, 24 January 1871, CO 234/26.

133. *Ibid.*

134. Appendix C, *ibid.*

no official comment on these statistics.

The first thorough examination of financial relationships between different districts of the colony was undertaken in 1877 by the Royal Commission on Financial Separation, which drew attention to northerners' disproportionately large contribution to customs and excise, the colony's largest source of revenue. In 1876 the contribution per head of population to customs and excise in the four financial divisions defined by the Commission was as follows:<sup>135</sup>

TABLE 4: 1876 Customs Revenue

<u>Division</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Customs per Head</u>
Southern	101,138	£2.14.8
Northern	27,807	£4.3.5
Wide Bay-Burnett	22,284	£1.8.9
Central	22,054	£3.3.1

In the north, 16% of the population contributed 24% of customs revenue. These figures made no attempt to credit duty to the division in which goods were consumed; had this been done, Northern and to a lesser extent Central customs revenue would have been higher, the Southern and Wide Bay-Burnett lower. Including the Wide Bay-Burnett and Central divisions in the accounts tended to disguise the discrepancy between the contributions of "north" and "south": amalgamating the Southern, Wide Bay-Burnett and Central divisions, the average contribution in the south was £2.12.0. Returns for the first five months of 1877, however, showed the gap between north and south to have considerably narrowed;<sup>136</sup> indeed the 1876 returns had shown that divisional differences had evened out to some extent since 1874.<sup>137</sup> W.L.G. Drew predicted that this trend would continue as the social development of the north gradually brought its customs payments into line with those of the south.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, in the mid-1880s the ratio between northern and

---

135. Appendix No. 7, Report of Financial Separation Commission, *QV&P*, 1877, Vol. 2, p. 187.

136. Appendix No. 11, *ibid.*, p. 189. Southern division £1.2.6 per head; Wide Bay-Burnett 10s.; Central £1.7.4; Northern £1.10.0.

137. North £5.10.4 per head; south £2.14.0 per head. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 19, 1875, p. 1066.

138. Report of Financial Separation Commission, *QV&P*, 1877, Vol. 2, p. 153. Cf., Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 455.

southern payments remained virtually unchanged from 1877.<sup>139</sup> Discrepancy in customs contributions between northern and southern Queensland was usually attributed to the larger proportion of adult males in the north, which resulted in higher consumption of dutiable goods.<sup>140</sup> It was also linked, more facetiously, to a higher consumption of alcohol among northern colonists.<sup>141</sup>

When discussing revenue contributions, proponents of northern autonomy naturally concentrated on customs revenue; examining the overall revenue position considerably modifies the picture. A more comprehensive view is obtained if divisional accounts of revenue and expenditure are compared, first treating customs as an item of general revenue, then defining it as local revenue. The following table shows balances of revenue and expenditure for 1876-77 in each case:<sup>142</sup>

TABLE 5: Divisional Accounts 1876-77

<u>Division</u>	<u>Balance of Divisional Account (Customs as General)</u>	<u>Balance of Divisional Account (Customs as Local)</u>
Southern	£10,885	£7,857
Wide Bay-Burnett	£42,662	£6,857
Central	£20,000	£27,436
North	-£5,575	£25,565

In the Southern and Wide Bay-Burnett divisions treating customs as local revenue as opposed to general results in a decreased balance of revenue over expenditure; for Wide Bay-Burnett the decrease is very large because duty on a large percentage of goods consumed in the division was paid at the port of Brisbane. In the centre there results a larger credit balance, but the most striking difference occurs in the north where there is an increase in the credit balance of some £30,000 and, moreover, the difference between a surplus and a deficit. This comparison highlights the north's large contribution to customs and relatively small contribution to other sources of

139. North - £3.19.4 per head; south - £2.18.8. Macrossan, *ibid.*, p. 448.

140. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 19, 1875, pp. 1066-1067.

141. Hemmant (Bulimba), *ibid.*, p. 1071. Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 455.

142. From Dickson, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, pp. 726-727.

revenue.

This is borne out by land revenue receipts. Land revenue was a smaller part of total revenue, ranking second to customs revenue, but the meagre contribution of the north is notable.

TABLE 6: 1876 Land Revenue<sup>143</sup>

<u>Division</u>	<u>Land Revenue per Head</u>
Southern	£1.8.0
Wide Bay-Burnett	£2.2.6
Centre	£2.0.0
North	14.0

A straight comparison between north and south (south comprising Southern, Central and Wide Bay-Burnett districts) further emphasizes the small northern contribution.

The Commission looked at accounts of revenue and expenditure in the various divisions for the years 1871, 1872 and 1873. The accounts were prepared in accordance with Palmer's financial separation bill of 1872, which counted customs duties as general revenue.

TABLE 7: 1871 Divisional Balances<sup>144</sup>

<u>Division</u>	<u>Divisional Balance (£)</u>
Southern	Dr 13,819
Wide Bay-Burnett	Cr 15,627
Centre	Cr 858
North	Cr 14,646

TABLE 8: 1872 Divisional Balances<sup>145</sup>

<u>Division</u>	<u>Divisional Balance (£)</u>	<u>Approx. Population</u>	<u>Credit Balance per Head</u>
Southern	Cr 57,568	74,658	15s.5d
Wide Bay-Burnett	Cr 40,881	16,890	£2.8.5
Centre	Cr 18,558	17,948	£1.0.8
North	Cr 27,258	10,608	£2.11.5

143. *Ibid.*, p. 727.

144. Appendix No. 12, Report of Financial Separation Commission, *QV&P*, 1877, Vol. 2, p. 190.

145. Appendix No. 13, *ibid.*, p. 191.

TABLE 9: 1873 Divisional Balances<sup>146</sup>

<u>Division</u>	<u>Divisional Balance (£)</u>	<u>Approx. Population</u>	<u>Credit Balance per Head</u>
Southern	Cr 49,055	74,658	13s.2d
Wide Bay-Burnett	Cr 36,445	16,890	£2.3.2
Centre	Cr 30,109	17,948	£2.13.7
North	Cr 17,639	10,608	£1.13.3

In 1871 the Southern division alone had a deficit, amounting to £13,819; this meant that the other divisions were paying for expenditure on southern works. The same cannot be said of 1872 and 1873, for in these years all four divisions enjoyed a credit balance. Nevertheless, in both years the Southern division, on a population basis, contributed less to the surplus than any other division. After 1873 the practice of keeping separate divisional accounts in accordance with Palmer's bill was discontinued.

Introducing the Financial Districts Bill of 1877 J.R. Dickson, Treasurer in the Douglas ministry, presented statistics for the debt per head incurred for local works in each division for the period 1859-77:<sup>147</sup>

TABLE 10: Local Debt 1859-77

<u>Division</u>	<u>Debt per Head (£)</u>	<u>Railway Debt per Head (£)</u>
Southern	35.12.0	28.16.6
Wide Bay-Burnett	7.10.6	
Central	56.15.8	46.11.2
North	7.18.8	

Queensland's public debt amounted to £10.17.0 per head of population.<sup>148</sup> The figures in Table 10 suggest on first glance that the north had indeed been passed over in the allocation of loan monies; although Table 10 shows "debt per head" it could be regarded as "benefit per head", the debt being spread over the whole population. However, the statistics covered the entire period since

---

146. Appendix No. 14, *ibid.*, p. 192.

147. From Dickson, *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.725.

148. *Ibid.*

separation, while debt per head was calculated on the basis of current population. If average divisional population for the period had been used, the difference between north and south would have been considerably less, since northern population was growing more rapidly. Construction of a trunk railway in a division was the critical factor behind the figures. For instance, in the south the debt per head for railways was £28.16.6, leaving £6.15.6 per head for other purposes, less in fact than the amount made available to the north for purposes other than railways. Though denied a proportionate part of loan votes, the north bore a share of the interest on these loans: Macrossan estimated that to 1877 the north had paid towards interest about £400,000 in excess of its fair share.<sup>149</sup>

General debt was supposedly incurred for purposes of benefit to the whole colony, such as public buildings and departmental expenses. It was apportioned between financial districts on a population basis, which could mask a disproportionately large allocation to some parts of the colony. For example, immigration was included in general debt, although the north had received only £40,000 of a total £1,100,000 of loan money spent on immigration since 1859, far less than it was entitled to on a population basis; as a result northern debt for immigration equalled the total local debt of the division.<sup>150</sup>

It may be concluded that during the 1870s northerners had substantial grounds for complaint about both the distribution of consolidated revenue and allocation of loan money. They contributed largely to customs revenue but made a relatively small contribution to other forms of revenue. Certainly there were genuine grievances, but for a number of reasons these were not so oppressive as separatist polemics often suggested.

By the 1880s statistical arguments were more complex, separationists using statistics for three main purposes: to show that the north suffered financial injustice; to show that northern Queensland was financially capable of maintaining a separate government; to support an argument based on precedents and on comparisons with contemporary self-governing British dependencies. To prove injustice separationists presented statistics comparing northern revenue to expenditure

---

149. *Ibid.*, p. 742.

150. Macrossan, *ibid.*, p.743.

from consolidated revenue; comparing expenditure per head of population between financial districts; and comparing loan allocations on a population basis.

In a letter accompanying the separation petition in 1886, separationists stressed that northern per capita revenue contributions were larger than the Queensland average; this was true of the two largest components of revenue - taxation and land revenue.<sup>151</sup> In 1886 Macrossan calculated that, crediting the north with duties paid on goods transhipped to consumers in the north, northerners paid 30% of customs revenue and 25% of total revenue, while constituting 19% of Queensland's population.<sup>152</sup> In contrast to the 1870s, northerners now made a greater than average contribution to land revenue as well; indeed the rate at which northern land was being sold by the government concerned northerners, who feared that by the time separation was achieved the north would have lost its real assets.<sup>153</sup>

On the expenditure side separationists' arguments were less developed: suitable official returns, detailing expenditure by district, they found unobtainable.<sup>154</sup> Consequently they concentrated on loan expenditure, especially on railways which was the largest item. The Separation Council calculated that to July 1884 the north had been allocated £2,101,875 from loans;<sup>155</sup> the main complaint was not the amount voted, but the long delays in spending loan allocations. For instance, although money for the Bowen, Cooktown and Herberton railways had been voted up to four years before, surveys of the Bowen and Herberton lines remained incomplete, while less than one-third of

---

151. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 447, p. 449. Customs and excise, an estimate of duty paid in Brisbane on goods destined for the north, stamp duties, and licences were included in taxation revenue.

152. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p. 444. Customs revenue per head in Queensland was £3.2.7; in the north £3.19.4; in the south £2.18.8. If the north was credited with duty paid in Brisbane on goods consumed in the north, the northern contribution was estimated at £4.19.3 per head, the southern £2.14.0 per head. *Ibid.*, p. 448.

153. *TH*, 20 July, 5 October 1889. *CP*, 7, 21, 24 August 1889. *NA*, 21 August 1889. *TES*, 29 April 1890.

154. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 447.

155. *Ibid.*, p. 450.

the vote for the Cooktown railway had been spent.<sup>156</sup> When Griffith retorted that delays also occurred in the south, M.H. Black showed that 71% of southern railway votes had been spent, compared to 46% of loan allocations to northern railways.<sup>157</sup> To July 1884 it was calculated that there remained £812,963 of unexpended balances on northern loan account,<sup>158</sup> so that only £1,289,114 had actually been spent. Separationists compared the interest payable on this amount with that payable on the north's share of Queensland's public debt, apportioned on a population basis:

The interest on £1,289,114 at 4½ per cent. is  
£58,010; the interest charged on the per capita  
calculation is at £2. 9s. per head, £128,950;  
the overdue burden, £70,940. 159

However, this conclusion is misleading since it was not only in the north that expenditure of loan votes was delayed, though it was certainly more common in the north.

In June 1885 Griffith stated at Townsville that although the amount of rail-loan expenditure due to the north on a population basis would have been £2,760,000, £2,446,000 had in fact been allocated, or only £314,000 less than its share. Whereas Griffith advanced this as proof of the fairness of loan distribution, separationists seized upon the Premier's confession that the north had not received its due. Furthermore northerners calculated, using official statistics for 1883-85, that the shortfall was actually £1,644,000 not £314,000, since little over a million of the money allocated had been spent.<sup>160</sup>

Griffith took up this loan question again in his remarks on the separation petition. His figure for total loan expenditure in the northern district differed from that of the Separation Council by £727,105,<sup>161</sup> considerably more than the annual loan expenditure in

156. *Ibid.*

157. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 446.

158. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 450.

159. *Ibid.*

160. Extract from *The Times*, 2 October 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 429. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p. 162.

161. Table 3, Appendix B, Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 427.



the north, which in 1885-86 amounted to £511,285.<sup>162</sup> It is impossible to establish which total is accurate since the official accounts do not give sufficient detail about loan votes. Part of the discrepancy is explained by Griffith's method of estimating the northern share of immigration debt: Griffith used a figure of one-fifth to calculate the northern share because in 1886 when his statistics were compiled northern population was approximately one-fifth of Queensland's total population.<sup>163</sup> Separationists, on the other hand, had based their calculations on the latest population returns available to them, which gave a proportion of one-eighth.<sup>164</sup> This accounted for a difference of about £200,000 in the final figure. Griffith's use of current population statistics to apportion a debt incurred over a period since 1859 was a dubious procedure in any case, justifiable only on the grounds of ease; in any case it begged the question about whether the north had in fact received a share of immigrants in proportion to its population.<sup>165</sup> It is also noteworthy that Griffith's figure for northern loan expenditure to June 1886 is greater than that given in the official return subsequently published of northern loan expenditure to June 1887.<sup>166</sup>

Griffith tried to explain delays in spending northern railway allocations, denying that they were unreasonable and in each case promising that work would be pushed ahead with all expedition.<sup>167</sup> However, in 1890 the Separation League repeated this complaint, instancing delays in surveying and building the Normanton, Cairns-Herberton and Bowen-Northern Railway lines; they could now state that votes passed up to eight years before had not been spent.<sup>168</sup> Indeed even at the end of 1900, of £12,666,839 voted for lines in the

---

162. Table 2, *ibid.*

163. Table 3, *ibid.*

164. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 450.

165. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, pp. 445-446.

166. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 808. Cf., Table 4, Appendix B, Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 428.

167. *Ibid.*, p. 423.

168. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 811.

southern division, £11,146,302 had been spent, leaving a balance of £1,460,537; while in the north £949,851 remained unexpended of a vote of £4,735,158:<sup>169</sup> 12% of loan allocations was unspent in the south, 20% in the north.

Separationists maintained that unexpended northern loan votes were often diverted to southern public works,<sup>170</sup> a claim which received some support during debate on McIlwraith's budget in 1888. Griffith pointed out that once Loan Acts were passed, the money was paid into consolidated revenue where it was available for expenditure by the government without an Appropriation Act, contrary to sound principles of administration. Griffith and O'Sullivan, the member for Stanley, cited cases where money voted for certain works had been "spirited away" and used for other purposes.<sup>171</sup> Therefore it was doubtful whether the north's unexpended balances had any existence outside the columns of the public accounts.

In 1886 Griffith, taking advantage of the superior resources at his command, engaged Treasury officials for a considerable period in preparing an account of revenue and expenditure in the northern district for 1884-85 and 1885-86;<sup>172</sup> this was one occasion when the Premier, as head of the government, had an immense advantage over dissident separationists. Griffith also had access to more recent statistics than those available to the Separation Council; his use of different statistics makes comparison with separationists' arguments difficult.

He concluded that in both 1884-85 and 1885-86 expenditure in the north from consolidated revenue exceeded not only its share on

169. *Queensland Official Year Book 1901* (Brisbane 1901), p. 378.

170. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 450.

171. Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 55, 1888, p. 280; O'Sullivan, *ibid.*, p. 1070. This issue was later set at rest as it related to past expenditure by an Indemnity Act passed in 1890, and by the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1890 which dealt with future expenditure. Griffith to Norman 12 January 1893, *QV&P*, 1893, Vol. 3, p. 1048.

172. In 1884 the Colonial Treasurer had admitted that it would take a Treasury clerk twelve months to ascertain particulars of revenue and expenditure in the different districts. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 386.

a population basis but its total revenue.<sup>173</sup> However, interviewing the Secretary of State in May 1887, Hume Black drew attention to discrepancies detrimental to the separationists' case between the Premier's report and a Treasury minute of August 1886.<sup>174</sup> In 1890 separationists mounted a more fundamental attack on Griffith's compilations, pointing out that Griffith himself had subsequently abandoned the principles on which his tables had been based. In his Financial Districts Bill of 1887 Griffith recognized the principle that the north should be credited with duty paid in southern ports on goods consumed in the north, which northerners estimated at 20% of Brisbane's customs revenue. By this reckoning, northern revenue in 1885-86 would have risen by about £60,000,<sup>175</sup> not only closing the gap between revenue and expenditure but giving the north a surplus of £25,000. In 1888 Griffith also adopted the separationist view that railway receipts and expenditure should be included in local account rather than general account: incorporating this principle in his accounts would have further increased the northern surplus.<sup>176</sup> Since neither side was above misrepresentation it is difficult to come to any conclusion about this extended

---

173. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 422, pp. 428-435.

174. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 448. Cf., extract from Brisbane *Observer*, *NQTTTS*, 6 April 1887. Figures presented in a Treasury return laid before the Legislative Assembly in August 1886 did not tally with those of Griffith. For instance, Griffith stated that local expenditure in the northern district for the financial year 1884-85 was £512,785 and that adding one-sixth of the general expenses of government, total expenditure in the north was £614,814. In contrast the Treasury return for the same year gave expenditure in the north as £514,421 which when added to one-sixth of general expenditure, £60,726, gave a total of £575,147 - a difference of nearly £39,000. There was also a discrepancy in the figures for expenditure in the north in 1885-86. According to the Treasurer's statement local expenditure in the north during the first nine months of the year was at the rate of £480,000 per annum; to reach the Premier's total for the year, expenditure in the last quarter would need to have been at the rate of £864,000 per annum. See Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 422, pp. 428-435. Cf., Treasury Returns, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 1043-1044.

175. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 812.

176. *Ibid.* Nevertheless these principles were never incorporated in the government accounts.

statistical debate between Griffith and separationists, but the overall impression is that northerners got the better of the argument.

Statistics were also used to demonstrate the north's capacity for independence. In 1886 northern revenue was shown to be greater than the estimated cost of separate government.<sup>177</sup> In 1890 a more elaborate examination reached the same conclusion.<sup>178</sup> The problem was that separationists' estimates of revenue were almost certainly exaggerated, as officials at the Colonial Office noticed. In the seven Australian colonies revenue per head ranged from £4.4.0 in Tasmania to £10.9.0 in Western Australia, averaging a little over £7 per head; separationists estimated northern revenue at about £13 per head.<sup>179</sup> Such over-optimism damaged their credibility.

To prove the viability of the proposed colony, separationists also presented statistics for population, landholding, livestock, and current production, and examined the prospects of the major industries. Statistics showed that in the period 1883-87 exports from Southern and Central districts combined rose only by about four per cent, while the northern increase was 60%.<sup>180</sup> The great productive potential of the north, with its vast and varied untapped resources and eager, industrious population was emphasized.<sup>181</sup>

Separationists compared north Queensland to Port Phillip and Moreton Bay immediately prior to separation.<sup>182</sup> Moreton Bay, for instance, had been judged ready for self-government when its population numbered 17,000 and its revenue was about £200,000 per annum; in 1887 northern Queensland already had a population over 60,000 and a revenue of over £600,000.<sup>183</sup> Comparisons were also made

177. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 447-448.

178. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, pp. 813-814, p. 816.

179. Mercer, minute 5 June 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO 234/51.

180. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 815.

181. *Ibid.*, pp. 814-815. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 446, pp. 448-449.

182. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 808.

183. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 449. Cf., 1866 separation petition, *PDT*, 17 October 1866.

with Western Australia, especially in view of Lord Knutsford's statement in regard to Western Australia that a population of 40,000 and a revenue of £400,000 was *prima facie* a case for self-government:<sup>184</sup> separationists ignored the fact that Western Australia had been a separate colony for 60 years. On the basis of revenue, north Queensland was ranked eighth among twenty other British dependencies already possessing representative or quasi-representative institutions;<sup>185</sup> the implication was that north Queensland was ready to join the ranks of self-governing colonies. At least one highly-placed official at the Colonial Office found this a very persuasive line of argument.<sup>186</sup>

Discussion of the financial aspects of separation gave great scope for misrepresentation; practised by both sides, it further complicated an already complex debate, estranging the contending parties. There were discrepancies between Griffith's statistical compilations and those of his Treasurer. Griffith's explanation of the divisional accounts during the 1886 separation debate in the Assembly was another instance of misrepresentation, or at very best complete misunderstanding.<sup>187</sup> Evidently Macrossan had so poor a grasp of the subject that he failed to point out Griffith's errors. Nor were separationists blameless. Between 1884 and 1890 they raised their estimate of northern revenue from £505,608 to £927,564, although in the same period population only increased from 52,633 to 70,000; separationists were postulating an 83% increase in revenue with a population increase of only 32%. Caught out by the Colonial Office, all their statistical arguments became suspect. Many misleading conclusions were drawn from statistics compiled upon untenable bases; both sides relied on "estimates", which somehow always favoured their case.

There was disagreement over methods of compiling returns. The government accounts, based on Griffith's Financial Districts Bill of

---

184. Knutsford to Broome 12 December 1887, *BPP Australia*, Vol. 31, 1889, p. 367. See below p. 328.

185. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 814.

186. Bramston, minute 3 June 1885, on despatch No. 31, CO 234/46.

187. Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, pp. 453-454.

1887,<sup>188</sup> included general revenue and general expenditure categories in addition to three local accounts for the Northern, Central and Southern divisions. According to separationists this masked the north's greater than average per capita contribution to general revenue and its less than average share of general expenditure. Northerners complained of being credited with only one-fifth of general revenue, since northern population constituted one-fifth of that of Queensland, when in reality they contributed one-third of total revenue. Therefore in their own calculations as many revenue items as possible were included on local account. On the other hand items of expenditure such as telegraph lines and mail services, which cost more per head in the north, northerners tended to regard as works to be placed on general account so that the burden was spread over the entire population.<sup>189</sup> The government's procedure in making up its accounts was exactly the reverse.

The debates on financial statistics were interminable, and inconclusive. Separationists rejected many of the principles on which official returns were based. Derived from different frameworks, the statistics produced by the two parties were not comparable; effective discussion was impossible. Both systems were internally consistent; their tenability depended on the extent to which they were true reflections of economic reality in Queensland in the 1880s and 1890s. To choose between them it would have been necessary to define that reality, an impossible task in the absence of suitable records. Neither of the contending parties in Queensland made the attempt; the only independent party, the Colonial Office, regarded this "ticklish" matter of statistics as one which could only be thrashed out in the colony itself.<sup>190</sup>

---

188. See below pp.286-287.

189. Analysis of the 1889 return, *TH*, 5 October 1889.

190. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 451.

## CHAPTER 8

### STRATEGY

The Queensland government, like all colonial and state governments before and since, opposed the separation movement. Because of this, and because separationists believed that the decision on separation lay with the Queen - in reality with her ministerial advisers - the separation campaign was fought mainly in England, by means of letters and deputations to the Colonial Office, letters in the English press, and to a lesser extent activity in the British parliament. Agitation in Queensland, such as the separation debate in the Legislative Assembly in August 1886, was undertaken always with an eye to the effect it would produce in England. Inevitably the representatives of the separatist organization in England, the London Committee, came into conflict with the Queensland government's representative in London, the Agent-General.

Part of the ideology of the separation movement was the belief, based on an interpretation of Imperial legislation, that the power of separation rested exclusively with the Crown; the corollary was that the views of the colonial parliament on separation were immaterial. Writing to the Governor, Musgrave, in November 1885, Thankfull Willmettt clarified the legal basis of the Separation Council's position, traversing the relevant Imperial Acts from 1840 to 1861. Willmettt contended that the long succession of Acts conferred and continuously confirmed the separation powers of the Crown.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he pointed out that

throughout the Imperial legislation the interference with or approval of by colonial legislatures as a condition precedent to the exercise of the powers conferred upon the Crown to create new colonies is nowhere even alluded to.<sup>2</sup>

Precedent was cited in support of this interpretation, separationists recalling that the opposition of New South Wales had not prevented

---

1. Willmettt to Musgrave 16 November 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.433.

2. *Ibid.*, p.434.

the separation of Victoria and Queensland.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed separationists believed that Imperial law conferred on the Crown not only a right, but a duty to grant separation to meet the wishes and requirements of colonists; despite even the conventional humility affected in petitions to the Crown, separationists stated unabashedly that they would regard the granting of separation as "fulfilment of an obligation".<sup>4</sup> William Coote had declared, in his first address to separationists in Townsville, that they "had but to appeal to the Queen and she was under an obligation to grant them separation".<sup>5</sup> At no time did Coote deviate from the contention that the power of separation rested exclusively with the Crown, and he had great influence on the strategy of the separation movement: more than that of any other individual, his interpretation of the separation case determined the orientation of the whole movement. The author of innumerable ideological tracts, including pamphlets, leaflets, circulars, official letters and lengthy letters to local newspapers, Coote also drew up the 1886 petition. His influence probably owed much to his extensive knowledge of what would have been to many local separationists the esoteric fields of constitutional law, statistics, and official protocol. His lucid, convincing and, above all, persistent exposition of issues of strategy reinforced this authority.

As a consequence of their stance on the separation powers of the Crown, separationists focussed their attention on the British Colonial Office. Efforts were also made to enlist the support of English politicians and newspapers in a position to influence the Secretary of State; in 1885, for example, circulars outlining the separation case were sent to members of both Houses of parliament.<sup>6</sup> To facilitate activity in London an organizational link was forged with the formation of a London agency in October 1885. The Separation Convention had appointed E.S. Rawson of Mackay and Dr J. Ahearne of Townsville as London delegates. Soon after the Convention, the Separation Council decided to establish a branch in London to assist the delegates and to promote the movement through the press and at the Colonial Office.<sup>7</sup>

---

3. *Ibid.*

4. Separation Petition, *ibid.*, p.441. C f., NQSC to Derby, *ibid.*, p.448.

5. *Territorial Separation*, p.32.

6. *NQTS*, 16 July 1885, published such a circular, written by Coote.

7. Report of NQSC meeting, *NQTS*, 18 July 1885. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, pp. 162-163.



Acting on instructions from the Council, Rawson convened a meeting of those interested in north Queensland separation in London on 1 October 1885. The Hon. Harold Finch-Hatton, who for some years had lived in the Mackay district, presided.<sup>8</sup> He compared north Queensland to Queensland in 1859, arguing that the north was in a better position to form a separate colony than Queensland at the time of separation. He denied accusations made in a letter to *The Times* that there was a connection between the movement and coloured labour:<sup>9</sup> as a Queensland squatter and miner in no way connected with the sugar industry, he pledged his support to the movement. Rawson and H. Hollis Hopkins of Townsville supported Finch-Hatton's remarks, and a resolution to form a committee was carried without dissent.<sup>10</sup> In January 1886 the London Committee took offices in a central position in Charing Cross.

Dr Ahearne, the senior delegate from the Convention, left Townsville for England at the end of October, assuming on his arrival the positions of

- 
8. Harold Heneage Finch-Hatton (1856-1904) was the fourth son of George Finch-Hatton, the tenth earl of Winchilsea. In 1876 he had joined his brother Henry in Queensland, remaining in the colony until 1883. For some time he was engaged in pastoralism at Mt Spencer, but subsequently went prospecting in the Nebo area, finding gold at Mount Britten, about 160 kilometres from Mackay. Finch-Hatton's amusing account of his exploits in Australia is to be found in his book, *Advance Australia: An Account of eight years' work, wandering, and amusement in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria* (London 1885). On three occasions - in 1885, 1886, and 1892 - Finch-Hatton unsuccessfully contested the seat of East Nottingham for the Conservative Party; in 1895 he was returned unopposed in Newark, but resigned in 1898. Finch-Hatton was one of the founders of the Imperial Federation League, acting as treasurer for some time. *Dictionary of National Biography*; Supplement 1901-1911, Vol. 2, p.24. *Burke's Peerage* (1956), p.2335.
  9. Report of meeting, *The Times*, 2 October 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.429. See below p. 248.
  10. *Ibid.*, p.430. The Committee included W. McArthur, M.P., F. and A. Neame (planters); H. Brandon (late manager of Australian Joint Stock Bank, Mackay); R.N. Moir (late manager of Union Bank, Mackay); W. Kirk (merchant); E.M. Young (manager of Australian Mortgage, Land and Finance Company, London); Alfred Hewitt (planter); W. Grimaldi (late Town Clerk, Townsville); O. de Satge (squatter); M.D. McEachern (merchant); A.W. Stirling (miner); J.H.B. Warner (squatter); J. Thomas (journalist); C.C. Rawson (squatter); W.A. Browne, M.D., A. Brodziak (merchant). Moles, *Separatist Movements*, p.64.

secretary and treasurer of the London Committee. However both Rawson and Hollis Hopkins soon found that private business compelled their return to Queensland by the end of the year. On his return to north Queensland, Hollis Hopkins took his seat in the Separation Council as representative of the London branch. Before leaving London Rawson nominated Finch-Hatton to supervise the activities of the London Committee; the Separation Council confirmed his appointment as Chairman of the committee in November 1885.<sup>11</sup> Finch-Hatton's appointment was criticized from all sides, on the one hand, because of certain eccentricities of personal character and because of an alleged lack of social respectability:

In a general way there is nothing to be said against this amiable and energetic young gentleman, and in North Queensland he has many admirers, chiefly by virtue of the fact that, being the brother of a real earl, he can smoke strong tobacco and crack a stockwhip like any ordinary Bogantungan bushwhacker. . . we really think some more substantial man might have been found to head the deputation to Lord Knutsford. 12

On the other hand, radical exponents of separation in north Queensland took exception to Finch-Hatton's aristocratic background and the undemocratic sentiments expressed in his book, *Advance Australia*.<sup>13</sup>

The London Committee consisted mainly of former north Queenslanders and persons with business interests in Queensland. At times north Queenslanders intending to visit London were authorized as delegates to the London Committee; these included William Aplin, sole northern member in the Queensland Legislative Council, William Kirk, president of the Northern Separation League, William Hann of Maryvale, Dr. Browne of Bowen and E.B. Power of Cooktown. The Committee also secured the assistance of public men in England, such as Dr. O'Doherty M.P., formerly member of the Queensland

---

11. Report of meeting of NQSC, *NQTTs*, 16 November 1885.

12. Extract from *Colonies and India*, *TH*, 24 January 1891. C f., letter to the Editor, *MM*, 6 September 1887; *TBS*, 18 December 1890; *NA*, 17 January 1891; Brookes, *QPD*, Vol. 50, 1886, p.1646 - "...agitation is confined to a very select lot, whose intellectual calibre is well gauged by the connection with it of Mr. Finch-Hatton."

13. *NM*, 15 October, 7, 9 December 1885. Letter to the Editor, *MM*, 8 September 1887. After the interview with the Secretary of State in May 1887, Finch-Hatton was criticized for using the opportunity to advocate Imperial Federation and deprecate Irish Home Rule. Letters to the Editor, *ibid.*, 6, 8, 13 September 1887.

Legislative Assembly,<sup>14</sup> Henry Kimber, another English member of parliament,<sup>15</sup> and the Duke of Manchester who, after returning from an Australian visit in late 1884, advocated separation in *The Times*.<sup>16</sup> The historian Anthony Froude also espoused northern separation after visiting Australia in 1884-85, promising to preside at a planned separation conference in London.<sup>17</sup> During debate in the House of Commons on the Irish Home Rule Bill, Finch-Hatton's brother, Murray, spoke in favour of north Queensland separation.<sup>18</sup> The Agent-General, James Garrick, ever on the alert, noted the energy displayed by the Committee: "The separationists here are always active, having nothing else to do, but I watch them diligently".<sup>19</sup>

Although northern separationists concentrated on London, a secondary strategy was to obtain expressions of support from groups in north Queensland. The prime example of this was the canvassing in 1885-86 for signatures to the separation petition. The Imperial Statutes laid down that inhabitants of any disaffected portion of a colony could petition the Crown for its separation;<sup>20</sup> for this reason a petition was organized, and finally endorsed by 10,006 signatures. Statements of support were solicited from northern parliamentary representatives, municipal councils and divisional boards, and editorial comments on separation culled from northern newspapers were forwarded to England. Nevertheless, the main purpose of this activity was to reinforce the case for separation presented to the Secretary of State.

Another outstanding characteristic of separatist strategy was its strict constitutionality: basically, separationists petitioned the Crown as the Imperial Statutes suggested, and waited for the decision of the Secretary of State. Although more radical methods were occasionally

---

14. *NQTS*, 7, 8 January 1886.

15. Garrick to Griffith 17 September 1886, Griffith Papers, MSQ 186, p.549.

16. *MM*, 13 February 1886.

17. *NQTS*, 19 April 1886. This did not eventuate because of a domestic bereavement. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1886.

18. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1886.

19. Garrick to Griffith 17 September 1886, Griffith Papers, MSQ 186, p.548.

20. 13 & 14 Vic., c.59, s.34 (1850). See above p.7.

suggested - withholding taxes, boycotting southern men in official positions, parliamentary obstruction by northern members, even secession and open insurrection<sup>21</sup> - they were never attempted. Separation was regarded as the answer to a legal and constitutional problem of providing the most effective form of government for a community of people; no racial, linguistic, religious or cultural differences, which might have aroused strong emotions and led to extreme reactions, separated north Queenslanders from their fellow-colonists. The conservative approach of the separatist organization, like its reliance on the power of the Crown, was associated with faith in British justice, confidence in the impartiality of the Colonial Office and the British parliament, and a strong sense of Imperial loyalty;<sup>22</sup> self-government was regarded as a right of all British colonists, which the British parliament protected. These sentiments were expressed in J.D. Nelson's "Separation Ode", written to celebrate the despatch of the petition:

No envious spirit wakes the grave demand;  
'Tis but our heritage from parent land  
To rule ourselves, when numbers give the right,  
And share the splendour of Imperial might. 23

If separationists had supposed the Queensland parliament the only source of redress, they might have resorted to more extreme methods.<sup>24</sup> The constitutional approach probably also owed something to the middle class social background and basic political conservatism of most of the movement's organizers. Nevertheless not all separationists were conservative in outlook; the editor of the *Northern Miner*, for instance, derisively caricatured the approach of the Separation Council:

The idea of Separation as preached in Townsville is intensely snobbish and suggests the bowing, cringing little tradesman behind his counter "My-Lording" the shadow of Imperial Power. 25

- 
21. *TH*, 10 July, 14 August 1886, 14 March, 2 April, 21 May 1887. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p.989.
22. *TH*, 28 August 1886, 26 March 1887, 10 August 1889. *TES*, 4 August 1892.
23. *NQTTS*, 8 June 1886.
24. *TH*, 10 August 1889.
25. *NM*, 23 September 1885.

Separationists first came into contention with the Queensland government over statements made in England, for which the separatist organization in north Queensland was not responsible. In early 1885 two sugar planters staying in London, J.E. Davidson and Sir John Lawes, addressed to the Colonial Office an expression of sympathy with the northern cause.<sup>26</sup> They pointed out in support of separation that north Queensland had twice the population and three times the income of Queensland at the time of separation. Other arguments advanced were the large area of Queensland and the consequent difficulty of administration; unjust distribution of loan funds due to the preponderance of southern members in the legislature; and the "absolute diversity of interests between the inhabitants of tropical and temperate Queensland on the subject of coloured labour".<sup>27</sup> The letter repeated arguments Davidson had previously put to the Colonial Office in advocating coolie labour.<sup>28</sup>

Griffith's observations on the letter amounted to a denunciation of the separation movement as a narrowly-based sectional agitation promoted by "the planters at Mackay, who have been disappointed in their desire to secure the introduction of coolies from India".<sup>29</sup> Griffith asserted that the movement had originated in Mackay in late 1884; that in no northern centre, with the exception of Mackay, Townsville and Bowen (to which he imputed ambitions to be capital), was there a majority or even a considerable minority in favour of separation; and that the mining centres in particular were hostile to the movement. Overall, only a minority of north Queenslanders supported the movement, he stated.<sup>30</sup>

- 
26. Davidson and Lawes to Derby 14 January 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, pp. 375-376. Davidson was managing partner for the Melbourne-Mackay Sugar Company, one of the largest in the industry. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.151. Sir John Lawes was a British agricultural scientist, founder of the famous Rothamsted experimental station, who had substantial plantation interests in Mackay, though he never once visited it. *Sugar Journal*, November 1900, p.166.
27. Davidson and Lawes to Derby 14 January 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.376.
28. Davidson and R.J. Jeffray to Derby 9 July 1884, *QV&P*, 1884, Vol. 2, pp. 927-928.
29. Griffith to Musgrave 1 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.377.
30. *Ibid.*

Griffith argued that the telegraph had already overcome most of the problems of distance. He categorically denied allegations that public works in the north had been neglected or that there had been an unjust distribution of loan funds. His emphasis, however, was on controverting Davidson and Lawes' statements about coloured labour, which he treated as their main argument. Griffith believed that the tropical lands of northern Queensland could be cultivated exclusively by European labour, though within a system of small farming rather than plantation agriculture.<sup>31</sup> He feared that coolie immigration on a large scale would have grave social consequences, demeaning physical labour and leading to a monopoly of all branches of industry by Asiatics "able to save money out of a pittance on which Europeans would decline to attempt to support life...."<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Griffith felt that coolie labour was incongruent with a system of constitutional government:

I am strongly impressed with the view that a representative Government, in which the influence of employers predominates, is not fit to be trusted with the control of inferior races; and I entertain a scarcely less strong opinion that a constitutional Government, in which the whole white population are represented, is not the best to control the destinies of an inferior race entering daily into competition with them in various forms of industry. 33

Therefore he suggested that if any part of Australia such as northern Queensland were to be thrown open to Asiatic immigration it should be separated and governed as a Crown Colony by Imperial officers who would mediate impartially between "inferior and superior races"; looking at the question from an Australian point of view, however, Griffith said he would regret allowing any part of Australia to develop a social pattern entirely different to that prevailing in the rest of the country.<sup>34</sup>

By concentrating on the coolie labour issue Griffith reinforced the idea that this was the separation movement's basic objective. However,

---

31. *Ibid.*, p.378.

32. *Ibid.*, p.379.

33. *Ibid.*, p.380.

34. *Ibid.* C f., *Debates of Federal Council of Australasia*, 1886 Session, pp.74-75.

Griffith stressed that the majority of north Queenslanders opposed coolie labour; for this reason the promoters of separation had taken care to conceal their motive, "for there can be little doubt that if it were put forward openly as the ground for advocating Separation, the movement would almost immediately collapse, or, more probably, meet with strong antagonism from a great majority of the people of the North".<sup>35</sup>

The Governor, Sir Anthony Musgrave, supported Griffith's statement, stressing the minority base of the movement.<sup>36</sup> Musgrave had no qualms about expressing disapproval of northern separation, which he regarded "both as improbable and undesirable".<sup>37</sup> He did not share Griffith's confidence that sugar could be cultivated in the tropics by white labour, thinking this physically impossible.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless he agreed that the movement originated with sugar planters seeking coolie labour, though like Griffith he thought that the majority of north Queenslanders would not allow the importation of coloured labour:

The mining population, and a large proportion of others not at all, or very indirectly, connected with sugar cultivation, form, I believe, a majority of the electorate who would still view with dislike the introduction of any "coloured labour".<sup>39</sup>

As for Griffith's suggestion for a Crown Colony, Musgrave considered it quite impracticable since northerners would not tolerate any form of government other than the representative institutions to which they were accustomed.<sup>40</sup>

Griffith's proposal for a Crown Colony lent credence to a rumour, given currency by the London *Daily News*,<sup>41</sup> that separationists aimed to form a Crown Colony in northern Queensland. Hearing of this, the Separation

---

35. Griffith to Musgrave 1 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.377.

36. Musgrave to Derby 13 April 1885, *ibid.*, p.381.

37. Musgrave to Knutsford 21 May 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.439.

38. Musgrave to Derby 13 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.380.

39. *Ibid.*, p.381.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *NM*, 1 April 1885.

Convention amended the separation petition to request "a continuance of the form of representative government at present existing", in place of the original, more ambiguous prayer for "such form of representative government as circumstances may hereafter seem to Your Majesty to require". To make sure, the Convention passed a resolution:

that hearing with surprise a rumour that an attempt may possibly be made to form North Queensland into a Crown Colony, this Convention places on record its profound belief and conviction that such a policy can never be acceptable to the inhabitants of North Queensland. 42

When Davidson and Lawes' letter and Griffith's reply were published in the *Brisbane Courier* of 14 April, along with a leading article unfavourable to the movement,<sup>43</sup> the Separation Council wrote Musgrave disclaiming prior knowledge of the planters' letter and denying responsibility for the opinions expressed.<sup>44</sup> The Council went on to highlight ambiguities and contradictions in Griffith's argument about the connection between the separation movement and the planters' campaign for coloured labour:

The main assumption in his letter is that almost everyone in the Colony has been aware from the first that the main object of the movement was to obtain coolie labour; the second, that if that object were put forward openly the movement would collapse; the inference is drawn that, therefore, it was concealed. But how can that be concealed of which almost everyone is aware; and if the movement, so far from collapsing, is growing stronger day by day - as it is, - one of two conclusions is inevitable: either that the people of the North, with full knowledge that coolie labour is the ultimate object of that movement, nevertheless support it, and inferentially, coolie labour into the bargain; or, that they believe its advocates to mean what they say, and decline to suspect them of designs repeatedly denied in every possible form of contradiction. 45

- 
42. Willmetts to the Editor, *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.426.
43. *BC*, 14 April 1885. The article emphasized the link between separation and coloured labour.
44. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.382. Coote immediately wrote to the *Courier*, asking readers to suspend judgement on the connection of the movement with coloured labour until the rejoinder of the Council was placed before them. Letter to the Editor, *BC*, 28 April 1885.
45. NQSC to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.385.



The Council pointed out that the separation petition requested "a continuance of the form of representative government at present existing": this would leave political decisions in the hands of electors, "who would have as much power to forbid coolie labour after Separation as before it"; there was no reason to suppose that the majority of electors who voted against coolie labour in 1883 would change their views if separation was accomplished.<sup>46</sup> As for the origin of the movement, the Council related the circumstances of the formation of the Northern Separation League in Townsville in 1882, observing that

the sugar interest, then in full tide of prosperity, was not...in any way represented...and that separation was then warmly advocated, more than three years since, by gentlemen who had not the slightest sympathy with coloured labour, or the efforts of its employers to obtain it. 47

The Council received support, more embarrassing than helpful, from a group of sugar planters in the Mackay district, who denied Griffith's charge that the separation movement was initiated by planters, declining

to allow ourselves to be made political stalking-horses from which to attack the movement for Separation, believing, as we do, that the movement rests on other and more substantial grounds than those on which Mr. Griffith would make it appear to do. 48

Davidson also replied to Griffith, pointing out, reasonably, that

a few people in England who have invested their capital in Queensland on the strength of the invitation and acts of previous Queensland Governments, and who consider themselves aggrieved by the conduct of the present Government, cannot do more than express their sympathy with the people in Northern Queensland in their desire to be separated from the South, as the petition for such separation, and the reasons for it, must emanate entirely from the actual residents and colonists of Northern Queensland, and not from English sympathisers with the movements. 49

---

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*, p.383.

48. Messrs Long and Others to Musgrave 13 May 1885, *ibid.*, p.387.

49. Davidson to Derby 25 April 1885, *ibid.*, p.388.

In response to the Separation Council's attempted rebuttal, Griffith merely reemphasized the minority nature of the movement.<sup>50</sup>

To set the case right in the eyes of the British public, the Separation Council also contradicted assumptions contained in a leader in *The Times* that a link existed between the "Queensland slave trade" and the separation movement.<sup>51</sup> The article had referred to a letter from a Brisbane correspondent on "The Labour Traffic in the Southern Pacific", written almost certainly by W. Kinnaird Rose who had served on Griffith's Commission to inquire into the Pacific Island labour traffic in Queensland; the letter had concluded:

The separation movement was conceived, is carried on almost solely, and supported wholly, by the money of the sugar-planters, and, except in two sugar estate centres, it has fallen dead. 52

Despite the assurances of the Council, however, Griffith and his disciples had aroused the suspicions of London editors: *The Times*, for instance, concluded that in current circumstances, with the planter class dominant, the risks of granting north Queensland separation were too great.<sup>53</sup>

Separationists were convinced that there had been collusion between Kinnaird Rose and Griffith to arouse opposition to the movement in England.<sup>54</sup>

The Queensland government professed to oppose separation because it was a minority movement disapproved of by most northerners; and because it would injure Queensland's credit and jeopardize the security of English bondholders.<sup>55</sup> Southerners feared that it would sever southern producers from northern markets, for even if northern Queenslanders favoured free trade in principle, a revenue tariff was certain to be raised; in any case, eliminating

---

50. Griffith to Musgrave 18 May 1885, *ibid.*, p.387.

51. Willmetts to the Editor, *The Times*, 30 September 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp.425-426.

52. *The Times*, 18 June 1885. The two "sugar estate centres" referred to were Mackay and Townsville. See also H. Finch-Hatton, "North Queensland Separation" *National Review*, Vol. 6, February 1886, p.801. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.162. Extract from *Figaro*, *NQTTTS*, 19 November 1885. Kinnaird Rose was certainly an opponent of separation. Kinnaird Rose to McIlwraith undated, McIlwraith Papers, p.1866.

53. Editorial, *The Times*, 12 October 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.432.

54. E.g., *NQTTTS*, 19 November 1885.

55. See below pp.344-345.

or significantly reducing northern duties would end a southern monopoly of northern trade and open northern ports to British competition.<sup>56</sup> There was also a widely-accepted notion that it was the government's duty to preserve the integrity of the colony, whatever the personal views of its members.<sup>57</sup> Even Macrossan had endorsed this idea, castigating John Douglas in 1877:

Whatever the Premier may think about territorial separation, I think that is not the question he should advocate as Premier. If he wishes to advocate it, let him abdicate his position as Premier and advocate it as a private member, but not as Premier of the colony and leader of the Government. 58

Griffith's opposition to the separation movement was undoubtedly intensified by his strong antipathy to black labour.<sup>59</sup> It was also heightened by his belief that the sugar planters whom he saw behind the movement had tried to abort the government's ten million loan.<sup>60</sup> Rejecting land-grants as a means of financing railway construction, the Liberal government had resorted to heavy overseas borrowing to finance the public works for which the constituencies clamoured.<sup>61</sup> Soon after it was formed the Mackay Separation League considered informing the London Stock Exchange that since north Queensland was seeking separation they objected to being pledged to any

---

56. Powers, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, pp.1521-1522. *NM*, 29 August 1891. C f., Executive of Central Queensland Territorial Separation League to Ripon 17 December 1892, *QV&P*, 1893, Vol. 3, p.1047. Extract from *NM*, *BC*, 10 November 1897.

57. Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p.453; Fraser, *ibid.*, p.632; Black, *ibid.*, p.538. C f., Miles, *ibid.*, p.537. Some thought it treason for a government to support separation.

58. *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, p.743. Boyd Morehead supported separation before and after he became Premier in 1889, but while Premier sent an adverse report on the movement to the Secretary of State. Twitted with inconsistency, he explained in parliament that "as Premier I was bound, even if it was a bad case, to protect the integrity of the colony." Morehead added that McIlwraith could not undertake to give separation, for it would be contrary to his duty and his oath to the Crown to promise it. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p.1072.

59. Moles, "Indian Coolie Labour Issue", p.1367.

60. Griffith's address at Charters Towers, *CP*, 18 June 1885. See *BC*, 9 June 1885.

61. McIlwraith's programme had included six millions of land-grant railways in addition to lines to be financed by borrowing, and the new government apparently felt constrained to go one higher.

Queensland government loan.<sup>62</sup> Some feared that if the movement was not advertised the Secretary of State could more easily refuse separation on the ground that Queensland had recently pledged her credit to the extent of ten millions on the security of the whole colony.<sup>63</sup> However the following meeting of the league decided against this course.<sup>64</sup> The proposal had earlier been submitted to McIlwraith with a request for advice on getting a telegram published in *The Times*.<sup>65</sup> In reply McIlwraith had scotched the plan, commenting that

Any action taken to prevent or obstruct the floating of a Queensland loan would be unpatriotic and damage the cause of Separation. It would alienate many friends north and south. 66

Patriotic considerations did not, however, prevent McIlwraith from doing his utmost to abort the loan himself. Believing that the popularity of the Griffith government depended on liberal promises of public expenditure out of the loan, he reasoned that "if it is a failure on the London market the present ministry will absolutely collapse".<sup>67</sup> McIlwraith's blistering critiques of Liberal financial policy were published anonymously in leading financial journals in England;<sup>68</sup> in his attack McIlwraith referred to the

---

62. *MM*, 26 November 1884. A similar proposal had been made in 1870. *PDT*, 5 March 1870.

63. *MM*, 29 November 1884.

64. *Ibid.* Nevertheless the Mackay League did send a telegram to *The Times* announcing that the "Existing depression in Northern Queensland has given birth to a strong Separation movement ...", the wording of which may have been calculated to undermine the confidence of English investors in Queensland's prosperity. *Ibid.* Dicken (Secretary to Agent-General) to Under Colonial Secretary 19 December 1884, QSA COL/92, No. 0567.

65. E.M. Long to McIlwraith 7 November 1884, McIlwraith Papers, p.873.

66. McIlwraith's minute *ibid.* See also Long to McIlwraith 8 November 1884, *ibid.*, p.874.

67. McIlwraith to H. Kimber 6 February 1885, McIlwraith Papers, Letter-Book 1884-86, p.68.

68. *Ibid.*, pp.68-79. McIlwraith to Kimber 8 February 1885, *ibid.*, pp.80-81. McIlwraith to Kimber 16 February 1885, *ibid.*, pp.94-96. McIlwraith had the assistance of Henry Kimber, a promoter of the trans-continental railway syndicate in London, who co-operated with McIlwraith in order to "kill the Party opposed to land grant railways". McIlwraith to Kimber 8 February 1885, *ibid.*, p.81. Kimber was also aggrieved by Griffith's refusal of compensation for the expenses of surveying the trans-continental line. Kimber was later involved in the activities of the London Committee. Garrick to Griffith 17 September 1886, Griffith Papers, MSQ 186, p.549.

depression in the sugar industry, which he attributed in part to Griffith's restrictive labour policy.<sup>69</sup> The letters caused a commotion in government circles and every effort was made to trace the author: McIlwraith wrote self-satisfiedly that the Agent-General "who is simply a detective and no lawyer or gentleman is on the alert. He would give his ears to be able to bring them home to me".<sup>70</sup>

In fact, the Agent-General was convinced that sugar interests, including Victorian capitalists with large investments in sugar, were making a concerted attempt to damage the loan and embarrass the Griffith government in the money market. He discerned, in references in English newspapers to the separation movement and in statements that coloured labour was necessary for tropical agriculture in Queensland, an organized effort to injure the credit of the colony, perceiving that English investors saw the coloured labour question in purely economic terms.<sup>71</sup> Thus for Garrick<sup>72</sup> and Griffith the link between the separation movement and planting interests was confirmed.

Congratulating Griffith on his reply to Davidson and Lawes in highly laudatory terms, William Brookes, who among his Liberal colleagues took a rather extreme stand against coloured labour on religious and humanitarian grounds, proposed to use the coloured labour issue to enlist the support of humanitarian groups and newspapers against separation. He suggested that

---

69. McIlwraith to Kimber 6 February 1885, McIlwraith Papers, Letter-Book 1884-86, pp.76-79.

70. McIlwraith to Kimber 17 July 1885, *ibid.*, p.132.

71. Garrick to Griffith 12 December 1884, Griffith Papers, MSQ 186, pp.46-48. Garrick to Griffith 19 December 1884, *ibid.*, p.57. Garrick to Griffith 9 January 1885, *ibid.*, p.79. Garrick believed that the capitalists who were Queensland's money-lenders or who influenced the money-lenders were convinced "that the exclusion of [coolie] labour is greatly injurious to the prosperity of Queensland". Garrick to Griffith 2 July 1885, *ibid.*, p.157. For example, Westgarth the financier supported coolies, if necessary under regulation of the British government, to ensure the progress and prosperity of north Queensland. Extract from *Sydney Morning Herald*, *NM*, 17 July 1885. William Westgarth (1815-1889) had left Victoria for London in 1857 to set up a brokerage business, advising colonial governments seeking loans in the London money market for the next 30 years. P. Serle, *Dictionary of Australian Biography* (Sydney 1949), Vol. 2, p.482.

72. E.g., Garrick to Griffith 16 January 1885, Griffith Papers, MSQ 186, p.82.

copies of Griffith's memorandum should be sent to leading public men in England, including Gladstone, Dilke, Chamberlain, Forster and Harcourt, and be distributed among English newspapers; Brookes undertook himself to forward copies to the Anti-Slavery Society and the Quakers.<sup>73</sup> On Griffith's instructions, the Agent-General sent copies to Chamberlain, Forster, Dilke and Rosebery, and to the editors of several London and provincial radical papers, with the object of stirring up opposition to separation by way of the coloured labour charge.<sup>74</sup>

The Agent-General, on Griffith's instructions, used other means to obstruct the separation movement in London. He reported in early 1885 that he had succeeded in blocking Coote's efforts to insert letters on separation in English papers, having been warned of the attempt by Griffith.<sup>75</sup> At the Colonial Office he "spoke plainly about the Colonial Office moving upon the request of two planters who happened to be here"<sup>76</sup> and probed senior officials to ascertain whether the Colonial Office "is with us".<sup>77</sup>

These actions aroused the animosity of separationists. At a meeting of the Separation Council in February 1886 attention was drawn to Garrick's interference; separationists maintained that as a servant of the colony he had no right to take a partisan stand on the issue.<sup>78</sup> The Council formally protested to the Premier at the Agent-General's persistently connecting the

---

73. Brookes to Griffith 15 April 1885, *ibid.*, pp. 131-133. See also Mercer, *Racial Attitudes Towards Melanesians*, pp.138-142; Brookes to Griffith 22 March 1892, Griffith Papers, MSQ 188, pp.299-300; Brookes to Griffith 25 March 1892, *ibid.*, p.301.

74. Garrick to Griffith 2 July 1885, Griffith Papers, MSQ 186, pp.155-156.

75. Garrick to Griffith 16 January 1885, *ibid.*, p.82.

76. Garrick to Griffith 2 July 1885, *ibid.*, p.155.

77. *Ibid.*, pp.155-157. In July 1885 Garrick had telegraphed a little hastily: "Interview with Colonial Office Separation quite sure that nothing will be done". Dicken to Under Colonial Secretary 17 July 1885, QSA COL/95, No. 6331. Separationists also had information that although the Agent-General opposed separation, his immigration agencies were playing up separation and north Queensland to encourage emigration. *NQTTTS*, 20 October 1885. In 1889 after his conversion to separation, Peter Aldridge of Cairns showed separationists an old letter from the Agent-General thanking him for his services in countering the movement. *Ibid.*, 22 March 1889.

78. *Ibid.*, 11 February 1886. C f., Palmer, *QPD*, Vol. 50, 1886, p.1646.

movement with the coloured labour question and representing it as dying or dead.<sup>79</sup> The Council argued that this was outside the Agent-General's function, which was that of agency in general matters concerning the colony as a whole rather than political advocacy in sectional or party issues.<sup>80</sup> Griffith in reply defended Garrick's actions.<sup>81</sup>

Clashes with the Agent-General continued. In 1886 the Townsville Chamber of Commerce authorized Coote to write a pamphlet on the development of Townsville for distribution at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. Garrick vetoed the pamphlet because it contained a paragraph referring to the number of signatures collected for the separation petition, professing concern that if he allowed the pamphlet to be distributed he would seem to endorse the claims made in it.<sup>82</sup> Dr Ahearne, the Council's delegate, complained that Garrick was discriminating socially against separationists in London.<sup>83</sup> Later in 1886 Ahearne, who had had several altercations with Garrick in the columns of *The Times* and *Daily News* in January-February of that year,<sup>84</sup> took up the cudgels again in an exchange in *The Times*, defending the validity of the signatures on the petition;<sup>85</sup> on his return from England E.S. Rawson had complained that the editors of English newspapers gave preference to Garrick's letters.<sup>86</sup> In late 1886 Garrick denied officially in the London press the Council's allegation that William Miles, Minister for Works, had stated that the Central railway line would be

---

79. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.163.

80. NQSC to Griffith 22 February 1886, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp.438-439.

81. Ryder (Under Colonial Secretary) to NQSC 5 March 1886, *ibid.*, p.439. Griffith said it was "clearly within the province of the Agent-General to correct erroneous or misleading statements published in Great Britain with reference to the Colony".

82. Dicken to A. Brodziak 6 August 1886, QSA COL/98, enclosed with No. 7214, with No. 7225. Report of meeting of Townsville Chamber of Commerce, *TH*, 18 December 1886. Brodziak was the London representative of the Townsville Chamber of Commerce.

83. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1886.

84. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.163-164.

85. *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, pp.450-453.

86. *NM*, 24 December 1885.

diverted to catch the trade of northern districts in view of the probability of separation.<sup>87</sup>

Opponents of separation often proposed remedies for northern complaints as alternatives to separation, particularly shifting the seat of government and instituting a system of provincial councils. In these suggestions the Separation Council professed to see acknowledgement that genuine grievances existed.<sup>88</sup> On the first proposal the Council realistically observed that although the site of Queensland's capital may have been ill-chosen, the decision had been confirmed by an accumulation of vested interests. Removal of the capital would waste previous expenditure on public buildings and depreciate the value of private property. Moreover the proposal was impracticable, for parliament, constituted as it was, was very unlikely ever to consent.<sup>89</sup>

In Rockhampton the ideas of T.H. Fitzgerald lived on, fostered by the Queensland Provincial Council League, formed in July 1886.<sup>90</sup> The League drafted a scheme for the constitution of provinces<sup>91</sup> and adopted a petition to the Legislative Assembly<sup>92</sup> which was presented by the member for Blackall, William Pattison, in August 1887.<sup>93</sup> Although Musgrave,<sup>94</sup> the *Brisbane Courier*, the *Northern Miner* and Archibald Meston condoned the scheme,

---

87. *TH*, 25 December 1886.

88. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.168. C f., Chubb, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p.462; *TH*, 10 July 1886.

89. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.168. C f., H. Mosman to McIlwraith 26 February 1886, McIlwraith Papers, p.1384.

90. The Committee were Captain Hunter (president), T.P. Robinson, E.P. Livermore (vice-president), W.C. Caporn (treasurer), R.R. Lawbarn (secretary). *TH*, 10 July 1886.

91. This was published, *ibid.*, 14 August 1886.

92. *NQTS*, 8 July 1886.

93. *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p.219, p.244, p.250.

94. Musgrave to Granville 29 July 1886, QSA GOV/28, p.341.



Griffith was cool; possibly he was already planning his own decentralization scheme.<sup>95</sup>

The Separation Council criticized the proposal as an attempt to "add one more step to the circumlocutory stair, which leads to a partially screened centralisation". The Council expected that the provincial councils would be no more than large municipalities, presiding over a number of inferior local bodies, but with no real power:

Between what the Assembly would not forego and what the local bodies would do their utmost to retain, it is hard to see what space would be left for the Provincial Councils to occupy. 96

Such a scheme was no alternative to separation and an independent legislature, it was declared. The failure of a similar system in New Zealand was again raised against the proposal.<sup>97</sup>

A significant step was taken in January 1886 when the Separation Council invited northern members of parliament to join as ex-officio members,<sup>98</sup> believing that their participation in the movement would demonstrate its representative status and respectability.<sup>99</sup> All except Rutledge, senior member for Kennedy, and Macrossan accepted immediately. Rutledge's refusal came as no surprise - a Brisbane lawyer and Attorney-General in Griffith's ministry, he had helped to organize the anti-separation movement. Though it caused some passing consternation among separationists, Macrossan's tardiness was due only to a delay in receiving his mail.<sup>100</sup> Since the 1870s he had strongly supported financial separation

---

95. Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p.407.

96. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.168. Report of meeting of NQSC, *TH*, 14 August 1886. C f., Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p.447.

97. Chubb, *ibid.*, p.462; letter to the Editor, *TH*, 14 August 1886.

98. Circulars were issued to W. Aplin, M.L.C., and members of the Legislative Assembly, J.M. Macrossan (Townsville), M.H. Black (Mackay), C.E. Chubb (Bowen), E. Lissner (Kennedy), J. Hamilton (Cook), E. Palmer (Burke), C. Lumley-Hill (Cook), W.V. Brown (Townsville), R. Philp (Musgrave), A. Rutledge (Kennedy).

99. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.163.

100. Report of meeting of NQSC, *NQTTTS*, 21 April 1886.

as a way of averting territorial separation. Nevertheless even in the 1870s Macrossan had not hesitated to say that if financial separation was withheld, northerners, himself included, would be forced to press the more extreme solution.<sup>101</sup> In March 1882, while Minister for Works in McIlwraith's cabinet, Macrossan had "reprobated the very notion of separation":<sup>102</sup> by October 1884 he had modified his view sufficiently to telegraph the Northern Separation League that he favoured separation but feared that the movement would encounter great difficulties.<sup>103</sup> A year later he privately told one member of the Separation Council that he supported separation.<sup>104</sup> Macrossan first publicly declared himself an adherent of the movement at a meeting in Townsville in April 1886, explaining that he had not come out in favour of territorial separation before because he had doubted the north's readiness, and because he believed that such a movement should arise spontaneously from the people rather than from the efforts of agitators.<sup>105</sup> It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that throughout his parliamentary career Macrossan's enthusiasm for separation, financial and territorial, waxed and waned according to the side of the House on which he sat.<sup>106</sup>

Some separationists proposed that northern members should form a compact separation party in the Assembly, like Parnell's Home Rulers in the House of Commons.<sup>107</sup> Still more popular was the idea of northern members

---

101. *QPD*, Vol. 23, 1877, pp.743-744. Macrossan said on this occasion that if financial separation was not granted, he would even be willing to demand separation as a Crown Colony, relinquishing the privileges of responsible government. C f., *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, p.440.

102. *NQSC* to Musgrave 2 May 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.383.

103. *PDT*, 18 October 1884.

104. Report of meeting of *NQSC*, *NQTTTS*, 21 April 1886.

105. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 24 April 1886.

106. C f., H. Bryan, *The Political Career of John Murtagh Macrossan* (M.A. University of Queensland 1954), pp.123-124, p.137. Bryan defended Macrossan's "ministerial supineness", arguing that Macrossan calculated that it would be more fruitful while in office to direct public expenditure to the north, rather than to press for separation against ministerial resistance. However, it is doubtful whether the north did in fact receive a larger share of public expenditure during Macrossan's term of office, though of course this proves nothing about Macrossan's intentions. See D.K. Dignan, *Sir Thomas McIlwraith: His Public Career and Political Thought* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1951), p.64, p.122. C f., *TH*, 16, 30 November 1889.

107. *NQTTTS*, 3 September 1885, 11 January 1886. *TH*, 14 August 1886.

initiating and supporting a motion for separation. The *North Queensland Telegraph* urged a debate on separation, partly to forestall any attempt by the Colonial Office to delay a decision by referring the question back to Queensland for the opinion of the legislature:

An adverse vote is sure to be the outcome; but as matters stand the opposition of the Southern Parliament must not be weighed in view of the final settlement of the wishes of the colonists by Imperial authority. It rests with Her Majesty whether the prayer of the petitioners shall receive countenance, and to her only will rest the division or otherwise of Queensland. For all that, it is essential that the basis of opposition should be known, and the best way of ascertaining the anxiety of the South to still cling to our revenues will be through the Legislature. Matter-of-form though it is, still we are inclined to agree with those who regard delay as dangerous. 108

At no time did separationists admit any authority of the Queensland legislature actually to grant separation. However the precedents of Victoria and Queensland suggested that the colonial legislature should consider separation, if only to reject it, before the question was referred to the Imperial authorities. Moreover a debate in parliament would demonstrate both the unity of northern representatives in support of separation and the immoveable opposition of the south.

The *North Queensland Telegraph* had advocated a vote in parliament as an important prerequisite to presenting the petition to the Queen. The Separation Council, under the influence of Coote who was regarded as a constitutional authority, decided that the Queensland legislature could safely be ignored since it had no power to grant separation. However at a meeting of the Bowen Separation League, Rev. Tucker expressed the view that the separation petition should be brought before the Assembly before going to England; it was recalled that in 1872 a separation petition had been refused because the Queensland legislature had not considered the question.<sup>109</sup> Hume Black also took this view, but Coote reiterated that application to parliament was unnecessary. Bowen separationists then asked their member, C.E. Chubb, to present to the House a petition from the Bowen League praying

---

108. *Ibid.*, 23 September 1885. C f., *ibid.*, 17 February 1886.

109. First Annual Report of Committee of Bowen Separation League, *PDT*, 13 March 1886. See above p. 100.

for separation,<sup>110</sup> hoping that Chubb would take the opportunity to initiate a discussion on separation;<sup>111</sup> this did not eventuate.

The Bowen League had also considered asking Chubb to submit to the House a motion in favour of separation, but was unwilling to flout the decision of the Separation Council.<sup>112</sup> Instead Tucker asked the Council to reconsider the question, suggesting that they ask Macrossan to organize a debate in the Assembly. In Council Coote pointed out that if the Council acted on this advice it would be tantamount to admitting that the Queensland legislature had power in the matter, "which would be suicidal".<sup>113</sup> For this reason the Council again refused to act upon Tucker's suggestion. Nevertheless, by March 1886 when Reddin, editor of the *North Queensland Telegraph*, moved in Council for a debate in the Assembly,<sup>114</sup> the Council's attitude had softened.<sup>115</sup>

During the session of 1886 northern members tried to bring separation into virtually every debate, beginning with the Address-in-Reply. When they decided to introduce a separation motion, according to Coote who attended the meeting, their intentions were to demonstrate their solidarity on the issue, and to identify the friends and enemies of separation.<sup>116</sup> In a three-hour speech universally acknowledged to be one of his finest, Macrossan supported the motion, explaining the legal foundation of the separation case, presenting statistics to show that the north had suffered financial injustice, drawing comparisons with the population and revenue of Moreton Bay in 1859 to demonstrate the north's capacity for self-government, and relating briefly the history of northern separation movements from the 1860s to show that the movement was no ephemeral flash-in-the-pan.<sup>117</sup> Macrossan stressed that the greatest problem was not inequitable distribution of

110. *QPD*, Vol. 47, 1885, p.1337.

111. *PDT*, 13 March 1886.

112. *NM*, 18,19 September 1885. *PDT*, 3 October 1885.

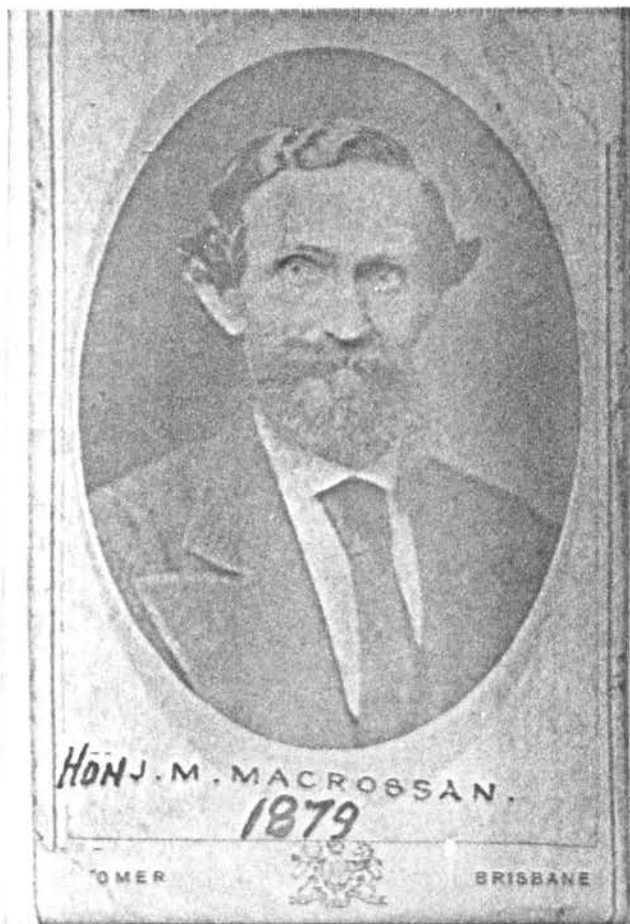
113. Report of meeting of NQSC, *NQTTTS*, 2 November 1885.

114. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1886.

115. See First Annual Report of Committee of Bowen Separation League, *PDT*, 13 March 1886.

116. Coote's letter to the Editor, *NQH*, 2 March 1892.

117. *QPD*, Vol. 49, 1886, pp.437-447.



JOHN MACROSSAN



ROBERT PHILP



HUME BLACK

public revenue but "the want of sympathy and encouragement in developing the resources of the North ...."<sup>118</sup>

Griffith replied that Macrossan had failed to prove that the majority of north Queenslanders favoured separation.<sup>119</sup> He emphasized the obstacle presented by Queensland's large public debt, anticipating that this would deter the Imperial parliament from granting separation. He also expressed the opinion that it would be "a very extreme course" for the Imperial parliament to divide the self-governing colony of Queensland, overriding the opposition of the local legislature.<sup>120</sup> Griffith explained the persistence of separation movements as an outcome of the gradual extension of settlement in a new country; public works could not be undertaken everywhere at once but were built where population justified the expenditure and where the expenditure would bring corresponding returns, with the result that sparsely-settled areas complained of government neglect.<sup>121</sup> Slightly modifying his previous statements, Griffith remarked that the separation agitation was started in 1882 by a few landowners in Townsville who expected great profits if Townsville became capital. The people of Mackay had joined the movement when they failed to get black labour. "The supporters of separation not in favour of black labour, and who do not reside in Townsville, make an extremely small number",<sup>122</sup> he affirmed. Griffith prophesied that Townsville would be capital if separation occurred, mentioning the fears this prospect aroused in Charters Towers, Cairns and other places.<sup>123</sup> He criticized Macrossan generally for appealing in his speech to self-interest, especially selfish local interest, and ignoring the general welfare of the country.<sup>124</sup> Contradicting his previous statement that the majority of northerners would not allow coloured labour in the new colony, the Premier concluded that separation would lead to the introduction of servile labour and eventually the end of representative institutions - a disaster for north Queensland,

---

118. *Ibid.*, p.447. C f., *ibid.*, p.448.

119. *Ibid.*, p.448.

120. *Ibid.*, pp.448-449. Griffith clearly anticipated the result of the division.

121. *Ibid.*, p.450.

122. *Ibid.*, p.451.

123. *Ibid.*, p.452. C f., Dickson, *ibid.*, p.550; Stevens, *ibid.*, p.565.

124. *Ibid.*, p.453.

Queensland, and for Australasia; whereas decentralization could give many of the advantages of separation without the drawbacks.<sup>125</sup> Several other southern members supported Griffith's assertion that coloured labour was the basis of the movement.<sup>126</sup> The leading participants in the debate gave the impression of appealing to an audience far beyond the House, tailoring their arguments for officials in London. Predictably the motion was negatived, forty to nine, northern separationist members alone voting in favour; there was not a single Robert Lowe to overstep regional lines.<sup>127</sup>

Thomas McIlwraith did not take part in the separation debate because he resigned his seat before the 1886 session, but he had expressed his views during a northern tour in January 1886:

He did not fear the result of Separation of the South and North of Queensland. He said there were many ways in which the North would be benefitted, and a very few in which the South would be injured. He had always been a worshipper of what he might call local self-government ...when the people of the North decided that they were capable of managing their own affairs, and had rather do so, then he held that they were perfectly justified in taking their own way...as for the South, it had no right to object...Northern matters would never be properly managed until the Northern Parliament met in a Northern town. 128

Pressed for his views in Townsville in early 1885, McIlwraith had admitted that separation was not inconsistent with federation, but added that he would regret it if Queensland could not be preserved as one great colony, an idea always central to his political thought.<sup>129</sup> Separationists accepted these statements too hastily as signs of support,<sup>130</sup> though some, especially Liberal supporters, questioned McIlwraith's sincerity since he was then in opposition, and moreover had reason to fear that a northern separation

---

125. *Ibid.*, p.458.

126. E.g., Miles, *ibid.*, p.537; Stevens, *ibid.*, p.565; Aland, *ibid.*, p.631; Grimes, *ibid.*, p.631.

127. See above p.6.

128. *PDT*, 23 January 1886.

129. Extract from *Northern Standard*, *NM*, 26 March 1885. See Dignan, McIlwraith, p.155, p.165. McIlwraith to C. Palmer 2 June 1899, McIlwraith Papers.

130. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.163.

party would split his following.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless in private correspondence McIlwraith expressed a similar, sympathetic view:

I think separation of north from south will come and am sorry for it but the north have no choice. The South demand representation in the House according to population. Now the South has the majority of the population and spend the money there. 132

The separation petition, 620 feet long and encased in a box of silky-oak and cedar, emblematic of the north, with a plate of silver from Ravenswood,<sup>133</sup> was despatched in July 1886, arriving in England in September. Griffith's commentary on the petition was not sent until January 1887. The Secretary of State, Edward Stanhope, and A.H. Palmer the acting-governor were no less anxious than separationists to have Griffith's report:<sup>134</sup> the Colonial Office had assured the Agent-General that separation would not be considered until the Queensland government gave its views.<sup>135</sup> However Griffith explained on several occasions that pressure of parliamentary business and delays in receiving replies to inquiries about the petition held up his report;<sup>136</sup> the nature of these inquiries was revealed when the report was finally submitted to the Governor in January.

Immediately he received the petition Griffith had ordered that the signatures be compared with electoral rolls for northern Queensland, with the result that only 3,393 of the 10,006 names could be found on the 1886 rolls.<sup>137</sup> Separationists answered that the petition did not purport to be signed by electors only, but by adult male European residents of north Queensland,<sup>138</sup> and that defects in the rolls, which had necessitated the preparation of new rolls in January 1887, invalidated Griffith's comparison.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, Griffith scored a point when

---

131. *NQTS*, 16 January 1886.

132. McIlwraith to Dawes 23 November 1885, McIlwraith Papers, Letter-Book 1884-86, p.183.

133. *BC*, 25 June 1886.

134. Stanhope to Palmer 9 November 1886, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.413. Stanhope to Palmer 16 November 1886, *ibid.*, p.417. Palmer to Stanhope 17 November 1886, *ibid.*, p.418. Black, *QPD*, Vol. 50, 1886, p.1645.

135. Garrick to Griffith 10 September 1886, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.417. Garrick to Griffith 27 September 1886, *ibid.*

136. Griffith to Palmer 17 November 1886, *ibid.*, p.418.

137. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *ibid.*, p.420.

138. Cootes' letter to the Editor, *TH*, 16 April 1887. *NQTS*, 26 August 1886.

139. *Ibid.*



he showed that of 12,687 names on the northern rolls in 1886, only 3,393 had signed the petition.<sup>140</sup>

Griffith also compiled lists of signatories purporting to be residents of the various police districts, which were sent to the officers in charge of those districts, "with instructions to make careful inquiries and to report which of the persons were known in the respective districts". According to the police, 3,860 names could not be identified as having at any time been residents in the districts set opposite their names. In Townsville especially, a large proportion of signatures (2,049 out of 3,866) were unidentifiable by the police. Griffith concluded from these investigations that not more than 6,000 of the signatures were genuine, considerably less than one-third of the relevant population of 19,807.<sup>141</sup>

Separationists questioned whether it was desirable or not to be "known to the police":<sup>142</sup> in any event the police force was a migratory body of men whose "knowledge cannot extend to every person over this widely scattered and ever moving population".<sup>143</sup> The Council further explained that many signatures were collected in Townsville, as in other coastal centres, from squatters, stockmen, drovers and carriers passing to and from the interior.<sup>144</sup> It also drew attention to the difficulty of attracting signatures to a petition unsanctioned by a government with control of public spending and with patronage over public office; while civil servants, numbering about 900 in the north,<sup>145</sup> were forbidden to sign, many others including aspirants for office, and those associated with banks and some private companies, considered it impolitic.<sup>146</sup>

---

140. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.420.

141. *Ibid.*, pp.420-421.

142. Lissner, report of separation deputation, *ibid.*, p.449. Little, *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p.1639.

143. NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.437.

144. *Ibid.*, p.438.

145. Report of NQSC, QSA GOV/A14, p.169.

146. NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.1, p.437.

Separationists also pointed out that the petition for Moreton Bay separation had received only 250 signatures when the population numbered about 23,000, a much smaller proportion than the northern petition.<sup>147</sup>

From observations during his northern tour in May-June 1886, Griffith reported that in Bowen, Townsville and Hughenden and in sugar districts there was a considerable majority in favour of separation. In Charters Towers and Port Douglas opinion was roughly equally divided; at Cairns and Herberton, and in the Gulf country generally (except at Burketown) the feeling was strongly adverse; while in other places separation was regarded with indifference. Griffith concluded that still only a minority of north Queenslanders supported separation.<sup>148</sup> He also persisted in the view that the coolie issue lay at the bottom of the movement.<sup>149</sup>

Griffith next discussed separationists' accusations of financial injustice, in order to show that "if any part of the colony has received undue favour, it is not the Southern division".<sup>150</sup> He denied that there had been undue delay in spending money allocated to northern public works. Griffith emphasized the difficulty presented by Queensland's public debt.<sup>151</sup> He expressed a fear that the multiplication of independent governments would retard Australian federation.<sup>152</sup> He promised that in the next session measures would be introduced to decentralize administration; establish branches of the Real Property Office in regional centres; keep separate accounts of revenue and expenditure in the several divisions of the colony and as far as practicable to appropriate the revenue raised in each division to public expenditure within the division; and extend the powers of local government.<sup>153</sup> Musgrave commended Griffith's report as a full and fair

---

147. *MM*, 30 January 1886.

148. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, pp.420-421.

149. *Ibid.*, p.421, pp. 424-425.

150. *Ibid.*, pp.422-433. See above pp. 232-233.

151. *Ibid.*, p. 425. See below pp.344-345.

152. *Ibid.*

153. *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425.

refutation of the allegations put forward in the separation petition, and repeated that a majority of northerners did not desire separation.<sup>154</sup>

According to separationists Griffith managed in his report, in Coote's words:

to conjure up the fading phantom of servile labor; to attack the integrity of the petition and its signatures; to attempt a little financial jugglery; to draw a sad picture of the financial ruin to both North and South; and to try at soothing our irritation with a faint decentralizing opiate. 155

The Separation Council's rejoinder defended the genuineness of the signatures, explaining the precautions taken to avoid invalid signatures. The Council remarked that because their aims rose above merely redistributing the revenue or obtaining readier access to the Lands Department, decentralization would not meet their requirements.<sup>156</sup>

When Griffith's decentralization alternative was foreshadowed in the Vice-Regal valedictory speech at the close of the 1886 session, separationists were immediately apprehensive, especially when they realized that Griffith would be in London for Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations and the Imperial Conference at precisely the time when the Colonial Office was deliberating on separation. It was feared that Griffith would use personal influence at the Colonial Office to postpone the decision on separation, pending trial of his decentralization scheme.<sup>157</sup> The Separation Council, taking up a suggestion of the *Townsville Herald*, asked Macrossan to go to England as a delegate to counter Griffith's influence, in the hope that he might even be allowed to attend the Imperial Conference as representative of north Queensland.<sup>158</sup> Personal commitments prevented Macrossan's acceptance,<sup>159</sup> whereupon the Mackay League suggested Hume Black and

154. Musgrave to Knutsford 20 January 1887, *ibid.*, p.420.

155. Letter to Editor, *TH*, 16 April 1887.

156. NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, pp.436-438.

157. *TH*, 18 December 1886.

158. *Ibid.*, 25 December 1886.

159. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1887. Macrossan had to appear in a lawsuit in Sydney.

W.V. Brown;<sup>160</sup> the Council rejected this suggestion partly because of the expense, and partly because it feared that Black's connection with the sugar industry would revive the coloured labour issue.<sup>161</sup> Severely criticized for this decision, the Council wilted under attack and reversed its decision in a couple of weeks, but it still feared that Black's appointment would alienate supporters in the mining districts and adjourned in order to consult the executive of the Charters Towers League.<sup>162</sup> When the Charters Towers League met to confirm its executive's decision, favouring Black's appointment, O'Kane alone dissented; he succeeded, however, in carrying a motion that separation committees in northern mining centres appoint a delegate to London, proposing Isidor Lissner.<sup>163</sup> Lissner consented after approving replies were received from a number of mining centres,<sup>164</sup> and in early 1887 Black and Lissner left for England.

The main purpose of the conference which sat at the Colonial Office in April-May 1887 was to allow colonial representatives and Imperial authorities to settle upon a system of Imperial defence.<sup>165</sup> Some contemporary observers suspected that Griffith's complaisance at the conference, even if it was not intended to influence the decision of the Secretary of

---

160. *Ibid.* C f., *Mackay Standard*, 24 December 1886.

161. *TH*, 15 January 1887. The cost of sending a delegate to England was estimated at £1000.

162. *NQTTs*, 19 January 1887.

163. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1887.

164. *Ibid.*, 27 January 1887.

165. Initially Lord George Hamilton revived Admiral Tyron's scheme for Australasian naval defence, but undertook that Great Britain would provide, equip and man the proposed Auxiliary Fleet if the colonies would accept the cost of maintenance, the cost of triennial changes of crews, and in addition provide for deterioration. Only Queensland and New South Wales were willing to accept this proposal without demur. When other colonies objected, however, the Admiralty compromised and agreement was reached. Other matters discussed included land fortifications at important coaling stations; defence of King George Sound and Thursday Island, ocean mail services, submarine telegraphy and the New Hebrides. *London Standard*, 6 May 1887, QSA COL/102A, No. 4639. *Saturday Review*, 7 May 1887, QSA COL/102A, No. 4979.

State on separation, did in fact have that effect.<sup>166</sup> It is true that Lord Knutsford and Griffith came into close contact during the conference, and that years later Knutsford recalled with gratitude Griffith's co-operation.<sup>167</sup> Nevertheless it seems unnecessary to seek ulterior motives for Knutsford's unfavourable reply to the separation petition in 1887, which was adequately accounted for by the official explanation.

---

166. Extract from *Sydney Globe*, *NQTS*, 30 May 1887. Hume Black, for example, suggested that Knutsford was influenced by intercourse with Griffith and the need to propitiate him, especially since his reputation depended on the result of the conference. *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p.473; report of public meeting, *NQTS*, 18 August 1887.

167. Knutsford to Griffith 5 January 1895, Griffith Papers, MSQ188, pp.928-929. See also Knutsford to Griffith 12 August 1896, Griffith Papers, MSQ189, p.180; Knutsford to Griffith 22 January 1889, Griffith Papers, MSQ187, p.496; Knutsford to Griffith 1 November 1887, *ibid.*, p.224.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE COLONIAL OFFICE

The internal organization of the Colonial Office, the department of the British government dealing with colonial matters, was quite stable during the period 1885-94.<sup>1</sup> The staff were distributed among functional departments, and several geographical departments, each dealing with one group of colonies. In the period 1885-87 there were four geographical departments - West Indian; North American and Australian; African and Mediterranean; and Eastern - and three functional departments - the Chief Clerk's department dealing with general and miscellaneous correspondence and including a registry, printing branch, library and copying branch; the Financial department; and the Emigration department. John Bramston, one of three assistant under-secretaries, supervised work connected with the Australian, North American, and South African colonies, Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, as well as several functional areas such as general legal business, commissions, and educational and ecclesiastical questions; Bramston had had experience in Queensland as Sir Robert Herbert's private secretary and had held the position of assistant under-secretary since 1876. Four clerks handled the work of the North American and Australian department: a principal clerk, E.B. Pennell, a first class clerk, F.W. Fuller, and two second class clerks.

The functioning of the Office revolved around receiving and despatching correspondence. In the registry all incoming correspondence was given a reference number and stamped with the date of receipt, and then sent to the appropriate department. In the North American and Australian department letters ascended the organizational hierarchy, passing from Fuller to Pennell to Bramston, and then to the permanent under-secretary, Robert Herbert, the parliamentary under-secretary, and finally to the

---

1. See *Colonial Office List*, 1886, pp.13-15. *Ibid.*, 1888, pp.10-11. *Ibid.*, 1891, pp.10-11. *Ibid.*, 1893, pp.10-11. R.B. Pugh, "The Colonial Office, 1801-1925" *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* (London 1959), Vol. 3, pp.739-744.

Secretary of State.<sup>2</sup> After examining the letter and any accompanying papers, each officer wrote a minute on the attached minute sheet; this might summarize or comment on the letter, cite relevant information not contained in it, or suggest appropriate action. Each minute was headed with the name of the person to whom the papers were next to be sent together with the date, and signed by the author; each officer added his comments to the minute sheet, or merely his initials if he concurred with previous minutes. When the Secretary of State had decided what action was necessary, the papers were returned to the department, and a draft reply retraced the path of the original letter, subject to alteration at each level, until it was accepted by the Secretary of State.

Most correspondence came from the colonial Governor, who was expected to keep the Office informed of all important events in the colony and to send copies of all important documents. As well as his own despatches, the Governor forwarded all communications, official and unofficial, addressed to the Colonial Office or other departments of the British government, together with any comments or explanations he deemed necessary. In addition the Colonial Office corresponded with other government departments, and with private individuals, in England.<sup>3</sup> This correspondence was dealt with in the same manner as despatches.

The Colonial Office was the focus of the separation campaign. In this separationists followed a tradition established by forerunners in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and northern New South Wales, and by earlier movements within Queensland. Convinced that fair dealing, let alone separation, was unobtainable from the Queensland government, they were eager to take their case to a higher court; there, they believed, British justice would be impartially dispensed since unbiased officials would, in Finch-Hatton's phrase, "hold the scales".<sup>4</sup> To the Colonial Office, on the other hand, northern separationists represented

- 
2. There is no evidence that second class clerks dealt with Queensland correspondence.
  3. Individuals writing from the colony were required to forward their letters through the Governor.
  4. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.451. See also *TH*, 28 August 1886, 26 March 1887.

a problem, as vexing as it was persistent<sup>5</sup> - one they preferred to avoid if at all possible. Lord Derby's response to the first approach to his department on behalf of northern separationists epitomized the attitude of the Colonial Office until the end of the century, when Australian federation took the matter out of their hands:

Her Majesty's Government would be very reluctant to advise the separation of a part of the Colony if the wishes and requirements of the residents in the Northern portion of it, in so far as they may be found after due enquiry to be just and reasonable, can be otherwise fairly met.<sup>6</sup>

As was seen earlier, the Colonial Office first received correspondence on the subject not from the separatist organization in northern Queensland nor from its London representatives, but from two private individuals. In January 1885 two sugar planters in London, Davidson and Lawes, presented a petition in support of separation which referred, *inter alia*, to the "absolute diversity of interests between the inhabitants of tropical and temperate Queensland on the subject of coloured labour".<sup>7</sup> Although the coloured labour issue was only one of the grievances enumerated by Davidson and Lawes, minutes in the Colonial Office treated it as the nub of the question.<sup>8</sup> So too did the report furnished by Griffith, which expatiated at length upon the undesirable social and political repercussions to be expected from introducing an Asiatic race into Queensland.<sup>9</sup> Despite repeated protestations by separationists, black labour and the separation movement remained closely linked in the eyes of the Colonial Office throughout the period of active agitation. In 1894, for example, it was noted that the

- 
5. Herbert, minute 18 January 1885, on Davidson and Lawes 14 January 1885, CO234/46; Anderson, minute 13 August 1892, on Central Queensland Separation League 12 August 1892, CO234/55; Mercer, minute 5 April 1894, on despatch No. 9, CO234/59.
  6. Derby to Musgrave 28 January 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.375.
  7. Davidson and Lawes to Derby 14 January 1885, *ibid.*, p.376. See above p. 243.
  8. Bramston, minute 3 June 1885, on despatch No. 31, CO234/46; Bramston, minute 17 January 1885, on Davidson and Lawes 14 January 1885, CO234/46.
  9. Griffith to Musgrave 1 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, pp.377-380.



movement was declining because the principal grievance against the south had been removed when the Pacific Island labour traffic was resumed in 1892.<sup>10</sup>

The conclusion sometimes drawn, that this association was a major reason for the refusal of the Colonial Office to support separation,<sup>11</sup> cannot be sustained. On the one hand, the influence of the humanitarians of Exeter Hall, postulated in support of this conclusion,<sup>12</sup> leaves no trace on the papers of this period;<sup>13</sup> on the other, there is abundant evidence that the officials supported the use of coloured labour in the Queensland sugar industry and were critical of Griffith's opposition to it. Summing up the position in early 1885, the assistant under-secretary inclined towards sympathy with northern sugar interests: "The present Government is ruining one of the principal interests in the Colony and this demand for separation is the result."<sup>14</sup> Sir Robert Herbert, permanent under-secretary, went further still. Like Sir Anthony Musgrave,<sup>15</sup> Herbert doubted the practicability of Griffith's plan for Europeans to work the sugar plantations.<sup>16</sup> As Queensland's first Premier Herbert had actively encouraged the introduction of coloured labour, which he considered essential for developing a tropical colony.<sup>17</sup> In 1885 he was critical of the Griffith government's labour policy:

The present Queensland Government is bringing  
a great deal of injury upon the Colony, and

- 
10. Mercer, minute 1 February 1894, on despatch No. 215, CO234/58.
  11. Shann, *An Economic History of Australia*, Chapter 14. Sullivan, *Localism in North Queensland*, p.36, p.67, p.83, p.125.
  12. *Ibid.*, p.125.
  13. Indeed Herbert held pronounced views against missionaries. B.L. Blakeley, *The Colonial Office 1868-1892* (Durham 1972), p.39. B.J. Dalton found the same to be true a generation earlier. Dalton, *War and Politics*, p.14.
  14. Bramston, minute 17 January 1885, on Davidson and Lawes 14 January 1885, CO234/46. C f., Bramston, minute 3 June 1885, on despatch No. 31, CO234/46.
  15. Musgrave to Derby 13 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.380.
  16. Herbert, minute 4 June 1885, on despatch No. 31, CO234/46.
  17. Knox (ed.), *Herbert*, pp.28-29. Moles, "Indian Coolie Labour Issue", pp.1348-1349.

of trouble upon itself and us, by its incapacity and narrowness. 18

Herbert believed that the Queensland government was jeopardizing the millions that had been invested in the sugar industry merely to catch the working man's vote and bolster its popularity in the south.<sup>19</sup> Hoping that separation could at least be postponed as long as possible, he believed that the government should reconsider its restrictive labour policy.<sup>20</sup> Later, in 1892, Lord Knutsford supported Griffith's decision to reverse his policy on Pacific Island labour, despite the popular outcry in England against the revival of the "slave trade";<sup>21</sup> the Colonial Office viewed the revival of the traffic as a factor promoting the prosperity of the colony.<sup>22</sup> Far from opposing the employment of coloured labour in northern Queensland, officials at the Colonial Office, including the influential Herbert, responded sympathetically to this aspect of the separation case.

In keeping with the general emphasis on legal questions among the lawyer-dominated secretariat,<sup>23</sup> the main concern of the Colonial Office was to establish where exactly the power of separation lay. Separationists argued that the Crown had the power to divide Queensland by issuing Letters Patent, in the same way as Queensland had been separated from New South Wales. However the evidence presented in support of this view was rather circumstantial. Separationists relied principally on the provisions of an Imperial Act of 1861, which had been passed to allow the annexation to Queensland of the unclaimed strip of territory between its western border and the eastern border of what later became the Northern Territory of South Australia. The Act empowered the Crown to annex to any future or existing Australian colony territory forming part of any other colony; it also included provisions to facilitate apportionment of the debt and settlement of boundaries in the event of

---

18. Herbert, minute 18 January 1885, on Davidson and Lawes 14 January 1885, CO234/46.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. Carrick to Griffith 13 May 1892, QSA COL/118A, No. 07394.

22. Mercer, minute 19 February 1895, on secret despatch 7 January 1895, CO234/61.

23. Blakeley, *Colonial Office*, p.81.

any future separation. Separationists contended that these provisions acknowledged the probability and, by inference, the necessity, of further separation.<sup>24</sup>

A despatch from the Secretary of State, the Duke of Newcastle, announcing the boundary extension, was cited to reinforce this argument. Newcastle had drawn Governor Bowen's attention to the probability that the newly-acquired territory would require a separate government at some time in the future. Because of this, Newcastle stressed, he was "not prepared to abandon definitively, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, the power to deal with districts not yet settled, as the wishes and convenience of the future settlers may hereafter require".<sup>25</sup> Bowen accepted the probability of a future separation.<sup>26</sup> The statute of 1861, together with these expressions of opinion, were regarded by northern separationists as guarantees of self-government whenever their "wishes and convenience" required.<sup>27</sup>

The idea that Imperial statute had reserved to the Crown the power of separation had a long history in northern Queensland.<sup>28</sup> Even in the earliest separation movements, the Duke of Newcastle had been quoted to substantiate this claim.<sup>29</sup> In 1871 the north's first petition to the Queen claimed separation on the basis of powers conferred by an Imperial Act of 1855, which provided for sub-dividing New South Wales.<sup>30</sup> Self-government gradually came to be seen not as a concession requested of the British authorities, but as a right of the petitioning colonists.<sup>31</sup>

- 
24. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.443; NQSC to Derby, *ibid.*, pp.444-445. The territory concerned, though nominally still part of New South Wales, was practically without government.
25. Newcastle to Bowen, No. 39, 14 December 1861, QSA GOV/2.
26. NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.445.
27. *Ibid.*, p.448.
28. E.g., *PDT*, 18 July 1866; Separation Petition, *ibid.*, 17 October 1866.
29. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 15 August 1866. *Ibid.*, 22 January, 18 March 1876.
30. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1876, Vol. 1, p.660.
31. *Territorial Separation*, p.32. Separation Petition, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.441. NQSC to Derby, *ibid.*, p.448.

Confident of their legal position in applying to the Queen for separation, northerners were certain that their prayer would be granted. In their view, the words of the Duke of Newcastle made "the wishes and convenience of the future settlers" virtually the sole criterion for a decision on separation.<sup>32</sup> Moreover the Imperial statutes did not mention any need to consult the colonial government.<sup>33</sup> The precedents of Victoria and Queensland strengthened the belief that the British authorities would overrule the opposition of the Queensland government.

Separationists convincingly demonstrated that in the early 1860s both Imperial and colonial authorities had anticipated a further separation. But they treated a remark made by Newcastle about a specific tract of territory - that annexed to Queensland in 1861 - as if it were a dictum of universal application:

The language of the Duke of Newcastle admits of no other construction than that the non-settlement of territory included in the area of the new colony, at the time of its creation, leaves the future settlers upon it free to claim self-government; and the Crown, under the powers vested in it, to grant their request "as their wishes and convenience might require".<sup>34</sup>

More importantly, separationists had taken it for granted that statutory enactments had in fact empowered the Crown to effect separation.

A series of Imperial Acts dating from 1840 to 1855 unequivocally made it lawful for the Queen, upon petition from resident householders in a district, to erect by Letters Patent a separate colony out of certain parts of the territory of New South Wales. The question at issue was whether this power had been exhausted by the creation of Queensland in 1859. Sir Anthony Musgrave, no friend of the promoters of separation, raised this doubt in early 1885, drawing attention to the fact that the Act of 1855, the last of the series of relevant Acts, named New South Wales

---

32. *Ibid.* Corfield to Knutsford 7 May 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.440.

33. NQSC to Musgrave 16 November 1885, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.440.

34. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p.807. C f., NQSC to Derby, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.445.

as the prospective parent colony; power to divide Queensland, as a colony carved out of New South Wales, was not specifically mentioned.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed even the Duke of Newcastle, whose judgement and prescience separationists extolled, though he clearly anticipated a future subdivision of Queensland, had doubted that the Crown could effect it without empowering legislation passed by the British parliament, as he wrote at the time of Queensland's separation:

It will be desirable that the Crown should possess the power of subdividing further the Territory now erected into the Colony of Queensland, by detaching from it such northern portions as may hereafter be found fit to be erected into separate Colonies. I presume, (but without having, as yet, taken legal opinions on the subject), that the Crown having now exercised the power of division conferred on it by the New South Wales Constitutional Act, any such further division can only be effected under further authority from Parliament. 36

Separationists quoted only the first part of this statement, and their opponents failed to bring the full statement to light.

The Colonial Office referred to the Crown Law Officers Musgrave's suggestion that the Crown's power of separation had been exhausted by the creation of Queensland; their report confirmed that the powers conferred by the Act of 1855, the final act in the series, were not sufficient to divide Queensland. These powers, though not entirely exhausted by the creation of Queensland, referred only to territories forming part of New South Wales when the powers were to be exercised; an Imperial Act, similar to that which allowed the subdivision of New South Wales, would be necessary to give the Crown power to divide Queensland.<sup>37</sup> In 1886 a new set of Law Officers endorsed this verdict, after examining all the Acts in the series and finding that none gave the Crown statutory power of issuing Letters Patent to divide Queensland.<sup>38</sup>

---

35. Musgrave to Derby 13 April 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.380.

36. Newcastle to Denison 18 August 1859, *NSW V&P*, 1859-60, Vol. 4, p.963.

37. Law Officers to Stanley 29 July 1885, CO234/46.

38. Law Officers to Granville 26 June 1886, CO234/47.

When in 1887 the Law Officers went beyond the strict letter of the law, entering the domain of policy, their conclusions were even more damaging to the interests of separationists. Asked whether it was necessary to refer to the Queensland legislature before an Imperial Act could be passed, they reported that although the Imperial parliament was competent to pass an Act for the separation of northern Queensland, such a course should not be adopted without some resolution, address or bill from the Queensland parliament. The Law Officers added that although the control of waste lands vested in the Queensland legislature presented no legal obstacle to the Imperial parliament's passing an Act for separation, it did constitute an additional ground for abstaining from such a course without the assent of the local parliament.<sup>39</sup> John Bramston, assistant under-secretary dealing with Australian affairs, went to the heart of the report: "It would be lawful but inexpedient for Parliament to separate Queensland without the assent of the Colonial Legislature".<sup>40</sup>

The Law Officers' opinion was a major constraint on the decision of the Secretary of State. In minutes Lord Knutsford admitted that "a very strong case is made out for separation", but confessed that he was at a loss to see how the Imperial parliament could act without a request from the colonial government.<sup>41</sup> Therefore it was on the basis of the Law Officers' report that the Secretary of State took his stand when replying to the separation deputation in May 1887: Imperial legislation for separation was possible, but

it would be very difficult, if not undesirable, for Her Majesty's Government to adopt any such course until we had before us either some resolution, or address, or Bill passed by the Legislature of the colony, or unless, perhaps, some overwhelming case were made out which would justify such an interference. 42

---

39. Law Officers to Knutsford 5 March 1887, C0234/48.

40. Bramston, minute 9 March 1887, *ibid.*

41. Knutsford, minute 8 March 1887, on Finch-Hatton 3 March 1887, C0234/48.

42. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.451.

Knutsford characterized the British parliament's power of separation as a "latent power" - one which had not been exercised since the colonies had achieved responsible government.

Any attempt to read a grand design into the decisions of the Colonial Office is sure to founder: research has repeatedly demonstrated the pragmatic way in which the department responded to specific colonial problems.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, during the 19th century a broad trend was discernible in Imperial policy as the colonies of settlement were allowed increasing control over their internal affairs. Whether it was the outcome of positive policy decisions,<sup>44</sup> or whether, as J.W. Cell has suggested, it was forced upon the Colonial Office by a sudden narrowing of the range of options so that colonial demands for self-government could no longer be resisted,<sup>45</sup> in the 1850s several colonies of settlement were granted responsible government in swift succession. Nor did the process of devolution of authority stop there for, as A.B. Keith observes, the record of responsible government is largely the history of successive surrenders of authority by the Imperial government.<sup>46</sup> This arose in part from submission to the same pressure from the colonies which had forced the initial concession, and in part from the working out of the implications of responsible government.

This was the background to the decision reached in 1887. The secretariat was convinced that the colonies were jealous of their powers of self-government.<sup>47</sup> Lord Knutsford feared that interference in the internal affairs of one of these colonies would provoke resentment from all.<sup>48</sup> That he had correctly gauged the trend of colonial opinion

- 
43. E.g., Blakeley, *Colonial Office*, p.xi; C.H. Currey, *British Colonial Policy 1783-1915* (London 1916), p.5.
44. E.g., see B.A. Knox, "Reconsidering Mid-Victorian Imperialism" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 1, 1972-73, pp.163-166.
45. J.W. Cell, *British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Policy-Making Process* (New Haven 1970), p.182.
46. A.B. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions* (London 1928), Vol. 2, p.1145.
47. Blakeley, *op.cit.*, p.xiv.
48. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.451.

was shown by developments in Queensland in the following year. In 1888 McIlwraith strode to power under the banner of "National Party", painting Griffith as a lackey of British imperialism and contrasting his subservience, especially on the naval defence issue, with his own independent, nationalistic outlook.<sup>49</sup> In office, McIlwraith questioned the Governor's right to refuse to exercise the prerogative of pardon, despite the advice of his ministers.<sup>50</sup> Also in 1888 the Queensland government and the Colonial Office clashed over the appointment of Henry Blake as Governor of Queensland; Griffith as leader of the opposition and the Premiers of South Australia and New South Wales joined McIlwraith in demanding that colonial governments be allowed to veto gubernatorial appointments.<sup>51</sup> Imperial intervention to divide Queensland over the head of the responsible government would indeed have been inopportune.

The trend of British colonial policy was reflected in the Colonial Boundaries Act, a contemporary postscript to the legislation of a quarter of a century before, which quietly made its way into the British statute book in 1895. Speaking to the bill in the House of Lords, the Secretary of State explained that it was necessary to validate certain annexations to colonies and alterations of Australian colonial boundaries, the legality of which the Crown Law Officers had recently called into doubt. Of particular significance was the express provision that in future "the consent of a self-governing colony shall be required for the alteration of the boundaries thereof".<sup>52</sup> This went unnoticed by the contending parties in Queensland until 1898, when opponents of the movement pointed to the Act as a stumbling block in the way of separation, arguing that separation indisputably involved altering boundaries.<sup>53</sup> It was tempting

---

49. See A.W. Stirling, "The Political Outlook in Queensland" *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 44, 1888, pp.723-724. C f., extract from *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, TH, 28 April 1888.

50. I.D. McNaughton, "The Case of Benjamin Kitt" *JBHSQ*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1951, pp.535-558.

51. B. Penny, "The Blake Case" *AJPH*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1960, pp.176-189.

52. *BC*, 14 February 1898.

53. *Ibid.*



to regard the Act as intended to strengthen the hand of the Queensland government in opposing separation; but there is no evidence to support this view. Nevertheless, though of little or no direct bearing on the separation question, the insistence on colonial assent, never before mentioned in legislation dealing with boundaries, was a clear indication of the evolution of British policy.

It is probable that the framers of the Acts of 1840, 1842, 1850 and 1855 intended to give the Crown the powers which separationists ascribed to it: referring to the subdivision of New South Wales, the Acts speak of plural "colonies" to be created out of it. The contingency that these separations would become desirable successively rather than simultaneously may have been overlooked. In 1859, following his observations on the possibility of further subdivision of Queensland and the need for parliament to confer fresh powers of separation on the Crown, Newcastle had concluded:

But there will be time enough to take the necessary steps for this purpose whenever I shall have received intelligence of the publication of the Instruments, and of the measures taken in regard to the Debt. 54

However, after the separation of Queensland was accomplished, the action foreshadowed by Newcastle was not taken. In 1887 the matter stood as it had in 1859: the British parliament rather than the Crown possessed the power of separation. Although the distinction may appear academic, the consequences were important; an official spelled out the implications of the Law Officers' finding that enabling legislation would be required:

the necessity of proceeding in this way does practically speaking materially affect the criterion of proof of the desirability of separation. The case for such a step must be fully proved. 55

If he decided that it was desirable to introduce an enabling bill, the Secretary of State would have needed first to seek cabinet approval

---

54. Newcastle to Denison 18 August 1859, *NSW V&P*, 1859-60, Vol. 4, p.936.

55. Mercer, minute 5 June 1890, on despatch No. 41, C0234/51.

and then to carry the measure through the British parliament. Regardless of their political power or force of character, Secretaries of State generally found it difficult to obtain cabinet support for their proposals.<sup>56</sup> The Colonial Office was only one, minor department of the British government; colonial matters usually aroused interest in cabinet only when they impinged on Britain's foreign policy or defence. Naturally the government was reluctant to risk entanglement in delicate colonial questions, especially when, as with northern separation, opinion in the colony itself was divided; a tradition that the Imperial parliament should legislate for the internal affairs of colonies with representative institutions only in accordance with the clearly expressed wishes of the populace was well established. To have taken up the separatist cause, overriding the views of the responsible government of Queensland, would have exposed the British government to criticism from a variety of sources including colonial representatives and lobbies, members of parliament with connections and/or experience in the colony, who were often primed with much local knowledge, the press, private interests, and not least, the opposition, who could be relied upon to recognize a stick with which to beat the ministry. Moreover it was not easy to insist on party unity on a colonial question, so that the government was likely to confront a united opposition strengthened by some of its own supporters influenced by personal interests or Queensland lobbies, and this in the face of the indifference of the ordinary British member for whom colonial questions were definitely of secondary importance.

Officials at the Colonial Office repeatedly stressed the difficulty and delicacy of any attempt to carry a bill through the Imperial parliament.<sup>57</sup> If the British government introduced a bill they would stand godfather to it and would have to be prepared to support it. This course could be justified only on moral grounds: in the last resort in clear cases of irremediable hardship and oppression.<sup>58</sup> To Herbert, the trouble

---

56. Blakeley, *op.cit.*, p.xii.

57. Anderson, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No. 105, C0234/62.

58. Mercer, minute 31 December 1890, on despatch No. 185, C0234/51.

over the Western Australian Enabling Bill had shown that parliament was unlikely to allow a separation bill to pass unless it was presented on the strongest grounds and after all reasonable opposition had been overcome.<sup>59</sup> Therefore it would have required much persuasion to induce the ministry to introduce, and parliament to pass, a bill to enable northern Queensland to be separated. Even if it could have been done, Lord Knutsford was probably not the man to do it. A poor speaker, with no taste for the cross-fire of parliamentary debate, Knutsford was only a very junior minister in Salisbury's government and he was notorious for abandoning his plans when he encountered resistance in cabinet.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to all these factors contributing to an adverse reply in 1887, the presence at the Colonial Office of Sir Robert Herbert, ex-Premier of Queensland, undoubtedly exerted a baleful influence on the fortunes of the separation movement.<sup>61</sup> His appointment in February 1870 as assistant under-secretary had been hailed as an augury of success by separationists in north Queensland who assumed that, because his interests had been identified with the north, they could count on his sympathy.<sup>62</sup> In his first address to Townsville separationists in 1884, William Coote predicted that Herbert would prove an ally.<sup>63</sup> Yet in 1892 his resignation was cause for celebration among separationists who by then were convinced of his enmity.<sup>64</sup> The evidence indicates that this reversal of opinion was well-founded.

---

59. Herbert, minute 4 July 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO234/51. In 1889-90, there had been considerable opposition to the Western Australian Enabling Bill from both sides of the House of Commons, mainly because of anxiety about giving so few colonists control of such vast territories. F.K. Crowley, *Australia's Western Third* (London 1960), pp.92-93. J.S. Battye, *Western Australia* (Oxford 1924), pp.388-393.

60. Blakeley, *op.cit.*, pp.157-158.

61. For details of Herbert's background, career in the civil service, administrative style and personal character, see *ibid.*, pp.32-41; Pugh, "The Colonial Office", p.744.

62. *PDT*, 2 April, 21 May 1870. Herbert had been a sleeping partner in the Valley of Lagoons pastoral property in north Queensland.

63. *Territorial Separation*, p.32.

64. *NQH*, 6 January 1892.

In 1871 Herbert had been promoted to permanent under-secretary, the position he held until his retirement. The power of the permanent under-secretary to influence the decisions of the Secretary of State, though perhaps often exaggerated, was nevertheless considerable. By emphasizing certain pieces of information and omitting to mention or minimizing others, by careful wording of minutes listing the merits and demerits of alternative courses of action, and by countless other devices, the opinion of the Secretary of State could be subtly moulded, especially if he had no strong preconceived ideas about an issue. The permanent under-secretary was the repository of detailed knowledge of the colonial situation and of past decisions of the Colonial Office; his opinion was bound to carry great weight with the transient Secretaries of State of the period.<sup>65</sup> That influence would in this case have been strengthened by Herbert's background in Queensland and the unusual length of his tenure, spanning a period of 21 years. His sway with Lord Knutsford would have been increased by their association as colleagues in the Colonial Office from 1870 to 1874,<sup>66</sup> and by Knutsford's own weaknesses as an administrator.<sup>67</sup> In combination these factors would have allowed Herbert, if he had strong views on the separation issue, considerable influence on the decisions reached.

In response to Davidson and Lawes' letter in 1885, Herbert flatly stated that separation was to be deprecated, though he added that it would probably come eventually. To avoid an undesirable separation rather than to support the Queensland government of the day was his main aim, as was shown by his opinion that Griffith should reconsider

---

65. E.g., Colonel Stanley was Secretary of State June 1885-February 1886; Lord Granville, February-August 1886; Edward Stanhope, August 1886-January 1887.

66. In 1867 Henry Holland (later Lord Knutsford) was appointed to the new post of legal adviser to the Colonial Office. One of his rivals for the position was Herbert. In 1870-71 Holland and Herbert, as assistant under-secretaries, divided the work of the office between them, in anticipation of the retirement of the permanent under-secretary, Sir Frederic Rogers. After Herbert's promotion in 1871 to fill Rogers' place, Holland worked under him as assistant under-secretary. Blakeley, *op.cit.*, pp.35-36, pp.157-158.

67. *Ibid.*, pp.157-158.

his labour policy to avert partition of the colony.<sup>68</sup> Sentiment probably played a part in Herbert's opposition to the movement: even in 1892 he could refer to Queensland as "my own country"<sup>69</sup> and he may have been reluctant to split the colony he had helped to found. When in Queensland, Herbert, like Governor Bowen,<sup>70</sup> had been very conscious of the need to combat divisive regionalism, drafting legislation, such as the Provincial Councils Act of 1864, to this end.<sup>71</sup>

After 1885 Herbert's actions and comments were consistent with his avowed disapproval of the movement. In July 1885 he assented to a submission of the Agent-General, that before separation was considered by the Secretary of State it should be shown to command at least a substantial minority of votes in the Queensland Assembly.<sup>72</sup> Herbert was gently chided for this declaration by John Bramston, his assistant under-secretary, former private secretary and old school friend. Bramston reminded his superior that the Secretary of State had expressed no such opinion; he sympathized with northern parliamentarians, who were easily outvoted by southern members, admonishing Herbert to be "most careful not to endorse the doctrine of votes". Herbert curtly replied: "I think you could hardly give the go-by to a 'Responsible Governments' legislature".<sup>73</sup>

Therefore the Law Officers' report of 1887 suited Herbert's purposes admirably, and his subsequent remarks seemed calculated to press home this advantage. On more than one occasion he stressed that the question had been decided by the opinion of the Law Officers and discouraged

---

68. Herbert, minute 18 January 1885, on Davidson and Lawes 14 January 1885, CO234/46.

69. Cablegram Herbert to Griffith, enclosed with Garrick to Griffith 18 January 1892, QSA COL/117, No. 00707, with No. 02335.

70. Bowen to Newcastle No. 90, 4 December 1860, QSA GOV/22.

71. Knox (ed.), *Herbert*, pp.29-30.

72. Garrick to Griffith 10 July 1885, *QV&P*, 1885, Vol. 1, p.390.

73. Bramston, minute 16 January 1885, and Herbert, minute 18 January 1885, on despatch No. 88, CO234/46.

further discussion of the issue.<sup>74</sup> For instance, when Hume Black requested a copy of Griffith's report on the petition in order to prepare for the interview with the Secretary of State in May 1887, Herbert, unlike his colleagues, was reluctant to comply, emphasizing that the decision had already been made and that the interview with the separation delegation was merely a courtesy.<sup>75</sup> Moreover Herbert seemed to be pushing the Secretary of State towards a reply more negative even than that indicated by the Law Officers' report. Herbert suggested that Knutsford state, in reply to a forthcoming question on north Queensland separation in the House of Commons, that he could "take no steps in the absence of Colonial as well as Imperial Legislation".<sup>76</sup> Knutsford altered this to the milder: ". . .without Imperial legislation, and such legislation can hardly be resorted to without some prior resolution being passed by the Colonial Legislature".<sup>77</sup>

Additional factors probably contributed to the negative reply in 1887: evidence of a counter movement within north Queensland, whose relative strength the Colonial Office found it impossible to gauge; and the adverse opinion of Musgrave, the Governor. Contemporary observers believed that the Home Rule issue added to the reluctance of the Unionist ministry to grant separation: the British government might have been embarrassed by questions about why north Queensland was entitled to self-government if Ireland was not.<sup>78</sup>

For all these reasons, the Secretary of State decided in 1887 that he "did not think at present that a sufficiently strong case had been made out to justify action . . .". However as consolation to separationists and perhaps, implicitly, a threat to the Queensland government, he stressed

---

74. E.g., Herbert, minute 31 March 1887, on despatch No. 8, CO234/48.

75. Herbert, minute 6 April 1887, on M.H. Black 5 April 1887, CO234/48.

76. Herbert, minute 10 May 1887, on House of Commons 9 May 1887, CO234/48.

77. See Knutsford's alteration of the draft reply to the above.

78. E.g., Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, pp.467-468.

the need for decentralization and fair allocation of revenue, saying that Imperial intervention in a self-governing colony

would be only justifiable if, after a prolonged trial, all other means of removing any administrative defects or inequalities should prove ineffective. It will be necessary in the first instance to test fairly the proposals of [the government] for establishing branches of Government departments in the Northern Districts, and to ascertain by a careful system of accounts whether, after the expiration of a further term, a reasonable proportion of the colonial revenue has been expended in the Northern Districts. 79

---

79. Knutsford to Musgrave 14 June 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p.442.

## CHAPTER 10

### REORGANIZING

In north Queensland the initial reaction to Knutsford's refusal of the petition was one of frustration, for separationists were certain that the southern-dominated parliament of Queensland would never give the approval which the Secretary of State had made virtually a precondition for Imperial action;<sup>1</sup> other than suggesting that decentralization be given a trial, Lord Knutsford had given separationists no indication of appropriate future strategy. Frustration led to aggression, and various extreme measures were mooted: resignation in a body of the voluntary defence force, boycotts of all southern men in official positions, parliamentary obstruction by northern members, even rebellion.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless the constitutional approach prevailed, as hitherto: in June 1887 the Separation Council issued a circular to northern leagues, repudiating such immoderate suggestions.<sup>3</sup> Since Lord Knutsford had emphasized that decentralization should be tried before northern separationists again approached the Colonial Office,<sup>4</sup> it seemed that little could be accomplished until Griffith's proposals were brought forward.

To fulfil his promise to the Secretary of State, Griffith in August 1887 introduced his decentralization scheme, embodied in three bills: the Financial Districts Bill, which divided the colony into three districts for financial purposes; the Local Administration Bill, providing for the establishment of branches of government departments in the central and northern districts; and a Real Property (Local Registries) Bill which provided for branches of the Registrar of Titles Office to be established in Townsville and Rockhampton.<sup>5</sup>

The Financial Districts Bill was based largely on the financial separation bills of the 1870s, although Griffith preferred to avoid any association with the term "separation".<sup>6</sup> It divided the colony into three financial divisions,

- 
1. *MM*, 14, 19 May 1887. Separation Council's circular, *TH*, 25 June 1887.
  2. *Ibid.*, 2 April, 21 May 1887. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 21 May 1887. *MM*, 14, 31 May, 2 June 1887.
  3. *TH*, 25 June 1887.
  4. Report of separation deputation, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 451.
  5. *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p. 296.
  6. *Ibid.*, p. 406.



the boundary of the northern division running from Cape Palmerston along the 21st parallel to the border of South Australia. Separate accounts were to be kept of general debt, general revenue and expenditure, and of local debt, local revenue and expenditure for each division; local revenue was to be spent in the division where it was raised. Customs and excise were included in local revenue, and credit would be given for duty paid on goods entering the colony at ports outside a district, but subsequently consumed within it. If general revenue should fall short of general expenditure, as was likely when the largest source of revenue, customs duties, was defined as local, the deficit would be met by a proportional levy on the three districts.<sup>7</sup>

Griffith immediately encountered resistance to the scheme from within his own cabinet. It was partly opposition to the Financial Districts Bill, especially to clauses making customs local revenue and allowing parliament to impose local taxation within financial divisions, which precipitated the resignation of J.R. Dickson, Griffith's Treasurer, in August 1887.<sup>8</sup> Garrick, the Agent-General, was also uneasy about the proposal regarding customs, but accepted the scheme as the only alternative to separation.<sup>9</sup> Garrick observed that Griffith's scheme had encountered an obstacle faced by all previous decentralization proposals: "Your plan is almost more than the South will be disposed to give, while it is less than the North will take".<sup>10</sup>

In northern Queensland few regarded the scheme with enthusiasm. The Separation Council condemned it as insufficient to meet the needs of the north.<sup>11</sup> Newspaper opinion varied. At first most northern editors doubted whether any decentralization scheme would be passed by the southern majority,<sup>12</sup> but later some were impressed by Griffith's willingness to part with his Treasurer over

- 
7. Griffith, *ibid.*, pp. 322-323. Each district's liability would be calculated by adding to its "local revenue" a proportion of general revenue related to its population.
  8. Dickson to Griffith 8 August 1887, Griffith Papers, MSQ 187, pp. 160-165. Dickson also objected to Griffith's proposal for a land tax on freeholders.
  9. Garrick to Griffith 30 September 1887, *ibid.*, pp. 197-198.
  10. Garrick to Griffith 2 October 1887, *ibid.*, pp. 215-216.
  11. Report of NQSC meeting, *NQTTS*, 10 September 1887.
  12. *MM*, 29 March 1887. *NQTTS*, 22 June 1887. C f., letter to the Editor, *MM*, 18 August 1887.

the issue, believing that this showed a sincere intention to enact the bill.<sup>13</sup> The Liberal papers, the *North Queensland Telegraph*<sup>14</sup> and *Cooktown Independent*,<sup>15</sup> advocated accepting the scheme as an instalment of justice. However the pro-Liberal *Mackay Mercury* considered the Financial Districts Bill cumbersome and unworkable, while the system of book-keeping it proposed would be too expensive relative to its advantages.<sup>16</sup> Like the *Mercury*,<sup>17</sup> the *Townsville Herald* considered the bill's failure to give northerners control over expenditure of local revenue its main drawback:

it is plainly impossible by any system of keeping accounts to ensure more than a correct division on paper of the revenue. It is absurd to say that any system of book-keeping can ensure that the balances shown by it shall be expended in certain districts. 18

The *Northern Miner* agreed that the scheme did not go far enough to meet northern requirements,<sup>19</sup> and the *Cairns Post* considered that although expensive, the scheme would leave the north in as bad a position as ever if not worse.<sup>20</sup> Even the *Brisbane Courier* doubted the efficacy of Griffith's scheme; the Financial Districts Bill, it commented,

fails to touch the difficulty with which it is supposed to deal. The one genuine trouble in the North... is the lack of local self-government; the vital question for the colony to consider is whether it can give the North a sufficient measure of local self-government to serve in lieu of territorial separation...the bills... make no pretence of extending local self-government to the North and the Premier in introducing them virtually admitted that he was not prepared to redeem his implied pledge. 21

As Macrossan admitted, Griffith's bill went further than the McIlwraith government's bill of 1879 in making customs local rather than general revenue; it also went further than the report of the Financial Separation Commission of

---

13. *Ibid.*, 25 August 1887. *NQTS*, 16 August 1887.

14. *Ibid.*, 31 August, 1 September 1887.

15. Extract from *Cooktown Independent*, *MM*, 29 September 1887.

16. *Ibid.*, 1 September 1887.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *TH*, 7 January 1888. C f., *ibid.*, 3 September 1887.

19. *NM*, 30 September, 5 October 1887.

20. *CP*, 7 September 1887.

21. *BC*, 8 September 1887.

1877, or the bill introduced by the Douglas ministry on the recommendation of the Commission, in allowing credit for duty paid outside a district on goods consumed within it.<sup>22</sup> Yet Macrossan and the other northern members, with the exception of Charles Lumley-Hill, the only northern separationist who supported Griffith's party,<sup>23</sup> refused to support the bill. Northern representatives stigmatized it as merely a scheme "to authorise triplicate ledger-keeping",<sup>24</sup> one which gave local residents no control over the spending of local revenue, and no control over tariffs.<sup>25</sup> With few exceptions central members also opposed the bill as a mere system of book-keeping, which did not go as far as the provincial councils system which they promoted.<sup>26</sup> A number of southern members opposed the bill, because it would injure southern interests,<sup>27</sup> because it would become a stepping-stone to an undesirable separation,<sup>28</sup> or because it had failed in its primary objective of satisfying the north and undercutting the separation movement.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless the bill passed its second reading, 25 to 21.<sup>30</sup> Rejected by the northern members whom it was intended to meet, however, it was then allowed to lapse, pending the general election in 1888.

The Local Administration Bill provided for the establishment at Rockhampton and Townsville of branches of such administrative departments as the government deemed appropriate, beginning with the Treasury, and Departments of Lands, Works and probably Mines.<sup>31</sup> Business would be conducted in regional offices by under-secretaries, usually without need for reference to Brisbane, thus expediting

- 
22. Macrossan to McIlwraith 31 August 1887, McIlwraith Papers, p. 1702.
  23. Lumley-Hill supported the bill as a stepping-stone to complete separation. *QPD*, Vol. 52, 1887, p. 479.
  24. Chubb, *ibid.*, p. 481. C f., Macrossan, *ibid.*, p. 466; Black, *ibid.*, p. 473.
  25. Macrossan, *ibid.*, p. 466; Black, *ibid.*, p. 473; Chubb, *ibid.*, pp. 481-482; Hamilton, *ibid.*, p. 486.
  26. Pattison, *ibid.*, pp. 471-472. Norton (Port Curtis), McWhannell (Gregory), Wallace (Clermont), and Scott (Leichhardt) also voted against the bill. *Ibid.*, p. 496.
  27. Macfarlane (Ipswich), *ibid.*, p. 468.
  28. Murphy (Barcoo), *ibid.*, p. 488.
  29. Nelson (Northern Downs), *ibid.*, p. 493; Stevens (Logan), *ibid.*
  30. *Ibid.*, p. 496.
  31. Griffith, *ibid.*, p. 323.

transactions and taking advantage of local knowledge. The second of the "anti-separation bills",<sup>32</sup> as Hume Black styled them, this was also opposed by northern members, again with the exception of Lumley-Hill.<sup>33</sup> Northerners considered the bill unsatisfactory because it failed to extend local self-government,<sup>34</sup> as Griffith admitted.<sup>35</sup> Supported by the government it also passed its second reading,<sup>36</sup> but, like the Financial Districts Bill, was abandoned by the government in the session of 1887.

The third of the trio, the Real Property (Local Registries) Bill received the support of northern members as a practical reform.<sup>37</sup> Establishing local branches of the Titles Office would avoid delay and expense arising from the need to send every mortgage and transfer of property to the Brisbane office for registration. The Local Registries Bill became law in 1887.

The principal issue in the general election of 1888 was government finance, in particular the size of the deficit; other important issues were land legislation, Griffith's proposed land tax, and Chinese immigration.<sup>38</sup> Both the Liberal and National<sup>39</sup> parties mentioned decentralization in their programmes. Griffith's manifesto stated that the trio of bills presented to parliament in 1887 was intended only as a basis, promising that a Liberal government would supplement them with a scheme to extend local self-government; local administration within each financial district would be handled by District Officers responsible to District Representative Assemblies, which would also be given wide legislative powers on

---

32. *Ibid.*, p. 475.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 546.

34. E.g., Black, *ibid.*, p. 541.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 548.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Macrossan, *ibid.*, p. 415; Chubb, *ibid.*, pp. 415-416; Black, *ibid.*, p. 417. Nevertheless, Black objected to the boundary line between the Northern and Central districts, adopted in each of the bills. This boundary, coinciding with the 21st parallel, would have excluded from the Northern division several districts currently using Mackay as their port. Northerners had long pressed for a local branch of the Titles Office. See letter to the Editor, *PDT*, 30 July 1864; letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 11 February 1865.

38. P.G. Bassett, *Politics in Queensland, 1888-1893* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1967), p. 136.

39. The name "National Party" was coined for the election and subsequently dropped.

local matters.<sup>40</sup> In his electoral statement, McIlwraith propounded for the first time the dictum "Federation before Separation", with which the movement's opponents subsequently made great play:

I have not been opposed to Separation, but I think no Separation should take place until the Colonies are federated. We exercise an influence on that question as a United Queensland which I am afraid we should lose were we divided, and it will be true policy to subordinate the lesser question to the greater. I thoroughly believe, however, after long consideration and intimate knowledge of the Northern people, that a measure which would give them, through their representatives, the complete control of the expenditure of their own revenue, would satisfy their present requirements, and honestly administered would probably obviate the demand for Separation. The more the principles of local government are extended, the nearer we approach the time when all Australia will act together under common laws and a common nationality. 41

The elections gave the National Party a large majority.<sup>42</sup> In north Queensland separation received a setback: of sixteen northern members, only eleven were separationists.<sup>43</sup> The division coincided exactly with party lines - the five anti-separationists were Liberals, the eleven separationists McIlwraith supporters. In June 1888 a meeting of northern McIlwraithians in Brisbane decided to support the new government provided that a measure was introduced to give the north control of its own expenditure, and that the right to vote for territorial separation was reserved.<sup>44</sup>

McIlwraith's victory raised the question of whether northern members elected as separationists could, in conscience, accept ministerial positions in a government which opposed separation. Separationists' views on this were almost invariably related to their political allegiance. J.M. Macrossan and M.H. Black

- 
40. Griffith's manifesto, F. Adams, *The Australians: a social sketch* (London 1893), p. 291.
41. McIlwraith's manifesto, *ibid.*, pp. 309-310. This contradicted McIlwraith's earlier statements on the issue. C f., above p.261.
42. Results: Nationals 44 seats, Liberals 25, Independents 3.
43. The five anti-separationists were A. Rutledge (Charters Towers), R. Sayers (Charters Towers), W.O. Hodgkinson (Burke), E. Hunter (Burke), and F.T. Wimble (Cairns). The separationists were J. Macrossan (Townsville), R. Philp (Townsville), E. Palmer (Carpentaria), R.H. Smith (Bowen), J. Hamilton (Cook), M.H. Black (Mackay), A.S. Gowley (Herbert), D.H. Dalrymple (Mackay), I. Lissner (Kennedy), W.C. Little (Woothakata), and L. Goldring (Flinders).
44. *TH*, 16 June 1888.

joined the ministry as Minister for Works and Mines and Minister for Lands respectively. This was regarded with satisfaction by some supporters of separation, especially McIlwraithians, on the grounds that it would restrain the new government in its opposition to the movement, and demonstrate the movement's respectability.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, because a cohesive northern bloc was impossible since five anti-separationists had been returned, it seemed quixotic to forego the advantages of representation in the ministry:

the position of two Northern representatives, Messrs Macrossan and Black, as members of the government, is full of difficulty, and yet it would be absurd to deprive ourselves of such benefit as can accrue from Northern influence in the Ministry so long as our present connection with the South continues....<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, some separationists, especially Liberals, interpreted this as desertion of the cause and a display of blatant political opportunism.<sup>47</sup> The Separation Council, dominated by McIlwraithians, expressed no misgivings about Macrossan's accepting office, and was anxious to retain him as an *ex-officio* member;<sup>48</sup> when Dr. Ahearne gave notice of a motion against separationist members accepting portfolios no quorum could be found to discuss it.<sup>49</sup>

Criticism of Macrossan overran party lines when he became associated with a new decentralization bill, which the government intended as

an extension of local self-government as will meet the requirements of the North for some time to come, and satisfactorily alter the conditions from which the desire for severance has arisen.<sup>50</sup>

An elaboration and extension of Griffith's Financial Districts Bill, the decentralization bill was divided into two parts, the first of which was essentially a transcript of Griffith's bill of 1887, providing for separate district accounts of revenue and expenditure, and for expenditure of revenue in the district where it was raised. The second section of the bill proposed to form "grand committees"

45. *Ibid.*, 26 May, 16, 30 June 1888. The *Herald* had changed its previous attitude when Macrossan was offered the portfolio. C f., *ibid.*, 10 July 1886, 28 January 1888.

46. *Ibid.*, 6 October 1888.

47. *MM*, 31 May 1887, 8 February, 6 March 1890. Reports of public meetings, *TH*, 9, 23 March 1889. Extract from *Favenswood Mining Journal*, *ibid.*, 9 March 1889. Extract from *Norman Chronicle*, *ibid.*, 23 March 1889.

48. *Ibid.*, 7 July 1888.

49. *NQTS*, 5 May 1888.

50. *QPD*, Vol. 55, 1888, p. 12.

comprising parliamentary representatives from each financial district. The committees would advise parliament about spending district credit balances or, in the case of a debit balance, raising a local tax or rate.

Most northern members decided to support the bill as a half loaf, as Robert Philp explained:

When the question is decentralisation against territorial separation, I am in favour of the latter. I always have been and always will be, but as it is a question of decentralisation or no decentralisation and a continued robbing of the North by the South, then we must accept decentralisation in preference to being robbed. I do not take it as a permanent solution of the difficulty. I consider it is better for us that we should accept the Bill until we can get territorial separation. 51

As Philp later told the Townsville separation committee, the northern members were no longer a solid group in the Assembly, and the bill was probably the only measure on which they could agree; some of them preferred decentralization to separation. Philp argued that the bill was a progressive measure, one which northern members could, by combined action, make even more favourable to the north.<sup>52</sup> Like Philp, Macrossan regarded the bill as a temporary palliative for some of the north's most pressing grievances in the period before separation. Answering accusations that he was inconsistent in bringing the bill forward soon after affirming that only separation would solve northern problems, Macrossan stated:

I am as much a separationist today as I was two years ago and I believe that the North portion of the colony will never be satisfied until they obtain Separation. 53

On the other hand, D.H. Dalrymple of Mackay expressed a determination to oppose the bill, as instructed by his constituents, because nothing but separation would satisfy northern demands.<sup>54</sup>

The separatist organization refused to accept the bill as satisfactory to the north.<sup>55</sup> William Coote depicted it as positively harmful to northern interests

---

51. *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1854.

52. Report of meeting of Townsville Committee, *TH*, 5 October 1889. C f., Philp, *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1855.

53. Quoted by Bryan, Macrossan, p. 135.

54. *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1642. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 8 February 1890.

55. *Ibid.* *Further Considerations on Separation* (Townsville 1890), pp. 13-14. Townsville Municipal Library.

and denounced Macrossan for his connection with it: "I say without fear of contradiction that Mr Macrossan is a traitor to the interests of the North".<sup>56</sup> Control of district credit balances would remain in the hands of the southern parliament; and there was no provision for a local body to direct local expenditure. Coote concluded that

if this bill is put forth as giving the North the slightest control over its revenue or expenditure it falls lamentably short of its professed purpose. The committees receive balance sheets in whose preparation they have no part, and which they have no permission to challenge. They occupy at best, but a recommendatory position; and no resolution or recommendation of theirs can be binding, or have effect in any manner on the Legislative Assembly....<sup>57</sup>

Newspaper opinion in Townsville was averse to the decentralization bill. The *Northern Age* condemned the bill and Macrossan for introducing it.<sup>58</sup> The *Townsville Herald*, though admitting that it went a little further than Griffith's bill, complained that the "grand committees" would have no real power to control expenditure; that there was no provision for different tariffs in each district; that there was no mention of administrative reform comparable to Griffith's proposal to establish branches of government departments in each district; and that the boundary of the northern division was unsatisfactory because it severed Winton from its port of Townsville and the Nebo district from Mackay.<sup>59</sup> Public meetings in Townsville protested against the bill and severely criticized Macrossan.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, the *Northern Miner* in Charters Towers strongly advocated accepting the bill as an instalment of justice.<sup>61</sup>

On behalf of McIlwraith who had charge of the bill, Macrossan introduced it

- 
56. Letter to the Editor, *TH*, 21 September 1889. C f., letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 5 October 1889.
57. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 24 November 1888.
58. *NA*, 6 September 1889. C f., *ibid.*, 18 September 1889. The *North Queensland Telegraph and Territorial Separationist* was renamed *Northern Age* in June 1889.
59. *TH*, 10 November 1888, 2 February, 21 September, 5 October, 14 December 1889. The Nebo district, like Winton, had requested to be included in the northern colony. Letter from Nebo Divisional Board to Separation Council, report of NQSC meeting, *NM*, 5 May 1887.
60. Reports of public meetings, *TH*, 21 September, 19 October 1889.
61. *NM*, 18 September 1889.



in parliament at the conclusion of the 1888 session - to allow public discussion, he explained.<sup>62</sup> In 1889 it also appeared late in the session, delayed primarily because of McIlwraith's poor health; it was then abandoned by the government, partly from the pressure of other business, partly because of the resignation of McIlwraith, who had framed the bill, and the professed inability of other ministers to do it justice at short notice.<sup>63</sup> Reintroduced in 1890, it had once again reached its first reading when the government fell.<sup>64</sup>

H. Bryan has defended Macrossan's failure to push the decentralization bill; he concludes that although Macrossan's enthusiasm for northern autonomy appeared to wax and wane according to whether he was in government or opposition, he had actually calculated that he could achieve more for the north by directing public expenditure to the area:

It appears, once more, as if the answer to Macrossan's Ministerial supineness must be in the rather vague and difficult-to-prove idea of substituting for direct action the subtler method of concentrating public works in the Northern Region. 65

A distinction should be made between decentralization and separation, which were by no means regarded as political equivalents in northern constituencies. Many separationists in Macrossan's constituency of Townsville were hostile to the bill and critical of Macrossan's association with it, some viewing it as a harmful measure which would hinder and delay separation. Without doubt the force of these opinions reduced Macrossan's determination personally to press the bill.

Nevertheless, both Macrossan and Black were also very quiet about separation during their period in office, giving rise to allegations that they had agreed to keep silent on the question,<sup>66</sup> a charge supported by another cabinet member, William Pattison (Colonial Treasurer),<sup>67</sup> and by McIlwraith him-

62. *QPD*, Vol. 55, 1888, p. 1062.

63. *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1637. McIlwraith had resigned from the ministry partly as a result of a dispute with his colleagues over loan expenditure in his electorate.

64. *QPD*, Vol. 61, 1890, p. 80.

65. Bryan, Macrossan, p. 137.

66. *MM*, 6 March, 24, 26 April 1890. Extract from *Ravenswood Mining Journal*, *TH*, 9 March 1889. Extract from *Cooktown Independent*, *ibid.*, 27 July 1889. C f., Sayers, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1059.

67. *MM*, 24 April 1890. *CP*, 23 April 1890.

self.<sup>68</sup> Moreover the idea that Macrossan forwent action on decentralization or separation in order to obtain compensatory benefits for the north receives no support from his record in office, which was regarded even by his most loyal supporters as one of almost unrelieved failure. For example, the editor of the *Townsville Herald*, of whom it had been said that his "mission in life was to defend Macrossan",<sup>69</sup> was forced to admit that Macrossan had failed to obtain loan money for either the proposed 87 miles of railway extensions in the north or Townsville harbour improvements; he had failed to secure a fortnightly Torres Strait Mail Service, or provision for the Ingham railway, or settlement of the route of the Ayr line; nor was the westward extension of the Northern Line any further advanced, and at the same time the north was burdened with increased tariffs.<sup>70</sup> For the editor of the *Herald*, far from showing Macrossan's determination to promote northern interests, the 1889 session had

proved that by accepting office as a Minister of the colony of Queensland, Mr Macrossan is often obliged to abandon advocacy of the special interests of the North in favour of the colony as a whole, of which the North is calculated to be only a one-fifth part. 71

Black was also criticized for his failure to promote northern objectives,<sup>72</sup> and especially for his administration of the Lands Department, which during his term resorted to frequent sales of northern land in order to raise revenue.<sup>73</sup>

After Lord Knutsford refused the petition in May 1887, criticism of the Separation Council steadily mounted. Much of the blame for the failure of the petition was heaped on the Council:

---

68. McIlwraith stated in parliament that an agreement had been made to let separation lie. *QPD*, Vol. 61, 1890, pp. 33-34. However McIlwraith accused both Macrossan and Black of betraying this agreement and relentlessly pushing the issue. Much of McIlwraith's behaviour during this period had the appearance of a personal vendetta against the Morehead government, and such accusations were effective weapons in his attempt to discredit the government in the south. C f., extract from *BC, TH*, 21 June 1890. In fact, Macrossan and Black were unable even to prevent Morehead submitting an Unfavourable report on the movement to the Secretary of State. See below p. 320.

69. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 21 September 1889.

70. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1889.

71. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1889.

72. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1889.

73. *Ibid.*, 20 July, 5 October 1889. *CP*, 7, 21, 24 August 1889. *NA*, 21 August 1889. *TES*, 29 April 1890.

All who had been actively engaged in the movement for self government, here or in London, became objects of public resentment - the more prominent their action the more bitter the hostility....<sup>74</sup>

Failure was popularly attributed to defects of the separatist organization, especially the unrepresentative character of the Separation Council on account of its Townsville-centredness,<sup>75</sup> the dominance of McIlwraithians,<sup>76</sup> and the lack of working class members.<sup>77</sup> A sense of despondency and defeatism which replaced the former boundless confidence when the petition was refused, together with the clear need to wait for decentralization to be tried before renewing agitation, made immediate effort seem futile: "There seemed something like a total collapse of public energy amidst which the organization devised by the Convention of 1885 became at first morbid and then effete".<sup>78</sup> During 1887-88 meetings were infrequent and occasionally lapsed for want of a quorum; the Council was increasingly attacked for lack of vitality.<sup>79</sup>

After Knutsford's reply, the idea was repeatedly voiced at public meetings, in newspapers, and at local league meetings, that the mandate given the Separation Council had been exhausted by the refusal of the petition; a second convention was proposed to reaffirm support for the Council or to select a new organizing body.<sup>80</sup> In September 1887, in a circular to all leagues, the Council itself advocated another convention, asking local leagues to suggest a venue and appoint delegates.<sup>81</sup> Only two replies were received, from the Mackay and Ingham leagues, both of which recommended a conference in Charters Towers.<sup>82</sup> Most other leagues, excepting those in Hughenden, Bowen and Ravenswood, had

---

74. Coote's letter to the Editor, *TH*, 10 March 1888.

75. *NQTTTS*, 22 June 1887. Report of public meeting in Mackay, *MM*, 20 September 1888.

76. *NQTTTS*, 2 May 1888. *Ibid.*, 23 February 1889.

77. P.H. Johnson to the Editor, *ibid.*, 8 March 1889. Letter to the Editor, *TH*, 9 March 1889.

78. Coote's letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 10 March 1888.

79. E.g., criticism from Mackay League and Hughenden Municipal Council, report of NQSC meeting, *ibid.*, 16 July 1887.

80. *MM*, 26 May 1887. Report of public meeting, *TH*, 28 May 1887. *NQTTTS*, 22 June 1887.

81. Report of NQSC meeting, *ibid.*, 10 September 1887.

82. Report of NQSC meeting, *ibid.*, 21 December 1887. *MM*, 27 October 1887.

ceased to meet.<sup>83</sup> In the circumstances the Separation Council decided to abandon plans for a convention, and to wait for a spontaneous revival at the local level.<sup>84</sup> This decision precipitated a bitter confrontation between Willmetts and George Smith, the secretary of the Mackay League, who strongly advocated a convention and a revival of the movement, and challenged Willmetts's authority to postpone action:<sup>85</sup> this began a series of disagreements between the Separation Council and the Mackay League over the need to renew agitation.

The Council was also challenged during the 1888 election campaign in Townsville, when the local Liberal Party made an attack on the Council the focal point of its campaign. Alfred Henry,<sup>86</sup> the Liberal candidate, charged that the Council was not a representative body, but "a self-constituted body - an irresponsible body - of men that had undertaken the management of the Separation movement".<sup>87</sup> In similar vein, other leading Liberals demanded reconstruction of the Council on a more popular basis, to include a more "representative" group of men.<sup>88</sup> Concurrently the *North Queensland Telegraph*, which was part-owned by Henry, launched a vitriolic attack on the Council, ridiculing its members.<sup>89</sup>

Placed in an untenable electoral position in separationist Townsville both by Griffith's intransigent opposition to separation and their own former reluctance to participate in the movement, Liberals resorted to challenging the separatist organization itself. McIlwraith's candidates, Macrossan and Philp, had disputed Henry's professed allegiance to separation, pointing to

- 
83. The Northern Separation League in Townsville did not respond to the circular. It held its last meeting in January 1888, and disintegrated after the death of its president, W.P. Walker, in June. *TH*, 7 July 1888.
84. Willmetts's letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 18 August 1888. Report of NQSC meeting, *ibid.*, 24 November 1888.
85. Report of NQSC meeting, *ibid.*, 18 February 1888. Smith was an agent-auctioneer in Mackay. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1889. See also *NQTTTS*, 25 January 1888.
86. Born at Dover in 1844, Alfred Henry came to Queensland in 1863. After squatting in the Burdekin and Hughenden districts he joined the public service in 1866. Henry had come to Townsville in May 1886 as Police Magistrate. *TH*, 19 May 1888.
87. *Ibid.*, 5 May 1888.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*, 12 May 1888.

Townsville Liberals' lack of involvement in the organization.<sup>90</sup> Liberals responded by blaming the Council itself, decrying its unrepresentative composition and charging that it was dominated by McIlwraithians.<sup>91</sup> Although the Council, learning from its mistake in 1885, carefully refrained from endorsing any candidate, Liberals again charged that it backed the McIlwraith candidates.<sup>92</sup> McIlwraithians in turn capitalized on the Liberal attack on the Council, arguing that this proved that Liberals were really enemies of the movement.<sup>93</sup> The Separation Council became a pawn in a party political contest, and in the process its authority was severely undermined.

Nevertheless the Liberal campaign against the Council was more than a party tactic. Many Liberals had suspected that the revival of the separation movement in 1884 was essentially a political move to embarrass the Liberal government; although they may have sympathized with separatism, they hesitated to actually participate.<sup>94</sup> However, the passage of time had shown that the movement was no ephemeral, party political contrivance, convincing many that their apprehension had been unfounded. Yet opportunities to participate in the movement were restricted by the fixed membership of the Council. Thus one objective of the Liberal campaign was to reconstruct an organization dominated by McIlwraithians so as to include more Liberals. Another demand was the inclusion of members of the working class, whom the Liberal Party at this time professed to represent. Liberals certainly hoped to gain electoral advantage from any popular dissatisfaction with the elitist character of the Council; they also sought recognition within the separatist organization of both the growing commitment of Liberals to separation and the political emergence of the working class.

The relatively poor showing of separationist candidates in the 1888 elections

---

90. *Ibid.*

91. Report of public meeting, *NQTTS*, 1 May 1888. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1888, 23 February 1889.

92. *Ibid.*, 17 April, 1, 2 May 1888. Report of public meeting, *TH*, 5 May 1888. *MM*, 8 February 1890.

93. *TH*, 12 May 1888.

94. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 21 September 1889. Extract from *Herberton Advertiser*, *ibid.*, 9 March 1889. *NQTTS*, 23 February 1889. *MM*, 22 September 1887. Extract from *Cooktown Independent*, *TH*, 23 April 1889.

- in 16 northern seats only 11 separationists were returned - redoubled criticism of the Council's inactivity.<sup>95</sup> After the election, the Council was beset by internecine conflicts within its own ranks as members indulged in mutual recrimination over the stagnation of the movement. In a letter to the *Townsville Herald*, William Coote complained of the Council's apathy, heaping scorn on Willmetts's policies in particular.<sup>96</sup> Coote urged a reorganization of the Council which, he asserted, had become "a non-representative and powerless body". In order to infuse new life into the movement he recommended forming correspondence committees throughout the north.<sup>97</sup>

The idea of correspondence committees provided a rallying point for disaffected separationists: a public meeting to initiate the committees attracted a number of prominent Liberals, as well as a few members of the Separation Council who desired a revival of active agitation. Alfred Henry was a leading speaker at the meeting; as a correspondent to the *Herald* noted, the move had a "strong odour" of Liberal influence.<sup>98</sup> The creation of a Townsville committee to open up correspondence with separationists in other northern centres, drew a bitter reaction from the core of the Separation Council, and considerable personal animosity, aggravated by party political differences, was aroused. However it soon became apparent that the Council had over-rated this challenge to its authority, for the committee quickly disintegrated, its functions being reabsorbed by the Council.<sup>99</sup>

---

95. *Ibid.*, 23 June 1888. C f., Coote's letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 6 October 1888.

96. *Ibid.*, 16 June 1888.

97. *Ibid.* The idea of correspondence committees derived from a contemporary article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, which described the successful use of this organizational method in the American War of Independence. *Ibid.*, 23 June 1888.

98. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*, 4 August, 22 September 1888.

Nevertheless, criticism of the Separation Council continued unabated.<sup>100</sup> Another acrimonious exchange between Coote and Willmetts appeared in the *Herald* in August 1888, in which Coote strongly expressed impatience with Willmetts' inaction and his vague statements about future strategy.<sup>101</sup> Clearly this recurrent squabbling between two of its leading members would have damaged the Council's authority. Moreover it faced increasing criticism from the Mackay League, who were anxious for a revival and looked to Townsville to initiate it.<sup>102</sup> A public meeting in Mackay, where separationists had been stirred by McIlwraith's moves to raise tariffs, carried a resolution

that while regretting the apathy that apparently prevails in some of the bodies appointed to advance the Separation movement, and more particularly regretting that the Townsville Council had been unable of late to afford us any assistance, the Separationists in Mackay consider that a fresh departure should now be made, and that steps should be taken immediately to again bring the question prominently before the people of the North. 103

The Mackay League sent a circular, including the resolution and a programme of future action, to many representative bodies in north Queensland, with encouraging results: favourable replies were received from the Ayr Divisional Board, Bowen Municipal Council, Dalrymple Divisional Board, Cloncurry Divisional Board, Cardwell Divisional Board, Thuringowa Divisional Board, Townsville Municipal Council, Charters Towers separation committee, Ingham Separation League, Ravenswood Separation League, Croydon's *Golden Age* and the *North Queensland Telegraph*.<sup>104</sup> To Mackay's disgust, the Separation Council failed to endorse the plan. In December 1888 a public meeting at Ravenswood joined the chorus denouncing the Council's inactivity.<sup>105</sup> In January 1889 resolutions declaring that the time had arrived for another effort to secure separation, and proposing a northern convention, were carried at a public meeting in Hughenden; these were later

---

100. *Ibid.*, 22 September, 24 November, 8 December 1888, 16 February 1889. Coote's letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 13 October 1888. *MM*, 22 January 1889. Letter to the Editor, *NQTS*, 20 February 1889.

101. *TH*, 18 August 1888.

102. *Ibid.*, 15 September 1888.

103. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 20 September 1888.

104. *TH*, 9 February 1889. Report of meeting of Townsville Municipal Council, *ibid.*, 6 October 1888.

105. Report of public meeting at Ravenswood, extract from *Ravenswood Mining Journal*, *ibid.*, 22 December 1888. C f., extract from *Ravenswood Mining Journal*, *ibid.*, 9 March 1889.

published in all northern newspapers and the *Brisbane Courier*.<sup>106</sup> Frustrated by the Council's inertia, the Mackay League finally suggested that if it continued to refuse to call a convention, the Mackay branch would itself reorganize the movement without further reference to the Council.<sup>107</sup>

The Mackay ultimatum was a significant element, along with challenges originating in Townsville and other centres, in the decision of William Coote and James Gordon in February 1889 to resign from the Council. The immediate cause was the absence of a quorum at the meeting called to discuss the Mackay proposals. The resignation of two of its prominent members sealed the fate of the Council, especially since they left with the express purpose of founding a new separatist organization.<sup>108</sup> The collapse of the Separation Council reflected the depressed state of the separation movement as a whole after the petition was refused and, more importantly, the inability of the Council to respond to growing indications from various quarters that the time had come for a revival of agitation.

Immediately after his rupture with the Council, William Coote began to promote a reorganization of the movement. He advocated a new separation league in Townsville with no special authority in the movement as a whole; the new body would merely co-operate on equal terms with kindred associations in north Queensland. Coote stressed that because the movement had disintegrated, a complete reorganization at the local level was necessary. He also urged that the new league should be more representative of the Townsville community.<sup>109</sup>

In compliance with a requisition signed by 490 ratepayers and residents of the municipality and presented to the Mayor, an afternoon meeting was held in March 1889 to launch a new separation league.<sup>110</sup> Recognized leaders of the movement attended, together with many recent converts. An executive was appointed,

---

106. *BO*, 22 February 1889.

107. Report of meeting of Mackay League, *MM*, 24 January 1889. *TH*, 9 February 1889.

108. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1889.

109. Coote's letter to Ravenswood Separation League, whom he represented in the Separation Council, *ibid.*, 2 March 1889.

110. *Ibid.*



including a number of former Separation Council members, some notable Griffith supporters such as Hubert and Henry, and a number of working class leaders and trade union organizers.<sup>111</sup> At the first meeting of the committee, however, Thomas Page, who had previously tried to organize a distinct working-class separatist body,<sup>112</sup> protested that a mistake had been made in holding the meeting in the afternoon, when most working men were unable to attend. The Council's lack of popular representation had contributed to the sense of alienation from it;<sup>113</sup> Page's proposal to disband the committee and call an evening meeting to select a truly representative executive was therefore agreed to.<sup>114</sup> Advertisements in local newspapers expressly urged working men to attend the meeting, which selected a new committee including Tom Page, W.A. Williams, secretary of the Wharf Laborers' Union, Lawes, M.J. Thomsen and Gaveston who were all involved in the trade union movement, and M. McKiernan, a labour sympathizer.<sup>115</sup> The committee was deliberately intended to be a "representative" one.<sup>116</sup>

The Mackay League had been reconstructed along similar lines in September 1887. Criticized for its exclusive character and the absence of working class representatives, the original committee had resigned after the petition was refused, and leading separationists exerted themselves to secure a more representative group on the new committee.<sup>117</sup> The Mackay Labor Union was specifically invited to participate in the movement,<sup>118</sup> and when two working men's representatives, including the president of the Labor Union, were nominated but failed to be elected to the committee, the new executive decided that they should be

---

111. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1889.

112. Doran, *Separatism in Townsville*, pp. 126-127.

113. E.g., P.H. Johnson to the Editor, *NQTTTS*, 8 March 1889; letter to the Editor, *TH*, 9 March 1889.

114. *Ibid.*, 23 March 1889.

115. The executive officers of the Townsville Separation League were J.N. Parkes (president), James Gordon and Thomas Page (vice-presidents), L. Allen (treasurer), J.A. Lynch (secretary), William Coote and Dr Joseph Ahearne (joint honorary correspondence secretaries). See Appendix 8.

116. *TH*, 23 March 1889.

117. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 11 August 1887. Letters to the Editor, *ibid.*, 16 August, 20 September 1887. In the reconstruction the Eton and Walkerston Leagues were amalgamated with the Mackay League. *Ibid.*, 13 October 1887.

118. *Ibid.*, 9 August 1887.

invited to join and that two elected members should resign to make way for them.<sup>119</sup> Mackay Liberals also began to play a larger role in the movement, particularly after the general election brought in a McIlwraith government.<sup>120</sup> The Mackay League had the distinction of being the only separation committee in north Queensland elected by ballot rather than at public meeting, another concession to the need for a popular body.<sup>121</sup>

In Townsville it was decided that the new league would be known simply as the Townsville Separation League; it was considered invidious to adopt a name implying representation of the whole of north Queensland, so the title "Northern Separation League" was deliberately rejected.<sup>122</sup> It was to be a strictly local body, confining itself to Townsville matters, though at liberty to suggest a programme of operations to other centres.<sup>123</sup> The new body was initially successful in assuaging the resentment which the domineering Council had aroused throughout the north. In July 1889, for example, the *Cloncurry Advocate* wrote approvingly of the circular distributed by the Townsville League on future strategy, observing that "there was scarcely a vestige left of the old autocratic spirit which characterized the first Council".<sup>124</sup>

Despite a change in tone, however, the new league gradually assumed, by default, powers scarcely less extensive than those of the old Council. In most centres leagues were either dormant or defunct, while the Mackay and Hughenden Leagues, the only strong bodies still functioning, delegated authority to the Townsville League. Thus in November 1891 the vice-president of the Mackay League described the Townsville Separation League as the "premier and corresponding representative league".<sup>125</sup> This *de facto* authority of the Townsville League was the basis of all further efforts to promote the separation cause. Writing to England to revive the London Committee, for instance, J.N. Parkes as president of the league, professed to speak on behalf of "the Northern Separationists of

---

119. *Ibid.*, 29 September 1887. The officers of the league were D.H. Dalrymple (president), B. McKay (vice-president), H.B. Black (treasurer) and G. Smith (secretary).

120. Extract from *MM, TH*, 23 February 1889.

121. Report of NQSC meeting, *ibid.*, 24 November 1888.

122. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1889.

123. *Ibid.*, 6 April 1889.

124. Quoted *ibid.*, 27 July 1889.

125. *Ibid.*, 25 November 1891.

Queensland of whom the Townsville League is for the present purpose the representative".<sup>126</sup>

In May the Townsville Committee formulated and circularized proposals for future strategy, which were subsequently approved by the other northern leagues. Although Macrossan and Willmetts had earlier advocated a new petition,<sup>127</sup> the policy proposal argued that this was unnecessary because no final answer had been given to the 1886 petition: as William Coote said, the petition had not been rejected or withdrawn, its genuineness had not successfully been impugned, and its prayer remained unaltered, so that "not a new petition, but a stronger case in support of its prayer, was really required".<sup>128</sup> On the basis of the old petition, renewed application would be made on the ground that during the intervening period the Queensland government had failed to redeem its promise of decentralization: branches of government departments had not been established, nor separate accounts kept. Additional grievances such as increased taxation would be stressed, the whole case supported by the parliamentary representatives of north Queensland and local Municipal Councils and Divisional Boards.<sup>129</sup> However, the decision to rely on the old petition left separationists open to the challenge that northern opinion had changed since 1885-86 when signatures were collected.<sup>130</sup>

Despite the refusal of the petition, separationists maintained their belief both in the strength of their case and in the appropriateness of their strategy in appealing to the Crown. In 1887 they vented their spleen not on the British authorities as such, but on the personal character of Lord Knutsford:

We can then remove the burden of blame from the constitution of the British Empire itself, to the accident of a nerveless coward having suddenly been

---

126. Parkes to J. Henniker Heaton 11 March 1890. Mitchell Library.

127. *TH*, 7 July 1888. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 18 August 1888.

128. Coote's letter to the Editor, *ibid.* C f., his letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 6 October 1888.

129. Report of Committee meeting, *ibid.*, 25 May 1889.

130. E.g., Morehead to Norman 28 March 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, pp. 822-823.

called upon to fill a chief place in that Empire's Government. 131

This distinction helped to reconcile Knutsford's reply with the strategy that had been adopted. By January 1889 Coote had completed his "Opus Major", a voluminous letter to the Secretary of State bringing the separation case up to date, countering assertions made in Griffith's report on the 1886 petition, and arguing, in answer to the Crown Law Officers, for the power of the Crown to grant separation; Coote also emphasized that the consent of a hostile and interested southern majority to separation was impossible.<sup>132</sup> This letter was printed in pamphlet form and distributed to local leagues for approval in early 1889.

During 1889 all northern local authorities were asked to record official views on separation, with the result that 18 approved the movement;<sup>133</sup> four definitely opposed it;<sup>134</sup> two favoured deferring action until other questions, notably the site of the new capital, were settled;<sup>135</sup> five considered the matter *ultra vires*;<sup>136</sup> and one, the Burke Divisional Board, did not bother to comment. The Townsville Committee calculated that local authorities favouring separation represented approximately 80% both of the population and value of rateable property in the north.<sup>137</sup> During this second phase of the agitation

- 
131. *TH*, 28 May 1887. C f., Coote's remark at public indignation meeting called to protest at the refusal of the petition: "When Sir Henry Holland placed the question of Separation in the hands of a Queens-street Parliament he did dishonor to his Queen and acted derogatorily to the British Parliament". *Ibid.* C f., *ibid.*, 22 December 1888; *MM*, 14, 19 May 1887.
132. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, pp. 803-816.
133. Mackay Municipal Council (M.C.), Cooktown M.C., Hughenden M.C., Townsville M.C., Hughenden Divisional Board (D.B.), Ayr D.B., Cloncurry D.B., Daintree D.B., Croydon D.B., Douglas D.B., Hinchinbrook D.B., Johnstone D.B., Pioneer D.B., Thuringowa D.B., Ravenswood D.B., Einasleigh D.B., Torres D.B., Dalrymple D.B. *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, pp. 817-822. Apparently in Cooktown the resolution was carried only because of the absence of two anti-separationists. *Cooktown Independent*, 8, 15 January 1890.
134. Charters Towers M.C., Normanton M.C., Woothakata D.B., Carpentaria D.B. *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, pp. 817-822.
135. *Ibid.* Bowen M.C., Wangaratta D.B.
136. *Ibid.* Cardwell D.B., Tinaroo D.B., Cairns D.B., Cairns M.C., Herberton M.C. However, the Cardwell and Tinaroo Boards stated that members individually sympathized with the movement.
137. *First Annual Report of Committee of Townsville Separation League* (Townsville 1890), QSA GOV/A18, 1890, p. 41.

the Townsville Committee maintained correspondence with northern local authorities as legitimate representatives of residents in the various localities.<sup>138</sup>

After Coote's letter to Knutsford was despatched in January 1890 and it became essential to have representatives in London to press separatist claims at the Colonial Office, the Townsville body wrote to all leagues urging the reconstruction of the London Committee and suggesting possible members.<sup>139</sup> The London Committee was revived with Harold Finch-Hatton again at its head;<sup>140</sup> members of the former London Committee were invited to renew their support for the cause, in order to maintain continuity with the Colonial Office.<sup>141</sup>

The Sydney branch was also revived. It included James Burns of Burns, Philp and Co., president of the branch, E.W. Lamb of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, A.G. Patterson, manager of the Bank of North Queensland, and John Walsh, ex-member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.<sup>142</sup> The Sydney branch supported the petition in August 1890 from members of the Queensland parliament urging a decision on separation.<sup>143</sup>

Separation leagues in Mackay, Hughenden and Ravenswood continued active, others were re-formed at Cairns,<sup>144</sup> Charters Towers and Ingham,<sup>145</sup> and a new league was inaugurated at Cardwell.<sup>146</sup> A public meeting in Winton in December

---

138. E.g., see *Further Considerations*, p. 5; Parkes to Norman 30 May 1892, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 505.

139. Reports of Townsville Committee meetings, *TH*, 16, 23 November 1889.

140. Members of the London Committee were H. Finch-Hatton, J. Henniker Heaton M.P., Sir A. Hodgson, H. Kimber M.P., McDonald Cameron M.P., H.F. Morgan, A. Brodziak, Brandon, Rice, C.C. Rawson, W.P. Morgan M.P., J. Critchell, Howard Vincent M.P., E.F. Sandeman.

141. Parkes to Henniker Heaton 11 March 1890. Mitchell Library. *First Annual Report of Townsville Committee*, QSA GOV/A18, p. 40.

142. *TH*, 23 August 1890.

143. Carrington to Knutsford 29 August 1890, C0881/9 (confidential prints), Australian No. 145, p. 96. See below p.327.

144. *Cairns Argus*, 31 October 1890. R.A. Tills, chairman of the Cairns Divisional Board, was appointed president and Alderman A.J. Draper, an auctioneer and commission agent who was largely responsible for the resuscitation of the league, was appointed secretary and treasurer.

145. *TH*, 14 September 1889.

146. *Ibid.*, 3 August 1889.

1889 carried resolutions for the district's inclusion in the proposed northern colony; the Winton Separation Committee was formed to apply to the Secretary of State.<sup>147</sup> They were supported by the Boulia Separation Committee, which endorsed the northern letter to Lord Knutsford and presented arguments for including the Winton-Boulia district in the northern colony, especially in view of the proposal to build a branch line from the Northern Railway to the district soon after separation.<sup>148</sup> However, after the movement for central Queensland separation was launched in late 1889,<sup>149</sup> the central league also laid claim to the Winton district;<sup>150</sup> in February 1891 the Rockhampton Separation Committee sent the Colonial Office a declaration from some residents of the district requesting that in the event of northern and/or central separation, the district should be included in the central division.<sup>151</sup>

Local attitudes to separation followed patterns similar to those prevailing in the period 1884-87. Coastal centres, especially Townsville, Mackay, Ayr, and Port Douglas, tended to support the movement. As before, Cairns was generally opposed to it, partly because of continuing concern about getting the railway to the top of the range,<sup>152</sup> partly because of jealousy of Townsville. Rivalry over the trade of the Etheridge district continued to embitter relations between the two towns. A Railway League was formed in Cairns in May 1889 to press for an extension of the Cairns-Herberton line to Georgetown in order to thwart Townsville's plans for a line from Hughenden to Georgetown.<sup>153</sup> Denunciations of the grasping, centralizing policy and selfishness of Cairns' "great enemy - Towns-

---

147. Norman to Knutsford 7 April 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 825.

148. Boulia Separation Committee to Norman, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1162.

149. See below pp.324-325.

150. Committee of Central Queensland Separation League to Knutsford 21 March 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, pp. 1157-1158. Morehead scored a point off Rockhampton's claim to the Winton district, noting that "it furnishes evidence that distance from the seat of government does not after all count for much in the minds of the advocates of Central Territorial Separation, for whereas their argument is largely based on the consideration of the injustice of Rockhampton being governed from so remote a corner of the Colony as that in which Brisbane is situated, the distance from Rockhampton to Winton is half as great again as that from Brisbane to Rockhampton". Morehead to Norman 22 May 1890, *ibid.*, p. 1160.

151. Committee of Central Queensland Separation League to Palmer 17 February 1891, *ibid.*, p. 1187.

152. *NA*, 26 November, 10 December 1889.

153. Report of public meeting, *CP*, 22 May 1889.



MAP NO.5 QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS 1890

ville" were common.<sup>154</sup> Georgetown's *Mundic Miner*,<sup>155</sup> the *Normanton Chronicle*,<sup>156</sup> the *Croydon Mining News*,<sup>157</sup> the *Cooktown Independent*,<sup>158</sup> and E. Hunter<sup>159</sup> and W.O. Hodgkinson,<sup>160</sup> members for Burke, also objected to Townsville's plans. In Cairns separation was regarded as part of Townsville's scheme to establish the capital on Cleveland Bay and further increase Townsville's already large political sway:<sup>161</sup>

at present [separation] means nothing but a Townsville scheme for aggrandizement, emanating from the brains of those who dream of a capital on the banks of the Ross River as the realization of their earthly ambitions. 162

At Herberton, among the mining population, fear of coloured labour as well as antagonism towards Townsville aroused opposition to separation:

many in this district who had previously been apathetic have lately come to recognize our connection with the South as our only safeguard against our territory being overrun with coloured aliens, our having to contribute to a greater extent than unfortunately we have had to do in the past to the aggrandizement of a mudhole never intended by nature for a seaport and that vexatious as is the delay in the completion of our railway things generally would be more so if we had only to trust to a Flinders-street Government. 163

As in Cairns, the need to promote the railway was also a major consideration in Herberton's opposition.<sup>164</sup>

---

154. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*, 24 March 1888, 25 May, 1 June 1889.

155. Extract from *Mundic Miner*, CP, 7 August 1889. *Ibid.*, 25 September 1889.

156. *Ibid.*, 13 September 1889.

157. *Croydon Mining News*, 28 June 1889.

158. *Cooktown Independent*, 2 April 1890.

159. CP, 11 December 1889.

160. Hodgkinson, QPD, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1847.

161. CP, 12 November 1887, 18 February 1888, 21 September 1889. A.J. Draper to the Editor, *Cairns Argus*, 19 September 1890. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 31 October 1890.

162. CP, 25 December 1889. C f., *ibid.*, 17 August 1889. - "Separation, born of Townsville intrigues, would to Cairns and those towns outside the sacred ring, mean nothing but an exchange of masters; and Cairns, at least, will probably remain satisfied with the devil they know in preference to the devil they don't".

163. *Wild River Times*, 29 August 1890.

164. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1890. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 12 September 1890.



A significant reversal of attitude had occurred at Bowen, since 1866 the stronghold of separation in northern Queensland. Hostility towards Townsville was again the main irritant. In August 1888 the Bowen District Association decided to withdraw its support of the separation movement, resolving that

in view of the selfish policy lately shown by Townsville towards Bowen, and the evident intention of Townsville to construct itself the capital of the new colony, the people of Bowen, although believing in the principle of Separation, decline at present to take any part in the question. 165

This decision was endorsed by the *Port Denison Times*, which considered it "preferable to remain under Queen-street rule than to be simply wiped out by a Flinders-street clique".<sup>166</sup> In August the following year, after the revival of the movement in Townsville, the Bowen Municipal Council declared that it did

not deem the present time auspicious to open up the question of territorial Separation, and would much prefer to defer ... an expression of opinion ... till certain matters are more definitely arranged than they are at present. 167

The matters referred to were the proposed removal of the Northern Supreme Court from Bowen to Townsville, the route of the proposed coastal line from Bowen to Townsville, and the vexed question of the capital. The idea of transferring the Supreme Court to Townsville in order to bring it within easier reach of the majority of the northern population had been mooted since the 1870s; in 1887-89 Townsville began to exert parliamentary pressure to this end, with the result that in December 1889 the Court was opened in Townsville. Bowen people bitterly resented this coup, their member, R.H. Smith, stating that it was a victory "won at the cost of Separation".<sup>168</sup> Other centres were also hostile. In parliament several northern members linked Townsville's aspirations with the separation issue, fearing that the transference of the Supreme Court would strengthen Townsville's claims to be capital of the new colony.<sup>169</sup> Telegrams

165. *PDT*, 25 August 1888.

166. *Ibid.* Flinders street was Townsville's main street, Queen-street Brisbane's. Cf., *ibid.*, 21 February 1891- "with Townsville, patriotism spelt greed and 'injustice to the North' merely meant as regards those outside the magic circle, 'Brisbane is robbing you, permit us to do it instead'".

167. *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 817.

168. Report of public meeting, *PDT*, 30 November 1889.

169. E.g., Smith, *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1708; Hunter, *ibid.*, p. 1711; Sayers, *ibid.*, pp. 1816-1817.

from Normanton, Cooktown and Mackay expressed opposition to the proposal;<sup>170</sup> opinion in Cairns was averse to any scheme which enhanced the importance of Townsville. Mackay, because it was closer to Bowen than Townsville, opposed the transfer and deprecated Townsville's centralizing policy: "Townsville threatens to become a second Brisbane, and to become the same bane to the North that the capital is to the South".<sup>171</sup>

In the eyes of Bowen residents, there was no need to shift the Court because better communication between Bowen and the interior would soon be available:<sup>172</sup> it was hoped that the planned coastal railway linking Bowen and Townsville would join the existing Northern Line from Townsville to Hughenden about 60 kilometres from Townsville, not 10 kilometres (the "six-mile peg") as proposed in Townsville, thus allowing Bowen to tap some of the traffic generated by the mineral fields of Ravenswood and Charters Towers and the pastoral districts of the far west.<sup>173</sup> As in Cairns, separation was regarded in Bowen as a means by which Townsville intended to achieve its own designs, especially with regard to the railway.<sup>174</sup> For this reason delay was counselled, to allow time for population to become more evenly distributed so that Townsville might be held in check.<sup>175</sup> Bowen worried especially that Townsville's influence would be magnified if it secured the capital. The Wangaratta Divisional Board in the Bowen district, for instance, plainly stated that it was "not prepared to take any action in the Separation movement until the question of the capital is decided upon".<sup>176</sup> When the Townsville Committee included the Board among local authorities favouring separation in principle, the Board protested to the Secretary of State: "the general impression here is that in the event of separation being granted, Townsville will alone benefit, much to the detriment of all the

170. *Ibid.*, p. 1823.

171. *MM*, 17 November 1887.

172. Smith, *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1708. *PDT*, 19 January 1889. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 30 November 1889.

173. *BO*, 15 March 1889, 5 May 1891. A junction at the "six-mile peg" would have made the distance from Charters Towers to Bowen 160 kilometres longer than from Charters Towers to Townsville. In the event the line was built in accordance with the Townsville proposal.

174. *Ibid.*, 15 July, 2 December 1890.

175. *Ibid. Ibid.*, 7 January 1890.

176. *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 820.

other ports on the North Queensland coast".<sup>177</sup>

Bowen's attitude to the movement was an extreme example of parochial jealousies. Bowen newspapers devoted considerable space to analyzing the probable composition of a new northern parliament, estimating the number of representatives that would be allotted their rivals and their supporters, and speculating on probable patterns of voting, alliances, and other sources of influence of particular localities.<sup>178</sup>

With the exception of Ravenswood, inland mining centres maintained their opposition to separation, the Burke district its indifference. Although the Croydon and Einasleigh Divisional Boards endorsed separation, and the Tinaroo Divisional Board declared that as individuals they sympathized with the movement, it is doubtful whether these reactions reflected the consensus of local opinion; the *Mundic Miner*, for instance, protested that the Einasleigh Divisional Board had pledged themselves to separation against the wishes of the community.<sup>179</sup>

In September 1890 anti-separation committees were formed at Herberton and Irvinebank.<sup>180</sup> Two petitions declaring separation both premature and undesirable were signed by 416 residents of the Herberton district and 86 residents of the Irvinebank district, and presented to the Legislative Assembly. The Herberton petition asserted that the movers for separation were actuated by selfish motives, with no regard for the welfare of northern residents. Both petitions affirmed that a very large majority of the inhabitants of northern Queensland were opposed to separation, and requested that the Assembly take steps to prevent the

---

177. Divisional Clerk of Wangaratta to Knutsford 12 June 1890, CO 881/9 (confidential prints), Australian No. 145, p. 87. In August 1890, although he personally supported separation and signed a petition from members of parliament urging a reconsideration of the question, R.H. Smith, member for Bowen, informed the Secretary of State that a considerable number of his constituents, under present circumstances, opposed the movement. Smith to Knutsford 18 August 1890, CO 881/9, Australian No. 145, pp. 96-97. C f., Smith, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1065. Despite a request from the Wangaratta Divisional Board that he oppose separation, Smith decided to follow his personal belief, and this decision was supported by a public meeting in Ayr. *TH*, 5 July 1890.

178. *BQ*, 7 January 1890, 20 October 1891.

179. Extract from *Mundic Miner*, *CP*, 27 November 1889.

180. *Wild River Times*, 19, 26 September 1890. A separation league was also formed at Herberton at the same time, but the chairman admitted that separationists were in a minority in the district. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1890.

dismemberment of the colony, especially in view of the imminent meeting of the Federal Council.<sup>181</sup> When the Herberton Municipal Council received the Townsville Committee's circular, the Mayor, W. Bonar, moved successfully that it lie under the table, a contemptuous rejection much resented by local separationists.<sup>182</sup>

In 1889, on the grounds that two governments had failed to pass a decentralization bill, the *Northern Miner* had again declared in favour of separation.<sup>183</sup> However the Charters Towers Municipal Council reported that it was "not in favour of Separation at the present time as it is well known that a large majority of the people of Charters Towers are against Separation".<sup>184</sup> A poll conducted at Charters Towers in September 1890 confirmed this judgement, by a substantial majority.

In late August a large anti-separation meeting had resolved, despite attempted amendments by separationists, that separation was premature in view of the probable federation of the Australian colonies; speakers opposing separation stated that they did so chiefly from a dread of coloured labour. A committee was formed to direct an anti-separation campaign throughout the north. Because of the disunity evident at the meeting, a deputation of equal numbers of separationists and anti-separationists met to formulate rules for a poll of local opinion on the question, each side agreeing to share the costs equally.<sup>185</sup> On 13 September electors on the electoral and municipal rolls of Charters Towers and the roll of the Division of Dalrymple voted for or against separation on the principle of "one man one vote". The result was 1,220 votes to 984 against separation.<sup>186</sup> The Governor, Sir Henry Norman, did service for the northern cause when in November 1890 he reaffirmed his opinion that a considerable majority of north Queenslanders favoured separation, observing that although the majority in Charters Towers had voted against it, he had information "that the minority would have been much fewer in numbers two or three years ago, and that the number of separationists there is increasing".<sup>187</sup>

---

181. *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, pp. 827-829.

182. Norman to Knutsford 16 September 1890, CO 881/9, Australian No. 145, p. 102.

183. *NM*, 20 September 1890.

184. *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 821.

185. *NA*, 3 September 1890.

186. Rutledge to Norman 16 September 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, pp. 1166-1167. Chinese voters were excluded from the poll.

187. Norman to Knutsford 13 November 1890, *ibid.*, p. 1174.

The opposition of inland mining communities was partly due to ill-feeling against Townsville.<sup>188</sup> W.O. Hodgkinson, member for Burke, claimed that "we are frightened of any separation of the colony under the auspices of the Separation League, bred in Townsville, nourished in Townsville, and composed of Townsville people":<sup>189</sup>

When Townsville will show in action what she professes in words -- that she has no desire to be the capital, and no desire to aggrandise herself at the expense of the rest of the North, then I shall listen to her voice. I happen to know the ceaseless efforts that have been made in every direction to extend the radii of Townsville influence into all parts of the North. 190

The alleged relationship between separation and black labour also continued to deter mining men and the working class generally. In 1889, hoping to gain a more sympathetic hearing from the McIlwraith government, sugar planters actively campaigned for a five-year extension of the Pacific Island labour trade, for which no further licences were to be granted after 1890. This alarmed working class organizations throughout the north, prompting demands that the separatist organization formally deny any aim to renew the traffic. Although it had been trying to woo the workers since 1889 and although it had painful memories of the damage done by Griffith in fixing the black labour label upon the movement, the Townsville Separation League failed to meet the labour movement's demands. A motion opposing coolie labour fell far short of Labour's slogan "North Queensland for the white man", especially as individual members of the Committee were observed to support a Chamber of Commerce motion for extension of the labour traffic.<sup>191</sup> W.O. Hodgkinson and E. Hunter, the two members for Burke, speaking at Georgetown, stressed the link between coloured labour and separation as reason for their opposition to the movement;<sup>192</sup> during

188. *Croydon Mining News*, 28 June 1889. *NM*, 20 September 1890. Extract from *Mundic Miner*, *CP*, 7 August 1889. A Herberton miner's letter to the Editor, *Wild River Times*, 3 January 1890. Letters to the Editor, *ibid.*, 1 August, 10 October 1890. Extract from *Mundic Miner*, 5 April 1890, *TH*, 12 July 1890.

189. *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, p. 1846.

190. *Ibid.*, p. 1847.

191 Doran, Separatism in Townsville, pp. 131-134. Letters to the Editor, from Croydon, *TH*, 2, 31 August 1889. P.J. Monks to the Editor, *ibid.*, 17 August 1889. W.H. Doonan of Limestone to the Editor, *ibid.*, 26 October 1889. *NM*, 18 September 1889. Letter to the Editor, *MM*, 12 December 1890. *Australian Republican*, 9 August 1890. *Cooktown Independent*, 10 May 1890. A Herberton miner's letter to the Editor, *Wild River Times*, 3 January 1890. W.B. Stenhouse to the Editor, *ibid.*, 4 April 1890.

192. Report of Hodgkinson's speech, *NA*, 17 December 1889. *CP*, 11 December 1889. C f., Hodgkinson, *QPD*, Vol. 58, 1889, pp. 1846-1847; Sayers, *ibid.*, p. 1638.

the debate in the Assembly on separation in 1890, R.J. Sayers of Charters Towers and W.O. Hodgkinson reaffirmed their opposition to separation on the same ground.<sup>193</sup>

A further resolution declaring that the league opposed coloured labour of any kind for north Queensland, which was carried by 20 votes to one in the Townsville Committee in September 1890, immediately before the Charters Towers poll,<sup>194</sup> failed to allay working class apprehension. A motion carried in Mackay was also ineffective:

the Labour question having now been definitely settled by the agreement of both political parties in Queensland to exclude in future all coloured races, their [sic] now exists no division of opinion on this subject; but it has become imperative, if the agricultural resources of our coast lands are to be utilized, that we should seek for reciprocity with Southern colonies which we can never attain while tied to Brisbane. 195

In both cases the declaration against black labour assumed that the coloured labour question had been disposed of, with no possibility of the Pacific Island labour traffic's being reopened. If, as seems likely, Labour's coolness reflected doubts about whether the question really was closed, their doubts were well-founded: the traffic was re-opened by Griffith himself in 1892, and flourished for a further ten years.

As before, the coloured labour issue was related to broader class issues. In parliament R.J. Sayers emphasized that the movement had been conducted by one class of people - businessmen, auctioneers, managers of financial institutions, and so on, rather than by working men; the working class, he added, were suspicious of their motives.<sup>196</sup> Hodgkinson asserted that he would not support separation so long as the leaders of the movement were men whom he had always opposed politically.<sup>197</sup> Tom Leahy of the Charters Towers Republicans expressed a common fear that the "classes" in the north had too much power for the masses.<sup>198</sup> These views were to change only after the general election in

193. Sayers, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1062; Hodgkinson, *ibid.*, pp. 1067-1069.

194. *TES*, 10 September 1890.

195. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 20 September 1888.

196. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1060. C f., *The Worker*, 11 March 1893.

197. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1069.

198. Report of meeting of Charters Towers Republicans, *Australian Republican*, 20 September 1890. C f., letter to the Editor from Cardwell, *TH*, 5 April 1890. Letter to the Editor from Croydon, *ibid.*, 2 August 1890.

1893, when the Labour Party first showed its strength in the north.<sup>199</sup>

The Separation Carnival in Townsville in October 1890 was a notable example of efforts to popularize the movement and raise funds. The culmination of months of organizing by the Carnival Committee, it consisted of a procession through Flinders Street followed by a carnival at the Townsville Show Grounds. The day was proclaimed a public holiday after the Municipal Council applied to the government;<sup>200</sup> special trains ran from Charters Towers and Ravenswood, and there were also contingents from Hughenden and Ingham. A large number of local organizations including friendly societies and trade unions took part in the procession, many with separation-inspired floats. Members of the Cabmen's Union drove people free to the Show Grounds; there, an organized programme included a clog dancing competition, sports, boxing contest, ballooning, fireworks and a waxworks display depicting the first ministry of the new colony, all these attractions being advertised in the official programme, the "Separation Sparkler".<sup>201</sup> About 5,500 people paid to enter the carnival grounds, giving a profit of over £900 for the day.<sup>202</sup> Other fund-raising and consciousness-raising activities organized by local leagues included competitions for guessing the name of the new colony and the composition of the first ministry (a reflection of unlimited confidence); excursions and picnics; and balls, concerts and plays, often with a separation theme.

The Separation Carnival emphasized the limited role which women played in the movement. A Ladies Committee was formed to assist the Carnival Committee, composed mainly of wives of leading separationists, including Mesdames Parkes, Allen, MacDiarmid, Roberts, Fairley, and Henry;<sup>203</sup> they ran stalls, baked cakes, provided refreshments, sewed costumes, and generally served the cause in ways traditionally feminine, and they were later commended for their efforts.<sup>204</sup> When the meeting was held to form the Townsville League, however, women had been

---

199. See below p. 362.

200. See QSA COL/A632, No. 10523 and enclosures.

201. *Grand Separation Carnival, Fair, and Ball Programme* (Townsville 1890). Townsville Municipal Library.

202. *TH*, 18 October 1890.

203. *Ibid.*, 16 August 1890.

204. *Ibid.*, 18 October 1890.

**T**HERE must always be some difference of opinion about Separation in certain parts of the North.

In Townsville the people are unanimous. They see that Separation will be the

**"Greatest good for the greatest number"**

They have worked together, sinking all local jealousies, and this mutual good feeling has been brought about principally by the use of that

**"ELIXIR OF LIFE"**

**The Famous West End Beer,**  
ASSENTED BY THAT  
**VERY FINE OLD SPIRIT—**

**Watson's Dundee Whisky.**

---

Without being egotistical, the great sale of the above through the whole North will tend to remove the "colowebbs" from men's minds, and will speedily achieve

**SEPARATION.**  
"SO HIGH IT BE."

---

**SAMUEL ALLEN & SONS LIMITED.**

**T. WILLMETT & CO.,**  
**TOWNSVILLE.**

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Cheapest** and the **Best** House in the proposed **NEW COLONY** for all kinds of Letterpress and Lithographic **Printing**, from a Job of **50 Visiting Cards** to **1,000,000 Handbills**, printed in all or any of the colors of the rainbow.

\*\*\*\*\*

The **Best Staff** of Separationists in the North!  
 The **Resources** of the Establishment are Immense.

\*\*\*\*\*




*"Omne solum forti patria est."*



**SEPARATION! SEPARATION!!**  
ESTABLISHED 1880.

**NORTHERN FURNISHING WAREHOUSE,**  
**FLINDERS STREET, TOWNSVILLE.**

**J. L. MORGAN,**  
IMPORTER OF  
 Colonial, English, American, Austrian, China, and  
**ORIENTAL FURNITURE.**



MAKER OF ALL CABINET WORK,  
 UPHOLSTERING MADE TO ORDER.

LARGE STOCKS OF ALL KINDS KEPT ON HAND.

J. L. Morgan is making on the premises all kinds of Art Furniture from various Colonial Woods, including Kaari and Cypress Pine, Pure and Solid Oak, Beech, Cedar and Walnut.

This long established and far-famed Furnishing House, is well-known to all men and women of North Queensland, young and old, to be the best house for matrimonial pairs to go to when commencing house-keeping on their own account, well-knowing as they do, that J. L. M. is the only fellow in the city who knows exactly what they require and how to fix up for them in a proper and comfortable manner a nicely furnished house (the delight of all women), to enable the young couple to start on a straight and even road in life until Separation is accomplished and prosperity to North Queensland returns.

**Cruckshank & Co.**  
LIMITED.

**HORSE & CATTLE SALESMAN.**  
**STOCK, STATION, LAND,**  
AND  
**General Commission Agents.**

Sales of Horses held every Wednesday and Saturday, at the Newmarket Horse Bazaar, at 11 o'clock.

**GOOD SECURE PADDOCKS.**

Stock received and forwarded to any part of the colony. Buggies and Saddle Hacks on Hire. Horses Broken to Saddle and Harness on Shortest Notice.

**BROWN'S**

**SEPARATION ICE CREAMS,**

**AMERICAN ICE DRINKS,**

**SEPARATION PASTRY.**

---

**Next to Grand Hotel.**



excluded from the hall,<sup>205</sup> and apart from one anti-separation speech by the wife of a prominent Liberal in 1885,<sup>206</sup> they left no trace of participation in the movement. This contrasted with the central Queensland movement, for in 1893 a Women's League in Rockhampton organized a separate petition to the Queen, which was signed by over 4,000 adult females and which presented, in addition to the usual points, arguments of domestic relevance such as "the excessive taxation of breadstuffs and all the necessaries of life".<sup>207</sup>

Although Coote had completed his letter to Lord Knutsford by January 1889, it was not despatched to England until February 1890. In the interim the Townsville Committee organized official statements on separation from northern local authorities, but the delay was caused mainly by difficulties in collecting signatures of parliamentary members. In his letter Coote referred ironically to the fact that soon after Macrossan had declared that the north would accept only territorial separation, he introduced McIlwraith's decentralization bill. When the letter was sent to Philp in Brisbane with a request to obtain members' signatures, most northern members including Philp refused to sign, objecting to the remarks about Macrossan. Although several members of the Committee agreed with Coote's comments, it was decided in September that it would be expedient to excise the passage.<sup>208</sup> After further exasperating delays,<sup>209</sup> the letter was finally endorsed by 16 members of parliament: J. Deane and W. Aplin, northern members of the Legislative Council, eleven northern separationist members of the Assembly, together with W.H. Corfield, member for Winton, and two southern members, J. Crombie (Mitchell) and P. Perkins (Cambooya).<sup>210</sup> In early February Philp and W.V. Brown, a former member for Townsville, presented the letter and accompanying documents to the Governor for transmission to the Secretary of State.<sup>211</sup>

---

205. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1889.

206. *NQTTTS*, 22 May 1885.

207. *QV&P*, 1893, Vol. 3, p. 1049.

208. Report of committee meeting, *TH*, 28 September 1889.

209. See Coote's letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 9 November 1889.

210. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 809. Perkins supported the movement mainly because he favoured black labour for north Queensland. Perkins, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, pp. 1072-1073.

211. *First Annual Report of Townsville Committee*, QSA GOV/A18, p. 40.

Reporting on the letter in March 1890 the Premier, Boyd Morehead, explained at the outset that separation had always been an "open question" in cabinet, Macrossan and Black having been conceded freedom of action on the issue when they joined the ministry. However, for himself and other members of the ministry, Morehead observed that the Townsville Committee offered no proof that the majority of north Queenslanders currently favoured separation, but relied on a two-year-old petition. Admitting that the advantages to Townsville of being made capital of a new colony were probably sufficient to predispose a majority in that locality to separation, Morehead submitted that proof was necessary that other centres were equally ardent.<sup>212</sup> He pointed out that northern members who endorsed the letter had committed themselves to separation before the election two years previous when, he averred, agitation was at its height; he stressed that five northern members, including representatives of the important constituency of Charters Towers, had declined to sign. Morehead asserted that it was outside the legitimate province of Municipal Councils and Divisional Boards, which were elected by local ratepayers to conduct affairs of a purely local nature, to express an opinion on separation.<sup>213</sup> The Premier was convinced that most causes of northern dissatisfaction had been removed during the previous two years, especially since Macrossan and Black had been included in the ministry.<sup>214</sup> Although mathematical justice in the administration of any state was impracticable, Morehead believed that the government had shown its willingness to try to promote equally the interests of all parts of the colony - by removing the Northern Supreme Court to Townsville and appointing an additional Supreme Court Judge; by considering extending the jurisdiction of District Courts and the establishment at Townsville of a branch Stamp Office; by introducing the decentralization bill and keeping separate accounts of revenue and expenditure in the northern, central and southern districts.<sup>215</sup> Morehead also argued that in view of the probable federation of the Australian colonies, which would establish a parliament capable of adjusting the boundaries of the several colonies along mutually acceptable lines, it was inopportune to consider separating northern Queensland.<sup>216</sup>

The Governor, Sir Henry Norman, noting that Morehead questioned the right

---

212. Morehead to Norman 28 March 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 822.

213. *Ibid.*, p. 823.

214. *Ibid.*, p. 822-823.

215. *Ibid.*, p. 823-824.

216. *Ibid.*, p. 823.

of the signatories authoritatively to represent current opinion in the north, expressed the view that

a considerable majority of the people of North Queensland are in favour of Separation, and this majority would be larger if there were not difference of opinion as to what town should be the capital of the proposed new colony. 217

However, he added, whether or not a majority favoured separation would remain a matter of personal opinion until a general election was held in which separation was made a test question in the north. Norman drew attention to the improbability of the Queensland parliament's ever passing a measure for separation:

Even if the Northern members were unanimous it is probable that they would always be in a hopeless minority on the question of Separation, and the Northern Separation Party therefore seem to me, from their point of view, well advised in seeking intervention of Her Majesty's Government. 218

On Morehead's suggestion that the question be deferred until federation was accomplished, the Governor pointed out that there could be a long interval before federation, while there appeared to him no reason why, if north Queenslanders desired separation, their desire should be subject to the approval of Tasmania and other distant colonies with which they had had little or no connection.<sup>219</sup> Norman informed the Secretary of State that separationists had indicated that they would not be satisfied with a measure of financial decentralization such as the government intended to implement.<sup>220</sup> Finally he referred to problems separation would cause in administering New Guinea:

Practically this Possession is now administered in important matters by the Government of Queensland, and this Government, with its large resources, is able to help New Guinea in various ways. It would hardly be possible to expect that New Guinea could be administered from Northern Queensland as efficiently as it is now administered, and Southern Queensland would have

---

217. Norman to Knutsford 7 April 1890, *ibid.*, p. 824.

218. *Ibid.*

219. *Ibid.*

220. *Ibid.*, p. 825.

difficulties in aiding New Guinea if deprived of all the territory which is nearest to the latter island. 221

Despite this reservation, separationists were justifiably pleased with the Governor's report.<sup>222</sup>

Speaking at a banquet in Townsville in April 1890, Norman expressed a belief that as Governor he should be impartial on the controversial question of separation, a view in marked contrast to that previously taken by Sir Anthony Musgrave, who had openly expressed opposition to the movement:

As the constitutional Governor of a self-governing colony, it appeared to him that when a considerable section of loyal and good subjects of the Crown desired a particular measure which was not acceptable to other parts of the community, it was the Governor's duty to observe an absolute and entire impartiality. It was even more necessary in the present case; because....the Ministers themselves were not altogether united in opinion upon the subject. 223

Norman raised three possible drawbacks of separation, which he advised northerners to consider carefully before pressing their demands: the possibility that if Queensland was divided into three it would have less influence in a federal parliament than if it remained one great colony; the possibility that the cost of administering three separate colonies would be greater to each than if they remained under one government; and the possibility that the cost of borrowing would be higher if loans were raised by three separate governments.<sup>224</sup>

William Coote took up these points in a pamphlet published by the Townsville Committee. He stressed that a long delay could be expected before federation, and that in the meantime northern revenue would continue to be appropriated by the south. From the northern viewpoint the important question was not how great an influence Queensland could exert but whether northern interests would be

---

221. *Ibid.* New Guinea was governed by an Administrator, with advice from an executive and legislative council nominated by the Crown. However the territory had been regarded practically as a dependency of Queensland; for this reason it had been considered necessary to stipulate that the legislative council should number not less than two persons besides the Administrator. Correspondence with the Secretary of State passed through the Governor of Queensland, and the Court of Appeal was the Supreme Court of Queensland. Queensland also guaranteed the expenses of administration, which were paid for by subsidies amounting to £15,000 a year, subscribed by Britain, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, of which Queensland's contribution was £5000. *The Times*, 22 December 1890. *MM*, 30 March 1893.

222. See e.g., *Cairns Argus*, 1 August 1890; *TH*, 26 July, 4 October 1890.

223. *BC*, 3 May 1890.

224. *Ibid.*

represented at all: Queensland representatives would reflect southern interests only, and possibly exert pressure on the federal government against subdividing the colony.<sup>225</sup> On Norman's second argument, Coote observed that cheapness and efficiency of administration did not necessarily follow as the area of a state increased.<sup>226</sup> He noted that many northerners had expressed misgivings about the cost of a new government, which were based on a mistaken idea that this would be an additional burden; he argued that the cost of local government would probably be the same after separation as before, while the north already contributed its share of the expenses of general government; any additional expense of setting up a new government would be more than met by the northern surplus, which would after separation be available for northern purposes.<sup>227</sup> Coote admitted that, other conditions being equal, a large and influential colony would be able to borrow at lower rates, but because of its revenue and expenditure and the relatively small debt for which it would be liable, the credit of the new colony would be at least equal to the average of the Australian colonies.<sup>228</sup>

After his tour of the north in April-May 1890 Norman reported to the Secretary of State that at Townsville, Charters Towers, Hughenden and Mackay "there seemed to be a very strong and general feeling in favour" of separation.<sup>229</sup> He also sent to the Secretary of State extracts of addresses urging separation, which had been presented to him by the Townsville Committee, the Mackay League, the mayor and aldermen of Hughenden and the Hughenden Divisional Board, observing that:

No addresses were presented to me which contained any expressions of opposition to Northern Separation, and every allusion to Northern Separation was cheered, though I am aware that in certain parts of the North a portion of the community, and perhaps in one or two places a majority of the community, are not in favour of Separation. 230

---

225. *Further Considerations*, pp. 8-9, p. 16.

226. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

227. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

228. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

229. Norman to Knutsford 19 May 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 826.

230. *Ibid.* C f., report of Norman's speech in Townsville, *Further Considerations*, p. 7 - "he had been struck with their unanimity, so far as he knew, upon the subject of Separation. At all events, if there was no unanimity, all he could say was that while hundreds - he might say thousands - of the people had spoken or cheered in his presence in favor of separation, not one single person had spoken against it".

Many opponents of separation, including both McIlwraith and Griffith, asserted that Norman had been duped by a carefully organized separation campaign arranged to coincide with his visit, northern opponents of the movement having been, allegedly, reluctant to raise controversial matters in the presence of the Governor.<sup>231</sup> In November 1890 Norman reaffirmed his opinion that a considerable majority of north Queenslanders favoured separation, adding that even in Charters Towers, formerly head-quarters of the anti-separation movement, the number of adherents was constantly increasing.<sup>232</sup>

So sympathetic to the cause were some of Norman's public statements during this period that Robert Herbert commented that he appeared "to be rather taking the side of Separation".<sup>233</sup> However in private correspondence Norman stressed that personally he deprecated separation:

My own personal opinion is that any division of the Colony is unnecessary, and that division will mean much additional expense, little or no addition to the progress of the Colony and it will place Queensland as a whole at a disadvantage as compared with other Colonies when Federation takes place....<sup>234</sup>

Nevertheless he considered it impolitic to ignore northern separatist sentiment:

While this is my individual opinion I recognise that since the question of division or separation has progressed so far it would be unwise to struggle against it and that some sort of separation should be granted if it is quite clear that the people of the North and Centre desire it....<sup>235</sup>

In December 1889 a separation league was formed at Rockhampton to agitate for central Queensland separation, largely as a result of the organizational efforts of G.S. Curtis, a local real estate agent.<sup>236</sup> In succeeding months the

231. McIlwraith, *QPD*, Vol. 61, 1890, p. 33. Griffith to Lady Musgrave 7 December 1890, Musgrave Papers. *J.O.L. TH*, 5 July 1890.

232. Norman to Knutsford 13 November 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1174. C f., Norman to Ripon 26 February 1894, Ripon Papers Vol. 70, British Library Manuscripts, Add. 43560.

233. Herbert, minute 13 May 1890, on telegram from Norman 12 May 1890, C0234/51.

234. Norman to Ripon 10 October 1892, Ripon Papers Vol. 70, British Library Manuscripts, Add. 43560. C f., extract from Norman to Knutsford 6 January 1892, enclosed with the above. C f., Norman to Ripon 26 February 1894, with the above - "My own opinion is that the Central and Northern divisions are not yet ripe for Separation and that they will make a mess of self government at first".

235. Norman to Ripon 10 October 1892, Ripon Papers as above.

236. Voss, *Separatist Movements in Central Queensland*, pp. 49-50.

movement spread to most central Queensland towns, and in November 1890 the Central Queensland Separation League despatched a separation petition embodying arguments analogous to those of northern memorials.<sup>237</sup> The petition was signed by 8,731 residents,<sup>238</sup> which represented a very large proportion of the adult male population of the district.<sup>239</sup>

The central movement presupposed that northern separation was imminent - no one thought that a new state of central Queensland was practicable if the north remained part of Queensland<sup>240</sup> - and was in part a defensive measure:

if Northern Queensland obtain separation and Central Queensland be denied that boon, it would be without the support it has hitherto received from the Northern members of Parliament, and would be left in a far more helpless position than it is at present. 241

The central movement also owed much to railway policy, Rockhampton residents believing that both Brisbane and Townsville were encroaching on the district's trade.<sup>242</sup> Northern proposals to extend the Northern Line south from Hughenden to Winton were especially menacing, evoking a concerted community effort to promote a branch from the Central Line to Winton.<sup>243</sup> To some extent, separatism in Rockhampton grew out of this siege mentality.<sup>244</sup> Despite railway rivalry, however, the Central Queensland League, expressing sympathy with the northern cause, invited the Townsville Committee to join them in combined action<sup>245</sup> and

237. *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, pp. 1175-1177.

238. Executive Committee of C.Q.S.L. to Knutsford 30 January 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1188.

239. Voss, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81. Voss suggests however that the degree of support in more sparsely populated outside areas was markedly less than in Rockhampton and its immediate vicinity.

240. See Norman to Ripon confidential, 21 February 1894, C0234/59.

241. C.Q.S.L. Committee to Knutsford 14 August 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1164. C f., letter to the Editor, *Rockhampton Bulletin*, quoted by *TH*, 28 September 1889 - "If the Northerners should secure Separation, which they will do if they stand by their guns, our position with regard to the South will be worse than it is at present". C f., Murray (Normanby), *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1614. C f., *PDT*, 18 February 1871, 7 September 1872.

242. Letter to the Editor, *Rockhampton Bulletin*, quoted by *TH*, 28 September 1889. *BO*, 14 January 1890.

243. *TH*, 9 November 1889. Report of public meeting in Rockhampton, *ibid.*, 16 November 1889. C f., *BC*, 17 March 1898.

244. See C.Q.S.L., *Interview with George Pearce-Serocold* (Rockhampton 1895), p. 4.

245. *TH*, 14 December 1889. *First Annual Report of Townsville Committee*, QSA GOV/A18, p. 41.

suggested a conference of delegates from northern and central leagues.<sup>246</sup>

In reply the Townsville Committee observed that the work of northern separationists having recently been completed, at least for the time being, by the despatch of the letter to the Secretary of State, such a junction seemed unnecessary.<sup>247</sup> Apart from a lingering grudge against Rockhampton for advocating provincial councils as an alternative to separation in the mid-1880s,<sup>248</sup> northern separationists considered that alliance with central Queensland would weaken their position, not only because the centre had not developed as strong a case, but also because the south would more strenuously resist trisection.<sup>249</sup> Nevertheless a parliamentary alliance of northern and central members was formed to promote both causes.

By early 1890 the northern movement had recovered from the bitter disappointment of 1887. It had gained the valuable backing of the Governor for its claim to majority support. It had tried systematically to remove grounds for further resistance by wooing the working class, disavowing the damaging label of black labour, and appearing to be less obviously dominated by Townsville: but it had not wholly succeeded in these endeavours, separation had become involved in inter-urban rivalries once more, and the movement found itself confronted with a new diversionary influence - federation.

---

246. *TH*, 25 January 1890.

247. *First Annual Report of Townsville Committee*, QSA GOV/A18, p. 41.

248. *TH*, 25 January 1890.

249. *Ibid.* *Ibid.*, 18 January, 1 February, 10 May 1890. Report of Committee meeting, *ibid.*, 1 February 1890. *Cooktown Independent*, 17 September 1890. *NQH*, 13 July 1892, 8 August 1894. Letter to the Editor, *ibid.*



## CHAPTER 11

### GRIFFITH'S PROVINCIAL SCHEME

During the session of 1890, the opposition, McIlwraith and the *Brisbane Courier* made a concerted effort to undermine the Morehead government, beginning with the Address-in-Reply debate. The government finally fell in August over Morehead's plan to impose a property tax to meet the financial deficit, an extremely controversial proposal. Griffith took advantage of the government's disunity on the issue by attempting a no-confidence motion, whose defeat by a margin of only two votes indicated that the property tax on which Morehead had staked his ministry would almost certainly fail. The Premier therefore resigned, and the so-called "Griffilwraith" coalition government was formed.<sup>1</sup> A.S. Cowley, member for Herbert and president of the Ingham Separation League since 1885, joined the ministry as Secretary for Public Lands and Agriculture with the approval of other separationist members, who hoped that his presence in the ministry would restrain government opposition to separation.<sup>2</sup>

During the ministerial crisis, before party realignments crystallized, Macrossan seized the opportunity to organize a separation petition which contradicted a remark by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the House of Commons that the question of separation "was not yet ripe for decision". Of the 72 members in the Assembly, 28 told the Secretary of State that they considered "the question to be thoroughly ripe, and trust it only awaits Your Lordship's favourable decision".<sup>3</sup> The petition was signed by 11 out of 16 northern members,<sup>4</sup> 10 central and seven southern members of the Legislative Assembly; of three members of the Legislative Council who

- 
1. See A.G. Stephens, *The Griffilwraith : Being an Independent Criticism of the Methods and Manoeuvres of the Queensland Coalition Government, 1890-1893* (Brisbane 1893).
  2. *TH*, 16 August 1890.
  3. Certain Members of Queensland Parliament to Knutsford, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1165.
  4. Although R.H. Smith, member for Bowen, signed the petition, he informed the Secretary of State that a considerable number of his constituents opposed the movement. Smith to Knutsford 18 August 1890, CO 881/9, Australian No. 145, pp. 96-97.

signed, two were from north Queensland and one came from the central district. Here the effect of the alliance of northern and central members in altering the balance of numbers was demonstrated for the first time. When the petition was presented to the Governor by a deputation of members on 18 August, Norman immediately telegraphed the Secretary of State that 31 members of parliament had urged a decision on separation.<sup>5</sup>

Many factors had contributed to the adverse decision of the Colonial Office in 1887, but that decision was neither inevitable nor unalterable. In 1887 Knutsford had conceded in minutes that separationists had a strong case. It seems that, though intimidated by the need for Imperial legislation in the face of Queensland's opposition, he was not at all ill-disposed towards the movement.

Knutsford's comments on granting responsible government to Western Australia throw light on his attitude to northern separation. In Western Australia the demand for responsible government, raised unsuccessfully as early as 1874, had been pressed more vigorously from the early 1880s in consequence of the economic and population growth occasioned by large-scale gold discoveries.<sup>6</sup> In correspondence with Sir Napier Broome, the Governor of Western Australia, Knutsford laid down criteria for judging the capacity of a community for self-government, which he repeated when introducing the Western Australian Constitution Bill in the House of Lords:

within reasonable geographical limits, a population of 40,000 persons, raising a revenue of 400,000 l., may *prima facie* be regarded as capable of managing its own affairs....<sup>7</sup>

As he knew, north Queensland with a population in 1888 of about 70,000 and a revenue of almost £928,000<sup>8</sup> more than met those criteria.

Knutsford's views on the future of the northern areas of Western Australia were even more to the point. He hesitated to

- 
5. Norman to Knutsford 18 August 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1165.
  6. Keith, *Responsible Government*, Vol. 1, p. 26.
  7. Knutsford to Broome 12 December 1887, *BPP Australia*, Vol. 31, 1889, p. 367.
  8. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 814.

hand over to so small a population the control of the future destinies of an enormous territory, presumably capable of supporting some millions of inhabitants, but at the present time containing only these 40,000 persons, nearly the whole of whom are congregated in one portion of the territory of which many parts are still virtually unknown.<sup>9</sup>

That is, he was wary of repeating what hindsight showed to be the errors committed in Queensland in 1859: he insisted that an enabling bill be submitted to the British parliament empowering "Her Majesty to create within the present territory of Western Australia such additional Colony or Colonies as may be thought fit...."<sup>10</sup> Of special significance was Knutsford's additional comment: "it will be advisable that such power should extend to again subdividing any Colony so created, should circumstances from time to time render that course necessary".<sup>11</sup> Clearly Knutsford appreciated the position in which northern separationists had been placed by the omission of such a clause from earlier legislation: he wanted to avoid placing future inhabitants of northern districts of Western Australia under a similar disadvantage.

Although the trend of British colonial policy was disengagement from self-governing colonies, it is noteworthy that neither Lord Knutsford nor any of his predecessors or successors ever renounced the separation power of the British parliament. However the Colonial Office would have preferred virtually any other solution rather than using such power against the wishes of the colonial government. Their tactic therefore was delay, to allow the Queensland government every opportunity to deal with the problem. Griffith's promise of decentralization in 1887 had seemed to offer an acceptable solution and therefore separationists had been advised that the scheme must be tried. Nevertheless, this did not mean that if the colonial authorities neglected to search for a solution the Colonial Office would for ever stand back.

Separationists had reopened correspondence with the Colonial Office in January 1890 on the ground that during the preceding two years the Queensland government had failed to fulfil its promise of

---

9. Holland to Broome 12 December 1887, *BPP Australia*, Vol. 31, 1889, p. 367.

10. Holland to Broome 3 January 1888, *ibid.*, p. 370.

11. *Ibid.*

remedial decentralizing legislation.<sup>12</sup> The Premier's report on the letter had admitted that two of his ministers were confirmed adherents of the movement. The Governor had affirmed that a considerable majority of north Queenslanders favoured separation, emphasizing that there was little likelihood that the southern parliamentary majority would ever allow a measure for separation to pass. When 31 members of the Queensland parliament then pressed the Secretary of State to bring the matter before the British government, the Colonial Office was moved towards a decision. Herbert's minute in August had a note of urgency:

The matter should come before the cabinet as soon as it reassembles. I do not think we can refuse to bring the question before Parliament. The Bill would have to be referred to a Select Committee....<sup>13</sup>

A reply was telegraphed to the Governor:

Referring to your telegram of 18th August awaiting arrival of further petition and debate in Parliament I cannot decide definitely as Imperial Parliament must legislate but Her Majesty's Government will consider whether circumstances justify introduction next year of Bill in order to enable creation of one or more separate colonies in North.<sup>14</sup>

In December Herbert still anticipated a Select Committee of the House of Commons to report on northern separation;<sup>15</sup> in January 1891 Knutsford reminded his staff that a memorandum on the question, for circulation to cabinet, "had better be got into shape".<sup>16</sup> Whether the British government would have allowed the matter to go further is merely a question for speculation, for Knutsford's telegram precipitated developments in Queensland which in turn convinced the Colonial Office that a decision should again be postponed. Clearly, however, the idea that the Colonial Office would never have intervened to grant separation is insupportable.

---

12. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 803.

13. Herbert, minute 27 August 1890, on Norman telegram 19 August 1890, CO 234/51.

14. Knutsford to Norman 28 August 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1166. Knutsford referred here to the expected debate on a separation motion of which Macrossan had given notice.

15. Herbert, minute 24 December 1890, on Finch-Hatton 17 December 1890, CO 234/51.

16. Knutsford, minute 5 January 1891, on despatch No. 185, CO 234/51.

Knutsford's telegram to the Governor, made public soon after it was received, immediately excited something of a furore in Queensland, promoting much self-congratulation among separationists and consternation among their opponents. To a large extent in response to fear that separation was in the offing, anti-separation committees were formed at Herberton and Irvinebank, organizing counter petitions.<sup>17</sup> There was a great deal of premature jubilation among separationists as a result of a wire from the *Brisbane Courier*, based on Knutsford's reply, stating that "Separation of North Queensland virtually granted, Lord Knutsford having promised to introduce a Bill for the severance of north from south".<sup>18</sup> This, together with a letter from Finch-Hatton saying that there had been a change of attitude favourable to separation at the Colonial Office and among leading members of the British government as a result of the Governor's report and the petition from parliamentary members,<sup>19</sup> fostered a widespread belief that separation was imminent.<sup>20</sup>

Knutsford's telegram, together with the launching of another divisive movement in central Queensland,<sup>21</sup> probably underlay Griffith's decision to formulate a more extensive decentralization proposal. Reporting on the parliamentary members' petition, Griffith stated that he still doubted whether a majority of northerners favoured separation; he also observed that the difficulty posed by Queensland's large public debt, then amounting to over £28,000,000, was undiminished by lapse of time. In conclusion Griffith stated that he believed that a scheme giving large autonomous powers to the southern, central and northern districts would satisfy most people in all parts of the colony, including both supporters and opponents of territorial separation; because the colony comprised so large an area and included such diverse conditions, it would be better governed if the management of local affairs were entrusted to those most closely affected.<sup>22</sup>

---

17. *Wild River Times*, 5 September 1890. Report of Herberton public meeting, *ibid.*, 19 September 1890. A public meeting to form an anti-separation league was held at Cairns shortly after this. *TH*, 1 November 1890.

18. *Cairns Argus*, 2 September 1890. *NA*, 1 September 1890.

19. *Cairns Argus*, 10 October 1890. Cf., letter from W.P. Morgan of the London Committee, *TH*, 11 October 1890.

20. *Ibid.*, 6, 13 September, 8 November 1890.

21. Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 61, 1890, p. 532.

22. Griffith to Norman 13 November 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1173.

After the Morehead government was ousted, Macrossan had declined leadership of the opposition in favour of leading the "Northern Party", a combination of all northern members except John Hoolan (Burke), which aimed to further northern interests by means short of separation.<sup>23</sup> In October 1890 he introduced a separation motion in the Assembly. His health damaged by recurrent illness, Macrossan on this occasion failed to reach the oratorical heights of his speech on separation in 1886;<sup>24</sup> he nevertheless took the opportunity to again deny the black labour charge and accusations that Townsville aimed to be capital. He stated that as well as being vulnerable to attack by sea, Townsville lacked room for expansion, all land in its vicinity being already privately-owned; he advocated a capital on a completely new site, like Washington in the United States, so that revenue from land sales could help meet the cost of setting up a new government; even if the British authorities specified Townsville, he added, the new parliament at its first meeting could shift the capital.<sup>25</sup> Macrossan finally referred disparagingly to Griffith's new decentralization proposal, which had been foreshadowed in his ministerial statement in September after the new government was formed. Admitting the difficulty of administering efficiently a large colony like Queensland and the problems of a central parliament directing public expenditure in remote areas, Griffith had outlined a system of provinces with a central legislature, whose functions would be taken over by the Australian government when the colonies federated; he had intimated, however, that the scheme would not be elaborated in detail until after the scheduled meeting of the Federal Convention in early 1891.<sup>26</sup> Macrossan, in common with other northern members, predicted that the scheme would simply create provincial bodies with few powers, like large Divisional Boards, or provincial councils of the kind that had proved failures in New Zealand.<sup>27</sup> Emphasizing that the scheme would not satisfy the north, Macrossan threatened that if it was implemented the first act of the northern provincial government would be to pass an act of secession from the proposed federation and

---

23. *TH*, 16 August 1890.

24. Bryan, *Political Career of Macrossan*, p. 138.

25. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 985.

26. Griffith, *QPD*, Vol. 61, 1890, pp. 531-532.

27. Macrossan, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 989, p. 1092. Black, *ibid.*, p. 997. Cowley, *ibid.*, p. 1064.

proclaim its independence.<sup>28</sup>

Griffith in reply admitted that the coloured labour question was settled and that there would be no black labour in the north if a new colony was formed.<sup>29</sup> Because of the difficulty of administering such a large colony and because he believed parliament spent too much time dealing with local matters, Griffith proposed to give the various districts of Queensland the same autonomy that they would have as separate states under a federal constitution. Having realized that his principal argument against the movement in the past was no longer valid, and at the same time acknowledging the validity of the principal arguments for separation, Griffith seems to have been genuinely converted to support of a modified form of separation. The scheme would ease the way for federation, one of Griffith's main goals, rather than hinder it by creating extra voices which might obstruct intercolonial negotiations; it would also avoid difficulties, which separation would raise, with regard to the public debt.<sup>30</sup> Griffith expected that after federation Queensland would be divided into at least three states anyway; in Sydney earlier in the year he had expressed an opinion that federation would probably entail subdividing the larger colonies.<sup>31</sup> For these reasons he moved an amendment to Macrossan's motion that

It would be to the advantage of the colony to establish in the Southern, Central, and Northern districts separate legislative and executive authorities with full powers of legislation and government so far as regards matters of local concern, but that matters of general concern, including the administration of the public debt, should remain under the control of one legislature and one executive, having jurisdiction over the whole of the present colony of Queensland until the establishment of an Australian Federation, when their functions should pass to the legislative and executive authorities of the Federation.<sup>32</sup>

---

28. Macrossan, *ibid.*, p. 989. Cf., Dalrymple, *ibid.*, p. 1085.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 992. Cf., *BC*, 18 October 1890 - "the question of black labour has been finally settled. The public men of the North and indeed of all parties are so deeply pledged against Kanakas, Coolies or Chinese that the coloured labour reproach can never again be raised against the territorial separation movement."

30. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, pp. 991-996.

31. *TH*, 25 January 1890.

32. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 996.

Northern separationist members spoke against the proposal,<sup>33</sup> but other northern members indicated support.<sup>34</sup> Macrossan's motion was negatived, 32 to 26, and debate was adjourned.<sup>35</sup> Central members voted for Macrossan's motion, supporting northern separationists; northern members returned the favour in November by supporting Archer's motion for central Queensland separation, but the wind had been taken out of the debate by Griffith's proposal.<sup>36</sup> Immediately after the division on his motion, Macrossan had reiterated that northern members would not support the plan,<sup>37</sup> but after a meeting of the separation party Macrossan and Archer were deputed to urge Griffith to elaborate the scheme as soon as possible;<sup>38</sup> northern members realized that if they allowed the vague amendment to hang over their heads it would block all efforts in London indefinitely.<sup>39</sup> Griffith complied, presenting to parliament about a fortnight later, in November, a set of resolutions which spelt out in more detail his provincial legislatures scheme.<sup>40</sup>

The scheme, markedly more elaborate than any of its predecessors of the 1870s and 1880s, involved dividing the colony into three provinces with separate legislatures consisting of two houses, at least one of which would be elective; in addition there would be a fourth legislature of the United Provinces, with two houses, one chosen by provincial legislatures, the other returned by electors in proportion to population. Each province would have a Lieutenant-Governor appointed by the Governor of the United Provinces, and an Executive Council appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in accordance with the system of responsible government. The legislature of the United Provinces would control general matters including the public debt, taxation other than customs duties, railway tariffs and non-European immigration. Provincial legislatures would be empowered to

---

33. Black, *ibid.*, pp. 996-997; Cowley, *ibid.*, p. 1064; Smith, *ibid.*, p. 1065; Dalrymple, *ibid.*, p. 1084.

34. Sayers, *ibid.*, p. 1062; Hodgkinson, *ibid.*, p. 1069.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 1092.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 1434.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 1095.

38. Macrossan, *ibid.*, p. 1499. Letter from Philp to Parkes, *MM*, 13 November 1890.

39. Dalrymple to Mackay Separation League, *ibid.*

40. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, pp. 1330-1331.



construct and manage railways and to raise revenue within the province for provincial purposes by customs or any other mode of taxation, with the proviso that duties would not be imposed on goods which were natural products of any province. It was provided that all customs duties, as well as the earnings of all railways whose cost of construction formed part of the public debt of the United Provinces, should be received by the government of the United Provinces and used to pay interest on that debt. The critical aspect of the scheme was the provision that when Australian federation occurred, the functions of the government of the United Provinces would pass automatically to the legislative and executive authorities of the federation, leaving the three provinces equal participants in the federation along with other Australian colonies.<sup>41</sup>

Following Griffith's initial exposition of the scheme in November, Macrossan rejected his appeal for northern members to support it, arguing that as elected separationists they could not accept a lesser proposal. Macrossan also doubted whether the proposal would be accepted by the two-thirds majority of both Houses needed to alter the constitution of the Legislative Council. Finally he expressed the opinion, widely held among northern separationists at this time, that territorial separation was within sight.<sup>42</sup> Archer, as leader of the central members, agreed with Macrossan that Griffith's plan would not satisfy separationists.<sup>43</sup> Louis Goldring, member for Flinders, objected to several aspects of it while endorsing it in principle.<sup>44</sup> Black objected that the scheme "from a financial point of view, keeps [the north] under the leading strings of the general Parliament",<sup>45</sup> especially since the government of the United Provinces would collect customs duties and railway receipts; he said that northern separationists required greater assurances that the resolutions would be passed before they would "drop the substance which I believe to be in our grasp, for the shadow which is represented by these resolutions".<sup>46</sup> D.H. Dalrymple also believed that it would be foolish

---

41. *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, pp. 1169-1171.

42. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, pp. 1525-1530.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 1594-1596.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 1601-1602.

45. *Ibid.*, 1609.

46. *Ibid.*

to give up separation "when victory is almost within our grasp".<sup>47</sup> If advanced a few years earlier the scheme might have proved attractive, but by 1890 separationists were at once too suspicious of Griffith because of his past opposition and too confident that the tide was turning in their favour to give it serious consideration.

Southern members were no more enthusiastic; not one spoke in favour of the scheme.<sup>48</sup> Macrossan asserted that southerners disliked the proposal because it allowed provinces to set their own tariffs;<sup>49</sup> Griffith countered that southerners could hardly be expected to back the scheme when northern and central members, whom it was designed to meet, refused support.<sup>50</sup> In view of the cool reception from all parties, Griffith had debate adjourned until after the date fixed for the prorogation. *The Times* commented on the debate:

Like most compromises which endeavour to please all parties, it was felt to unite the disadvantages of every scheme without securing the advantages of any...<sup>51</sup>

In the north avowed separationists tended to disparage the proposal, but anti-separationists supported it. The Mackay Separation League carried unanimously a resolution stating that the scheme was inadequate to meet northern requirements, and objecting in particular to the provision that customs duties and railway revenue would go to the United Provinces government, which would deprive the north of control over its own finances.<sup>52</sup> The Mackay League also disliked the provision for the United Provinces government to control non-European immigration.<sup>53</sup> Dissidence appeared immediately within the Townsville Committee, beginning a controversy between the "proposalists" and the "pure and simples" which lasted until the scheme was finally rejected

47. *Ibid.*, p. 1613.

48. Morgan (Warwick), *ibid.*, p. 1597; Adams (Bundaberg), *ibid.*, p. 1599; Macfarlane (Ipswich), *ibid.*, p. 1611; Plunkett (Albert), *ibid.*, p. 1613; Donaldson (Bulloo), *ibid.*, p. 1520; Powers (Burrum), *ibid.*, p. 1524.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 1617.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *The Times*, 8 December 1890.

52. Report of meeting of Mackay Separation League, *MM*, 20 November 1890. Cf., letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 18 November 1890.

53. *Ibid.*, 20 November 1890.

by parliament in late 1892.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, although a few Griffith supporters were inclined to support the scheme, a resolution was carried with only four dissentients:

that a telegram be sent to Macrossan stating League considered proposals as contained in Macrossan's letter, and will not be satisfied with anything short of Territorial Separation pure and simple.<sup>55</sup>

The *Townsville Herald* and *Townsville Evening Star* disapproved of Griffith's scheme but the Liberal *Northern Age* came out in favour, regarding it as tantamount to separation.<sup>56</sup> The *Herald* and *Evening Star* were deluged with letters, mainly opposing the scheme, but including some favourable assessments from prominent local personalities like W.V. Brown, ex-member for Townsville, and Captain E.F. Sandeman, manager of Aplin, Brown and Co., who advocated it mainly as a stepping-stone to separation.<sup>57</sup> The Townsville Chamber of Commerce resolved that "nothing short of Territorial Separation will satisfy the North".<sup>58</sup>

The *Northern Miner*, under new management since the death of T. O'Kane in May 1890, declared that the scheme did not go far enough, gave provincial legislatures insufficient power, and was unacceptable as a substitute for separation.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the new mouthpiece of radical opinion in Charters Towers, and the organ of the Towers Republicans, the *Australian Republican*, commended the scheme as a "masterly piece of state craft" that would be a step towards federation.<sup>60</sup> The anti-separationist *Wild River Times*,<sup>61</sup> the *Herberton Advertiser*,<sup>62</sup> and the *Cairns Post*<sup>63</sup> also supported the proposal.

54. See report of Committee meeting, *TH*, 20 December 1890. The "pure and simples" advocated "territorial separation pure and simple."

55. *TES*, 6 November 1890.

56. *NA*, 7, 20 November 1890, 2, 6 January 1891.

57. Brown to the Editor, *TH*, 15 November 1890. Sandeman to the Editor, *ibid.*, 22 November 1890. Brown became member for Townsville in 1891.

58. *TES*, 1 November 1890.

59. *NM*, 17 November 1890.

60. *Australian Republican*, 8 November 1890. The newspaper especially praised the proposal for elected Lieutenant-Governors.

61. *Wild River Times*, 24 October 1890.

62. *TH*, 15 November 1890.

63. *Ibid.*

The *Cooktown Independent*, which supported separation, predicted that the scheme, though expensive, would merely set up powerless legislatures in the provinces, under the control of the south.<sup>64</sup>

The scheme is ponderous and expensive, and leaves the provinces with only the shadow of power the real substance of which still remains with the dominating South.<sup>65</sup>

The *Endeavour Times* likewise opposed the scheme.<sup>66</sup> The separationist *Cairns Argus* disparaged the provincial legislatures as merely enlarged municipalities with no real power.<sup>67</sup> Reactions in Cairns,<sup>68</sup> as in Bowen,<sup>69</sup> were to some extent influenced by aversion to establishing a provincial centre in Townsville. The newly-founded Cairns Separation League carried a motion that the scheme did not meet the wishes of the people of north Queensland, and that nothing would meet their requirements except territorial separation.<sup>70</sup> The Cardwell Separation League stated that it would accept separation only.<sup>71</sup> The Central Queensland Separation League also opposed the scheme.<sup>72</sup>

From December 1890 to January 1891 Griffith visited northern Queensland, finding separation and provincial government topics of discussion in every town. He went with the intention of proselytizing his scheme, which he personally considered very conciliatory: "What I offer them is all they professed to want, apart from entirely independent existence & the right to establish the system of servile labour".<sup>73</sup> On his return to Brisbane Griffith reported to the acting-Governor that, overall, he believed that the proposals would be accepted as satisfactory by a very large majority of those who had

---

64. *Cooktown Independent*, 24 December 1890. Cf., letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 22 November 1890.

65. *Ibid.*, 15 November 1890.

66. *Endeavour Times*, 23 May, 15 July 1891.

67. *Cairns Argus*, 31 October 1890. Cf., *ibid.*, 14 November, 12 December 1890.

68. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 31 October 1890.

69. *BO*, 23 December 1890.

70. *Cairns Argus*, 5 December 1890.

71. *TH*, 15 November 1890.

72. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1890.

73. Griffith to Lady Musgrave 7 December 1890, Musgrave Papers.

previously advocated territorial separation.<sup>74</sup> Certainly the Bowen Municipal Council, which had not supported the movement since 1887 anyway, presented him with an address in favour of the scheme,<sup>75</sup> but in other separationist centres reactions were generally hostile. At a banquet given the Premier in Cooktown, Captain Armit, editor of the *Cooktown Courier*, spoke against the proposals, and after cheers had been given for separation he was carried out of the hall on the shoulders of an excited crowd.<sup>76</sup> At Hughenden the Separation League presented an address affirming that they would accept nothing less than complete territorial separation; Louis Goldring, president of the League, objected that supreme power would remain with the central government.<sup>77</sup> The Mackay Separation League argued in favour of territorial separation, urging Griffith to drop his opposition to the movement in view of southern resistance to his proposals.<sup>78</sup>

The Separation League in Townsville also expressed strong opposition to the scheme. As president, J.N. Parkes read an address expressing confidence that separation was near at hand, and explaining that the League opposed the scheme because, by proposing to create "some central head to control the collection of revenue" and perform the more important functions of government, it was antagonistic to the aims of the separation movement.<sup>79</sup> Referring to the alleged insuperable objections of English bondholders to separation, the League stated that they knew nothing authoritatively of such objections but, on the contrary, had grounds for believing that no opposition to separation would come from that quarter.<sup>80</sup>

Griffith in reply stressed the bondholder difficulty, resulting from Queensland's large public debt; he also argued that Australian federation might be retarded if another, possibly discordant, voice

---

74. Griffith to Palmer 24 February 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1179. Norman had taken leave of absence to visit England. Cf., Griffith to Lady Musgrave 21 April 1891, Musgrave Papers - "The Separation movement has not, I think, much vitality. I am vain enough to fancy that my visit North in Dec made a considerable difference."

75. *BO*, 23 December 1890.

76. *Cairns Argus*, 23 December 1890.

77. *NA*, 2 January 1891.

78. *MM*, 18 December 1890.

79. Griffith to Palmer 24 February 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1180.

80. *Ibid.*

joined in intercolonial negotiations.<sup>81</sup> Suggesting that the Townsville League had rejected the proposals too hastily, only days after they were published, Griffith asserted that the scheme would give "everything you demand short of complete territorial separation", and "as much power as you would have under Australian Federation".<sup>82</sup> The Premier tried to tell the Townsville League, as he had previously tried to convince the Mackay League<sup>83</sup> and the people of Cooktown,<sup>84</sup> that they were mistaken about the imminence of separation, and misguided if they thought future success possible:

I tell you that your deputations to Lord Knutsford are simply beating the air....I venture to say that you may send as many as you like, but you will be told on every occasion that you must first go to the Queensland Parliament.<sup>85</sup>

Finally Griffith asked League members to specify in what ways the proposals failed to satisfy them, and Parkes undertook on behalf of the League to furnish a written statement of their objections.<sup>86</sup>

The Townsville League's memorandum of objections, which was endorsed by the Mackay League,<sup>87</sup> complained that the scheme was incomplete, since many details, such as the form of provincial legislatures and delimitation of constituencies, were not specified. More importantly, the League pointed out that the south would still send twice as many representatives to the Lower House of the United Provinces as the northern and central divisions combined.<sup>88</sup> From this they concluded that: "Heretofore the North has had its surpluses taken by stealth; were these resolutions to become law they would be appropriated by statute".<sup>89</sup>

Griffith answered that it would have been impertinent for the government to have stipulated the form of provincial legislatures or designated constituencies, since the constitutions of the several

81. *Ibid.*, p. 1181.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 1181-1182.

83. *MM*, 18 December 1890.

84. *Cooktown Independent*, 24 December 1890.

85. Griffith to Palmer 24 February 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1182.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 1183.

87. *TH*, 24 January 1891.

88. Parkes to Griffith 31 January 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, pp. 1183-1184.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 1185.

provinces would probably not be identical, and these were matters which the people of each province should decide.<sup>90</sup> He argued that the objection about the dominance of the south in the legislature of the United Provinces was met by the proposal for equal representation of provinces in the Upper House.<sup>91</sup> Countering a number of the League's specific objections, Griffith observed that they were really objections to any scheme of federation, implicitly questioning the League's professed support for Australian federation.<sup>92</sup>

Many separationists initially held back from Griffith's scheme in the belief that separation was near at hand, and that an enabling bill would probably be introduced in the next session of the House of Commons.<sup>93</sup> But the announcement of the provincial scheme effectively halted separationists' progress in London. On 10 December Lord Knutsford, who was well-posted on the scheme from Norman's despatches and from the Agent-General's office,<sup>94</sup> told a deputation from the London Committee that the question "was not yet ripe for decision" because the Queensland parliament was considering Griffith's proposals;<sup>95</sup> apparently this was the decision of cabinet.<sup>96</sup> When Finch-Hatton protested that "if separation were to be deferred now Sir Samuel Griffith was a sufficiently clever tactician to put a never-ending string of motions before the Queensland Parliament with a view of deferring the question to all eternity", Knutsford replied that he did not mean that a decision should be indefinitely postponed. He suggested

---

90. Griffith to Parkes 23 February 1891, *ibid.*, p. 1186.

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 1185-1187.

93. *Cairns Argus*, 12 December 1890. *TH*, 22 November 1890. P.J. Martin to the Editor, *ibid.*, 8 November 1890. Willmetts to the Editor, *ibid.*, 22 November 1890. Report of meeting of Mackay Separation League, *MM*, 20 November 1890. W. Lennon to Philp 15 November 1890, Philp Papers, Series 1, pp. 21-23. J.O.L. Dodd S. Clarke to Philp 17 November 1890, *ibid.*, pp. 45-46. Black, *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1609.

94. Report of interview with Hollis Hopkins, who was one of the deputation to Knutsford in December, *TH*, 7 February 1891. Macrossan complained in parliament that the British authorities knew of the scheme through the London press before the Queensland parliament. *QPD*, Vol. 62, 1890, p. 1524.

95. *The Times*, 11 December 1890.

96. See reply of Baron Henry de Worms (parliamentary under-secretary) to Henniker Heaton, enclosed with QSA COL/113, No. 00881.

that northern separationists prepare a complete scheme for constituting a new colony.<sup>97</sup> Lord Knutsford had the impression that northern members, and Macrossan in particular, supported Griffith's proposal, misled apparently by an erroneous telegram circulated in Queensland and in England in November, stating that northern representatives had decided to back it.<sup>98</sup> During the interview and in later correspondence with Knutsford, Finch-Hatton unsuccessfully tried, by quoting parliamentary debates, to convince him that he was mistaken about Macrossan, and that northern separationist opinion was generally averse to the scheme.<sup>99</sup>

Knutsford clarified his attitude when interviewing a central Queensland deputation introduced the following week by Sir Charles Nicholson, then chairman of the Central Separation Committee in London. The Secretary of State explained that the question was not ripe for consideration because the Queensland parliament had not yet reached a decision on Griffith's proposals; discussion in the Legislative Assembly had been adjourned, and he had been informed that the scheme would be brought before parliament again in the next session. He stated that the scheme seemed *prima facie* to be a very reasonable one and acknowledged that a similar system had been successful in Canada; but he added that he did not wish to offer an opinion either for or against the proposal as it had not been considered by Her Majesty's government. Until the scheme had been thoroughly discussed in the Queensland parliament Knutsford did not think the British parliament would favourably consider separation. Nevertheless, he stressed that he did not mean that separation could not be effected unless an absolute majority of the Queensland Assembly supported it, as there might be reasons justifying separation even if such a majority could not be obtained. He advised the deputation to submit a comprehensive scheme

---

97. *The Times*, 11 December 1890.

98. See *TH*, 8 November 1890.

99. See Finch-Hatton to Knutsford 17 December 1890, CO 881/9, Australian No. 145, pp. 117-118. Referring to Macrossan's threat of secession in parliament in November 1890 Finch-Hatton warned the Secretary of State that the situation in north Queensland was critical and that any further delay in granting northern demands in a constitutional manner would lead to embitterment against both the south and the Imperial government, which might be an obstacle to federation of Australia or of the British Empire, or might ultimately provoke secession and an outbreak of violence. Finch-Hatton to Knutsford 26 January 1891, *ibid.*, pp. 224-225.



for separation, dealing especially with the public debt.<sup>100</sup>

Knutsford was not so reticent about expressing an opinion in his irregular personal correspondence with Griffith. In March 1891 he frankly admitted that personally he was "in favour of your proposals, subject perhaps to a few modifications" and was "glad to learn that there seemed to be an increased feeling in favour of your scheme"; however he added that if Griffith's plan fell through, he "did not see how the S of State could ignore the strong feeling for separation of the North".<sup>101</sup> Knutsford reaffirmed this opinion in June 1891.<sup>102</sup> Sir Robert Herbert was still anxious to avert separation. Conceding that Norman was undoubtedly correct in thinking that a considerable majority of northerners favoured separation, he believed that they might be satisfied by some alternative remedial measure.<sup>103</sup> Until his retirement in 1892 Herbert ardently supported Griffith's proposal.<sup>104</sup> Sir Henry Norman also supported the scheme.<sup>105</sup>

Griffith's scheme was perfectly tailored to suit the Colonial Office. It avoided most of the difficulties associated with the public debt, though perhaps not as completely as Griffith claimed;<sup>106</sup> it put no obstacle in the path, but rather eased the way to federation;<sup>107</sup> and, foremost among its qualities, it appeared to make possible a local solution of the problem, relieving the Colonial Office of the need to interfere.<sup>108</sup> Separationists were therefore advised in March 1891 that

- 
100. *The Times*, 20 December 1890. *Post* 18 December 1890, enclosed with QSA COL/113, No. 00881.
101. Knutsford to Griffith 13 March 1891, Griffith Papers, MSQ 187, pp. 838-839. Knutsford also explained his position to W.H. Wilson, M.L.C., minister without portfolio, when he visited London in early 1891.
102. Knutsford to Griffith 2 June 1891, Griffith Papers, MSQ 188, pp. 87-88 - "I sincerely hope the Government proposals may, with some modification if necessary, be accepted."
103. Herbert, minute 4 July 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO 234/51.
104. E.g., Herbert, minute 10 December 1890, on despatch No. 159, CO 234/51; Herbert, minute 2 January 1891, on despatch No. 185, CO 234/51.
105. Norman to Ripon 10 October 1892, Ripon Papers Vol. 70, British Library Manuscripts, Add. 43560. Extract from Norman to Knutsford 6 January 1892, enclosed with the above.
106. Anderson, minute 9 August 1892, on despatch No. 92, CO 234/53. Cf., Mercer, minute 16 September 1892, on despatch No. 119, CO 234/53.
107. Mercer, minute 31 December 1890, on despatch No. 185, CO 234/51.
108. Knutsford to Norman 21 March 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1189.

since Griffith's proposals "would, if adopted, secure most of the principal objects which it is desired to attain through territorial separation, without raising certain serious complications incidental to separation", Lord Knutsford did not feel justified in proceeding with either northern or central schemes for separation.<sup>109</sup>

Griffith's proposal was the greatest impediment to separationists' progress in London during the early 1890s, but not the only one. A major reason for the reluctance of the Colonial Office to introduce enabling legislation in the British parliament was that opposition was expected on the ground that separation would impair the security of holders of Queensland government bonds by dividing the revenue and assets on which the bonds had been issued.<sup>110</sup> Herbert emphasized this difficulty in 1890, when it seemed likely that enabling legislation would be introduced in the next session: "'The City' may be expected to resist vigorously the weakening of the Queensland securities which would result from any Separation...." <sup>111</sup>

Lord Normanby had raised this objection to separation as early as 1872.<sup>112</sup> Griffith had taken it up in his memorandum on the separation petition in 1887. He assumed that since it was impracticable to allocate some debentures and stock to one colony and some to the other, the debt would be divided, and the new colony would become liable to Queensland for the annual interest payable on its share. This arrangement, he observed, had a number of disadvantages from Queensland's point of view: it did not deal with the difficult matter of organizing repayment of the principal when it fell due; by accepting it, Queensland would incur the risk of the new colony's defaulting in its payments; if at any time the new colony was unable to meet its liabilities, the finances of both colonies might be thrown into confusion; the credit of Queensland and the value of its securities would no longer depend solely on its own government, but would be affected by the policies of a government over which it had no control; furthermore, the value of the securities of both colonies could be expected to fall when

---

109. *Ibid.*

110. Herbert, minute 4 July 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO 234/51.  
Fuller, minute 11 July 1890, on despatch No. 67, CO 234/51.

111. Herbert, minute 27 August 1890, on Norman's telegram 19 August 1890, CO 234/51.

112. Normanby's reply to deputation of Kennedy Provincial Association, *PDE*, 7 October 1872.

separation took place. Pressing the argument, Griffith suggested that if the British parliament overruled the Queensland government and granted separation, it should undertake to indemnify Queensland against any financially injurious results.<sup>113</sup>

Like Morehead, his successor, Griffith stressed that the size of Queensland's debt and its attendant problems were critical points distinguishing the separation of Victoria and Queensland from the proposed northern separation.<sup>114</sup> In 1859 the New South Wales public debt had stood at £3,500,000,<sup>115</sup> a relatively insignificant obligation compared to Queensland's debt of nearly £21,000,000 in 1887.<sup>116</sup> Griffith's concern about the debt was shared by Sir Anthony Musgrave, who considered the obstacle insuperable.<sup>117</sup>

That this problem was likely to hamper the separation movement was first demonstrated in 1886 when Dr Ahearne, trying to arouse sympathy for the movement among influential people in London, encountered resistance in financial circles. Unprepared to refute their protests that separation would endanger the security of investors in Queensland bonds, Ahearne implored William Coote to furnish some means of reassurance. In reply he received a legalistic solution to 'the problem which became <sup>the</sup> separationists' standard answer to this objection.<sup>118</sup>

Separationists relied again on Imperial statute: an Imperial act had been passed in 1861 in an attempt to settle the argument between New South Wales and Queensland over apportioning the public debt of New South Wales, a dispute which was in fact never resolved. The act provided for the debt to be apportioned between any new colony and its parent colony by a Commission of three, one appointed by each colony and the third by the Secretary of State.<sup>119</sup> Northern

113. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 425.

114. *Ibid.*

115. Morehead to Norman 22 May 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1160.

116. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 425. In fact the debt had been a considerable problem in the separation of Queensland, and an obstacle to the separation of the northern rivers district from New South Wales in the 1860s. Knox, " 'Care is more important than haste' ", pp. 64-83; Lang's speech at Grafton 22 October 1865, in Lang, *Separation of Northern Districts*.

117. Musgrave to Knutsford 20 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 420.

118. *TH*, 22 April 1891.

119. 24 & 25 Vic., c. 44, s. 6 (1861).

separationists also contended that the same act adequately safeguarded public creditors, confirming their claims to the revenues of the whole area of Queensland at the time bonds were issued, regardless of any subsequent form of administration: the act provided that in the event of a separation the new colony and its parent would be held jointly and severally liable for the public debt incurred by the parent colony before their division.<sup>120</sup> Separationists argued further that separation would promote economic development in both colonies, thereby enhancing the value of the bondholders' investment. Such reassurances apparently mollified a number of London financiers<sup>121</sup> - but not the Secretary of State: no doubt the inability of New South Wales and Queensland to reach a settlement despite the Imperial enactment contributed to his qualms.<sup>122</sup>

Though raised occasionally during the early phases of the agitation, the bondholder problem became more prominent in the 1890s. During the period 1884-90 the Queensland government borrowed ten million pounds on the London money market, bringing the colony's total indebtedness to £28,105,684 at the end of 1890;<sup>123</sup> the annual interest payments amounted to nearly £1,140,000.<sup>124</sup> This debt was unusually large even among the Australian colonies which were notorious for their high rate of borrowing.<sup>125</sup> Public and parliamentary opinion on separation could not fail to be affected by these financial considerations, especially after the economic crisis of 1893, as Bramston noted:

In the present financial conditions of Australia the public creditor will object to any form of Separation and he would have some weight with the House of Commons with which the decision must rest.<sup>126</sup>

Probably another reason for heightened anxiety after 1890 was the

120. *Ibid.*

121. Finch-Hatton to Knutsford 17 December 1890, CO 881/9, Australian No. 145, pp. 116-117. Finch-Hatton informed the Colonial Office that representatives of the Bank of England, Queensland National Bank, Bank of New South Wales, and a firm of colonial brokers were convinced that the security of bondholders would not be injured.

122. Cf., *The Times*, 8 December 1890.

123. Griffith to Norman 13 November 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1173.

124. Morehead to Norman 22 May 1890, *ibid.*, p. 1159.

125. Anderson, minute 9 August 1892, on despatch No. 92, CO 234/53. See Appendix 9.

126. Bramston, minute 31 May 1893, on Agent-General 29 May 1893, CO 234/58.

initiation of the central Queensland movement, for a tripartite division would have been even more alarming for bondholders.<sup>127</sup>

Consequently the Secretary of State gave the issue increasing emphasis in his interviews with separationists. In December 1890 he urged a northern delegation to formulate a scheme to guarantee protection for bondholders; he repeated the request in March 1891.<sup>128</sup> However it was the central separationists, given the same advice in 1890, who took the initiative, as they were to do so often in succeeding years. With the assistance of William Coote, who was at this time disaffected from the Townsville League, they drafted an enabling bill which relied principally on the provisions of the 1861 act but included interim arrangements pending the Commission's final apportionment of the debt; additional provisions covered default on interest payments by either colony.<sup>129</sup> In May 1892 Knutsford told a central delegation that he was not satisfied with these provisions. He suggested that it might be necessary for the Queensland parliament to pass legislation, assuming ultimate liability for the whole debt, similar to that enacted by the parliament of New South Wales to allow Queensland's separation;<sup>130</sup> he did not say how the Queensland government might be persuaded to do this.<sup>131</sup>

Along with moves in Australia towards federation, the growth of the central movement was another factor complicating northern separationists' dealings with the Colonial Office in the 1890s. Popular legend in north Queensland has always blamed the central movement for the failure of the northern campaign.<sup>132</sup> It is an exaggerated claim, but this development was certainly a source of confusion at the Colonial Office: the comments of some officials showed lack of understanding of the relationship between the two movements.<sup>133</sup> For instance,

---

127. See report of central Queensland deputation, *The Times*, 20 December 1890.

128. Knutsford to Norman 21 March 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1189.

129. Draft Bill for Separation of Central Queensland, enclosed with Archer and Ferguson 14 April 1892, CO 234/55.

130. Extract from *The Times*, 7 May 1892, enclosed with Garrick to Griffith 13 May 1892, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, pp. 504-505.

131. In fact Knutsford was mistaken; although proposed, no Debt Bill was introduced into either the New South Wales or British parliaments. Knox, " 'Care is more important than haste' ", pp. 65-77.

132. See *Cummins & Campbell's Monthly Magazine*, 1 June 1936, p. 23.

133. Herbert, minute 12 November 1890, on Norman's telegram 12 November 1890, CO 234/51.

the central movement was regarded at first as an offshoot of the northern, and the territory proposed to be formed into the new colony of central Queensland was thought to be part of the area claimed by the northern movement.<sup>134</sup> Lord Knutsford made this mistake when interviewing the northern deputation in 1890: he depreciated the value of the 1886 petition, remarking that many of its signatories had now put their names to the central petition.<sup>135</sup> Central separatist agitation also allowed him to minimize the stronger showing made by separationists in divisions in the Legislative Assembly after 1890.<sup>136</sup> In the later 1890s, on the other hand, it is certain that the inactivity of the northern movement hampered the efforts of central separationists, whose case virtually presupposed northern separation: while northern separationists declined to press their claim, their inaction gave the Colonial Office a reason to avoid a decision.<sup>137</sup>

The rise of the Labour Party to political prominence had a similar effect, for the Colonial Office put no store in the parliamentary support which Labour members gave separation, interpreting this as merely a vote against the government rather than a positive commitment to dividing the colony.<sup>138</sup> However, there is no evidence that the Colonial Office was deterred from separation by the possibility that the Labour Party would be dominant in the new colony. Sir Henry Norman's spectre of a socialistic Labour Party,<sup>139</sup> "pledged to very extreme measures"<sup>140</sup> at the head of the new colony<sup>141</sup> seems to have held no dread for British officials; McIlwraith's fears of a socialistic onslaught against the rights of property in central and northern Queensland<sup>142</sup> evoked no sympathy.<sup>143</sup>

---

134. Mercer, minute 5 June 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO 234/51.

135. Report of deputation, *The Times*, 11 December 1890.

136. Report of deputation, *TH*, 31 January 1891.

137. See Norman confidential 21 February 1894, CO 234/59; Norman confidential 1 March 1894, CO 234/59; Lamington 10 June 1896, despatch No. 45, CO 234/63; Lamington 2 January 1899, despatch No. 1, CO 234/68.

138. Mercer, minute 17 October 1893, on secret despatch 5 September 1893, CO 234/57.

139. Norman secret 29 October 1895, CO 234/62.

140. Norman's telegram 30 January 1893, CO 234/56.

141. Norman confidential 24 January 1894, CO 234/59.

142. McIlwraith to Garrick 14 September 1893, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 515.

143. See Mercer, minute 25 October 1893, and Bramston, minute 26 October 1893, on despatch No. 164, CO 234/57.

Lord Knutsford's statements in 1890-91 made many northern separationists more receptive to Griffith's proposals. The point had been clearly made that activity in London would be unproductive until the Queensland parliament dealt with the scheme. Disappointed by repeated rebuffs from the Secretary of State, some began to see Griffith's scheme as a viable alternative to separation. Moreover, during his northern tour Griffith had impressed many with his confidence that the scheme would be passed in the next session, which seemed preferable to waiting an indefinite period for separation.<sup>144</sup>

The outcome of the northern deputation to the Colonial Office also produced a change of opinion among northern members. In February 1891, in reply to a suggestion from the Townsville Committee that he go to London as a delegate, Macrossan intimated that after carefully reading a report of the previous interview and letters from Finch-Hatton he had reached the conclusion that further delegations to England would be futile until Griffith's scheme had been discussed in parliament:

upon one point [Lord Knutsford] had apparently made his mind up - that is, that the Premier of Queensland's inter-state proposals must be considered and disposed of before the question of separation could be entertained.... Our best policy, I believe, is to get Sir S.W. Griffith to make certain alterations in the proposals which are desirable from a Northern point of view, and give him all the assistance we can in Parliament in trying to pass them. Should he fail to pass them, even with the assistance which we can give him, we would then be in a good position to approach the home authorities with a reasonable chance of success in our demand for separation.<sup>145</sup>

This was Macrossan's last advice to the Townsville Committee, as he died in March while attending the Federal Convention in Sydney.

Gradually other northern members adopted a similar position.<sup>146</sup> D.H. Dalrymple, for instance, believed that the proposals would have to be dealt with before Knutsford would act, and advocated a northern alliance to make the scheme as liberal as possible. He considered the proposals quite conciliatory as they stood, but objected to the power of the United Provinces to deal with immigration and to take railway revenue and customs duties; it also ought to be stipulated that each province would send equal numbers of representatives to the Upper House

---

144. *TH*, 3 January, 14, 21 February, 18 March 1891.

145. Macrossan to Parkes 26 February 1891, *QPD*, Vol. 65, 1891, p. 1074.

146. See Lissner's and Smith's comments at banquet given to Griffith in Townsville, *TH*, 3 January 1891.

of the United Provinces.<sup>147</sup> R.H. Smith, whose Bowen electorate was deeply divided over separation, welcomed the new scheme which he publicly declared to be tantamount to separation.<sup>148</sup>

In July 1891 at the beginning of the parliamentary session a meeting in Brisbane of northern representatives, including Corfield, Smith, Brown,<sup>149</sup> Lissner, Cowley, Philp, Goldring, Sayers, Hodgkinson, Dalrymple, Little and Black, formed a Committee of Northern Members, with Black as chairman. The meeting unanimously decided, to Griffith's surprise,<sup>150</sup> to accept the proposals in principle.<sup>151</sup> A meeting of central members also decided that the scheme should receive the most favourable consideration, although because alterations in the proposals since the previous session had not been made public they refused to pledge themselves to unconditional support.<sup>152</sup>

Griffith re-introduced his resolutions in mid-September 1891, moving that they be considered in committee. The resolutions were basically the same as those submitted at the close of the previous session, with only slight amendments, mainly in phraseology, to bring them into conformity with resolutions adopted by the Federal Convention in Sydney in March-April 1891. Griffith's one reservation about his scheme as formulated in 1890 concerned the proposal to allow provinces to set their own tariffs; he considered that since negotiations in Sydney had removed many of the obstacles in the way of an Australian customs union with a uniform tariff, it would be unwise to allow separate tariffs within each province in Queensland.<sup>153</sup> He explained

---

147. Report of public meeting, *MM*, 7 March 1891.

148. *BO*, 2 June 1891.

149. W.V. Brown had been returned as a proposalist at a by-election in Townsville in May, following Macrossan's death. For a discussion of the election, see Doran, *Separatism in Townsville*, pp. 113-114.

150. Griffith to Lady Musgrave 11 October 1891, Musgrave Papers.

151. Black to Griffith 15 July 1891, Griffith Papers, MSQ188, pp. 121-123.

152. Archer to Griffith 22 July 1891, *ibid.*, pp. 129-131.

153. On 31 March 1891 Griffith, as Chairman of the Committee of Constitutional Machinery, had submitted to the Convention a draft "Bill to Constitute the Commonwealth of Australia", which was finally adopted on 9 April. Chapter V of the bill provided that states were not to levy import or export duties, except such as were necessary for executing the inspection laws of a state, and the net revenue of all taxes and duties imposed by a state on imports and exports would be for the use of the Commonwealth. S.W. Griffith, *National Australasian Convention: Draft of a Bill to Constitute the Commonwealth of Australia* (ed. by G.B. Barton) 1891, p. 8, p. 65. J.O.L.



that he had not altered the resolutions in this respect because this might have given the appearance that the government was not adhering to its pledges to bring in the scheme, but he expected the issue to come up when the resolutions went into committee.<sup>154</sup>

Northern members supported Griffith's motion because, as Black explained, reports from England of Knutsford's reply to the northern delegation had shown that the resolutions would have to be fairly considered.<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless the scheme encountered strong resistance from the opposition;<sup>156</sup> although the House agreed to consider the scheme in committee,<sup>157</sup> the first resolution was eventually rejected after long debate, 33 votes to 28,<sup>158</sup> despite Griffith's warning that if the Queensland parliament refused to deal with the matter it would pass into the hands of the Imperial authorities.<sup>159</sup> Because the other resolutions depended upon the first, Griffith withdrew the proposals.<sup>160</sup>

Explaining the defeat to the Governor, Griffith stressed that it owed a good deal to the inclusion of the central province, and hinted at a bi-provincial scheme:

I have strong reasons to think that the main ground of objection to the proposals which operated in the minds of the majority was the proposal to establish a Central Province. I infer from the debate, as well as from information freely given to me by members of all sides in the House, that if the proposals had been limited to the establishment of Northern and Southern provinces little opposition would have been made to them...I confidently anticipate that notwithstanding the temporary defeat of the proposals, the principles embodied in them will be found to prove an acceptable and satisfactory solution of the difficulties attending the agitation for Territorial Separation.<sup>161</sup>

Hume Black decided against yielding to pressure from the Townsville

---

154. *QPD*, Vol. 64, 1891, pp. 1047-1052.

155. *QPD*, Vol. 65, 1891, p. 1062.

156. E.g., Nelson, *ibid.*, pp. 1058-1059; Morehead, *ibid.*, pp. 1059-1061; Powers, *ibid.*, pp. 1075-1077; Donaldson, *ibid.*, pp. 1079-1081.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 1126.

158. *Ibid.*, p. 1796.

159. *Ibid.*, p. 1751.

160. Griffith to Norman 29 October 1891, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 501.

161. Griffith to Norman 25 November 1891, *ibid.*, pp. 501-502. See e.g., Hyne, *QPD*, Vol. 65, 1891, p. 1061; Morehead, *ibid.*, p. 1060; Macfarlane, *ibid.*, p. 1066.

League Committee to introduce a separation motion following the rejection of the scheme because he expected Griffith to meet it with an amendment for a two-province scheme; this would have split the Committee of Northern Members and ended the alliance with central members.<sup>162</sup> Nor did the Townsville Committee proceed with plans for a delegation to the Colonial Office, because several northern members indicated that they intended to support a bi-provincial scheme if, as they expected, Griffith introduced it in the following session; in the circumstances the Committee expected, correctly, that an approach to Lord Knutsford would be useless.<sup>163</sup>

Sir Henry Norman informed the Secretary of State privately that the scheme would have been passed without the inclusion of a central division and advised that a decision on separation should be postponed:

Though I am not disposed to admit that the Southern members should be able to prevent Northern and Central Separation for all time I think at present it would be unwise for Her Majesty's Government to take any action in the matter in opposition to a deliberate decision of the Queensland Parliament.<sup>164</sup>

Lord Knutsford, regretting that the scheme which he considered "a most fair and reasonable solution of the difficulty" had been rejected, reached the same conclusion as Griffith after studying the debates: "if you had confined the scheme to the North, you might have fairly hoped to carry it", he advised Griffith in what he regarded as a semi-official letter,<sup>165</sup> implying that the Colonial Office would be satisfied with a bi-provincial arrangement. In May he reassured Griffith privately: "You know how heartily I uphold your view of Provincial Legislatures, but a united Queensland, against territorial separation", and discussed Imperial measures which would be necessary to put into effect Griffith's Constitution Bill, based on the

162. Black to Townsville Committee 14 November 1891, report of committee meeting, *NQH*, 9 December 1891. *Ibid.*, 16 December 1891. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 4 May 1892.

163. Report of committee meeting, *NQH*, 9 December 1891. *Ibid.*, 6 January, 2 March 1892.

164. Extract from Norman to Knutsford 6 January 1892, enclosed with Norman to Ripon 10 October 1892, Ripon Papers Vol. 70, British Library Manuscripts, Add. 43560.

165. Knutsford to Griffith 13 February 1892, Griffith Papers, MSQ 188, pp. 240-242.

resolutions, a draft of which he had been sent.<sup>166</sup> Even years after he left the Colonial Office as a result of Gladstone's victory at the polls in August 1892, Knutsford retained his interest in the subdivision of Queensland, favouring a solution along the lines of Griffith's scheme.<sup>167</sup>

Consequently when a central Queensland deputation approached the Secretary of State in May 1892 they were advised that the time was still "not ripe" for decision by Her Majesty's Government. Nevertheless Knutsford clearly stated, as a personal opinion, that consideration of separation would not be postponed indefinitely:

I am not prepared to say that after it has been brought forward twice, and then been thrown out by the votes of the Southern members...that that process may be continued from year to year. I should say myself that, when that measure has been thoroughly discussed in two sessions of the Queensland parliament, the time would have arrived when Her Majesty's Government and the Parliament of this country will not desire to, and would not, delay proceedings until after the Bill had been brought in again....I do not think that legislation by the Imperial Parliament would be delayed after this measure had been thoroughly threshed out twice over by the Queensland Parliament.<sup>168</sup>

Perhaps Knutsford intended to shake the complacency of southern members.<sup>169</sup> Certainly the *Brisbane Courier*, which had previously opposed considering Griffith's plan, warned after receiving news of the interview that the scheme would have to be accepted or separation would be granted.<sup>170</sup> Knutsford's remarks buoyed up northern separationists, who took them as the basis for their approach to the Colonial Office after Griffith's scheme was finally rejected; but by that time Lord Knutsford had been replaced by a new Secretary of State who could not be bound by the words of his predecessor.

Debate on the second reading of Griffith's Queensland Constitution Bill, embodying the provincial scheme, began in July 1892. Griffith

166. Knutsford to Griffith 31 May 1892, *ibid.*, pp. 341-343. Cf., report of deputation, extract from *The Times*, 7 May 1892, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 505.

167. Knutsford to Griffith 12 August 1896, Griffith Papers, MSQ 189, pp. 180-181.

168. Report of deputation, extract from *The Times*, 7 May 1892, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 504.

169. See *ibid.*, p. 505.

170. *BC*, 30 May 1892.

explained that the bill had been framed largely on the basis of the Commonwealth Bill adopted by the Federal Convention at Sydney; since the Convention had moved towards a common tariff for all Australia, the Constitution Bill, contrary to promises of separate tariffs given in 1890, provided for one tariff for the whole of Queensland.<sup>171</sup>

Griffith was not without hope that if the federation within Queensland was established, neighbouring parts of Australia might join it when the beneficial effects of the system were shown;<sup>172</sup> this would have earned him personal kudos as the founder of Australian federation. He stressed that a vote for the bill would be, in effect, a vote against territorial separation:

the movement for local autonomy has so far progressed now that, unless this Parliament will move, the Parliament of Great Britain, which has a controlling authority over us, will certainly be invited to move. There is no doubt of that. We have to choose between two alternatives. Either we must rise to the occasion ourselves and deal with the matter fairly, and honestly endeavouring to do the best for all parts of the colony...or else we shall have the matter taken out of our hands by the Imperial Legislature, and they will do what they think best under the circumstances.<sup>173</sup>

Northern members spoke in favour of the bill for varying reasons. Black said that although he preferred territorial separation, he would accept the scheme because there were obstacles in the way of separation; if it were passed, which he considered very unlikely, it would be merely a stepping-stone to separation, which he envisaged as one of the first issues discussed in any northern provincial parliament.<sup>174</sup> R.H. Smith, on the other hand, thought separation would be impossible after the provincial system was established.<sup>175</sup> E. Palmer of Carpentaria and J. Hamilton supported the bill, but like Black saw it leading to territorial separation;<sup>176</sup> Palmer raised the possibility of another province in north-western Queensland.<sup>177</sup> A.S. Cowley, in contrast, saw the scheme as a final solution to the difficulties between north and

171. *QPD*, Vol. 67, 1892, p. 791.

172. *Ibid.*, p. 793. Cf., McIlwraith, *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 933.

173. *QPD*, Vol. 67, 1892, p. 788.

174. *Ibid.*, pp. 846-847.

175. *Ibid.*, p. 908.

176. Palmer, *ibid.*, p. 861; Hamilton, *ibid.*, p. 878.

177. *Ibid.*, p. 861.

south; like Lissner, he was convinced that the Imperial government would not intervene to grant separation.<sup>178</sup> Philp also supported the scheme as a fair compromise that would eliminate an agitation which had disturbed the colony for over a decade, and that at the same time would avoid the destructive tariff war which must surely follow separation.<sup>179</sup>

When J. Donaldson (Bulloo) moved an amendment that the time was not opportune for dividing the colony into provinces,<sup>180</sup> Griffith took it as a censure upon the government and threatened to resign if the second reading failed to pass;<sup>181</sup> he reiterated that a vote against the scheme would promote the cause of territorial separation.<sup>182</sup> As in 1891, it became apparent during debate that many members, though supporting a northern province, did not believe that central Queensland had presented an equal case for autonomy.<sup>183</sup> Referring to this trend of opinion, Griffith observed that

if this were simply a question between Northern and Southern Queensland, and giving the North autonomy and the South autonomy to mind their own affairs, there is a very small minority who would dissent from the proposal.<sup>184</sup>

He said that although he thought three provinces preferable, two provinces would still be better than the existing system, and infinitely better than territorial separation. Stressing that he did not consider the tri-provincial arrangement essential to the scheme, and that the government was willing to accept any modification of the bill which did not touch its basic principle, Griffith virtually invited members to move an amendment to omit the central province.<sup>185</sup>

Accordingly, after Donaldson withdrew his amendment, A.H. Barlow (Ipswich) moved an amendment "that this House approves of the division

---

178. Cowley, *ibid.*, pp. 852-853; Lissner, *ibid.*, p. 881.

179. *Ibid.*, p. 878.

180. *Ibid.*, p. 885.

181. *Ibid.*, p. 901.

182. *Ibid.*, p. 895, p. 897.

183. E.g., Nelson (Murilla), *ibid.*, p. 842; McIlwraith, *ibid.*, p. 843; Morehead, *ibid.*, p. 845; Rutledge, *ibid.*, p. 857; Palmer, *ibid.*, p. 861; Hyne (Maryborough), *ibid.*, p. 861; Foxton (Carnarvon), *ibid.*, p. 872.

184. *Ibid.*, p. 896.

185. *Ibid.*, p. 897.

of the colony into two provinces on the basis of this Bill".<sup>186</sup> D.H. Dalrymple objected that if there were only two provinces the north would be outvoted by the south in the Lower House and would have only equal representation in the Upper House.<sup>187</sup> C. Powers of Burrum, on the other hand, predicted a deadlock in the Senate which, he warned, would precipitate territorial separation.<sup>188</sup> The amendment was carried, however, by 34 votes to 22, the ministry, northern members (except Hoolan, Palmer, Rutledge and Sayers) and central members voting against it;<sup>189</sup> when the amendment was made a substantive motion, the ministry and northern members (except Hoolan) voted in the affirmative. After this was carried by 38 votes to 19, Griffith withdrew the bill for redrafting.<sup>190</sup> Central members bitterly resented their district's exclusion from the scheme, harbouring for some time a sense of betrayal both by Griffith's government and their supposed northern allies.<sup>191</sup> The parliamentary alliance between northern and central members was split.

Griffith gave every appearance of being fully committed to a self-governing province in the north. He informed the Governor that he was confident of a large majority for the measure. He added that although the case for northern autonomy was stronger and more thoroughly aired, a central province could readily be created at a future date.<sup>192</sup>

In August 1892 Griffith brought down Constitution Bill No. 2 providing for two provinces. Black acidly remarked that this bill was "a still better stepping-stone";<sup>193</sup> John Hamilton concurred.<sup>194</sup> Despite opposition and poor attendance, Griffith protectively steered the bill through its second reading<sup>195</sup> and through committee. In committee

186. *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 914.

187. *Ibid.*, p. 930.

188. *Ibid.*, p. 931. Cf., W. Brookes in Legislative Council, *LCD*, Vol. 66, 1892, p. 182.

189. *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 932.

190. *Ibid.*, p. 934.

191. Executive of Central Queensland League to Ripon 17 December 1892, *QV&P*, 1893, Vol. 3, p. 1032. Buzacott to McIlwraith 7 August 1892, McIlwraith Papers, p. 2625.

192. Griffith to Norman 24 August 1892, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1. p. 507.

193. *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 1217.

194. *Ibid.*, p. 1245.

195. *Ibid.*, p. 1246. The vote was 32 to 8, Black alone among northern members voting against it.

northerners secured for the northern province equal representation in the Senate and one member in the House of Representatives for every 8,000 people, while the southern province was allotted only one seat for every 10,000 people;<sup>196</sup> even so, the north would send only nine members, compared to the south's 32, to the Lower House. On the other hand, Griffith succeeded in adding an unpopular new clause: all land rents, one-third of the gross earnings of railways the cost of which formed part of the debt of the United Provinces, and such other moneys as were prescribed by the United Provinces, were to be paid into the Treasury of the United Provinces.<sup>197</sup>

In committee Philp moved an amendment that the southern boundary of the northern province be shifted from the 21st parallel south to the 23rd parallel,<sup>198</sup> so as to include the Winton and Boulia districts which since 1887 had expressed a desire to join a northern colony or province,<sup>199</sup> as well as Mackay's back-country of Nebo, Fort Cooper, Oxford Downs, Lake Elphinstone and Mount Britton.<sup>200</sup> Griffith and McIlwraith argued that this alteration was unnecessary because the scheme did not propose to obstruct trade between provinces by customs barriers or otherwise.<sup>201</sup> Telegrams in favour of the amendment were received from Townsville and Mackay, but central towns vehemently opposed the suggestion,<sup>202</sup> central members regarding it as further proof of the perfidy of their former northern allies.<sup>203</sup> The amendment was rejected 28 to 9, six northerners supporting it, two opposing it.<sup>204</sup>

The Premier threatened resignation of the ministry if the bill was not passed. On his own admission, he "forced it through the

196. *Ibid.*, p. 1448.

197. *Ibid.*, pp. 1496-1503. Six northern members voted against this amendment, Cowley, Rutledge and Smith supporting it. Cf., A.J. Thynne, *LCD*, Vol. 66, 1892, p. 179; W. Forrest, *ibid.*, p. 178.

198. *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 1513.

199. Corfield, *ibid.*, pp. 1509-1510.

200. Black, *ibid.*, pp. 1513-1514.

201. Griffith, *ibid.*, p. 1508; McIlwraith, *ibid.*, p. 1510.

202. Telegrams from Mackay, Townsville, St Lawrence, Westwood, Tambo, Rockhampton and Mount Morgan, QSA COL/A712, No. 12309.

203. Callan (Fitzroy), *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 1511; Stevenson (Clermont), *ibid.*, pp. 1512-1513. Cf., H.C. Goffays to Griffith 10 October 1892, QSA COL/A712, No. 12309.

204. *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 1514. Hodgkinson and Cowley opposed it as members of the ministry.

Assembly".<sup>205</sup> Black criticized Griffith's aggressive attitude in committee:

if any hon. member differed from the Chief Secretary that hon. gentleman became petulant, and made remarks which he should not expect from a gentleman in his position. If he got up to speak at all on the Bill, the hon. gentleman said he wanted to wreck it.<sup>206</sup>

Most other participants in the debate were indifferent: "A totalisator bill", said the *Brisbane Courier*, "or a vote of £100 to an incapacitated civil servant, would have provoked a far more earnest discussion than was excited by the Constitution Bill".<sup>207</sup> Many members, fearing a dissolution, absented themselves from the House rather than vote against the measure. The final reading was eventually carried on 30 October 1892 in a thin House, by 30 votes to 13, 29 members being absent.<sup>208</sup>

however the bill was rejected by the Legislative Council, 17-9,<sup>209</sup> principally on the ground that as it proposed to alter the constitution of the Legislative Council it should have been passed in the Assembly by two-thirds of its members, as required by the Constitution Act of 1867, before being presented to the Upper House.<sup>210</sup> William Aplin, John Deane, and Hugh Mosman, the three Council members from northern Queensland, were absent during the debate. As several members of the Council observed, accepting Griffith's scheme would have meant suicide for the upper chamber.<sup>211</sup>

205. Griffith to Lady Musgrave 28 November 1892, Musgrave Papers. Cf., Griffith to Norman 24 November 1892, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 513.

206. *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 1498.

207. Quoted by Stephens, *Why Separation*, p. 22.

208. *QPD*, Vol. 68, 1892, p. 1553. Black and Sayers voted against it; Hodgkinson, Cowley, Dalrymple, Little, Smith, Philp, Wimble, Lissner and Corfield voted in favour.

209. *LCD*, Vol. 66, 1892, p. 188.

210. A.C. Gregory, *ibid.*, p. 168; F. Clewett, *ibid.*, pp. 170-171; T.L. Murray-Prior, *ibid.*, p. 173; P. Macpherson, *ibid.*, pp. 174-175; W. Forrest, *ibid.*, p. 176; A.J. Thynne, *ibid.*, pp. 178-179; W. Brookes, *ibid.*, p. 182; W.F. Lambert, *ibid.*, p. 183; J.D. Macansh, *ibid.*, p. 186. There was a difference of opinion at the Colonial Office about whether the Council's objection was sound, and it was suggested that the question should be referred to the Law Officers, but the final decision was not to interfere. See Mercer, minute 1 December 1892, Pennell, minute 1 December 1892, Bramston, minute 23 December 1892, on despatch No. 189, CO 234/54.

211. Gregory, *LCD*, Vol. 66, 1892, p. 169; J.T. Smith, *ibid.*, p. 172; Murray-Prior, *ibid.*, p. 174; Macpherson, *ibid.*, p. 175.



After the bill's defeat in the Legislative Council, Griffith immediately cabled the new Secretary of State, Lord Ripon, that the Queensland government would re-introduce it in the first session of the next parliament, following the general elections scheduled for May 1893. This caused widespread surprise as it was assumed that Griffith intended to accept the Chief Justiceship.<sup>212</sup> How could he, asked Philp, enter into commitments on behalf of a government of which he would not be a member?<sup>213</sup> Griffith's private correspondence, however, suggests that he genuinely believed that after the general election he could succeed in getting the bill passed.<sup>214</sup>

Meanwhile a revival of the separation movement was underway in Townsville. Griffith's provincial proposals had seriously undermined the movement; after the election of a "proposalist", W.V. Brown, in 1891, the Townsville Committee had seriously considered its own dissolution.<sup>215</sup> While parliament was considering Griffith's proposals there was little scope for committee activity; several members resigned because they supported Griffith's scheme, and attendance at meetings fell off markedly.<sup>216</sup> But the failure of the scheme to pass in the session of 1891, as Griffith had promised, caused some disillusionment.<sup>217</sup> A public lecture by William Coote in May 1892 inspired fresh interest in separation, new members began to join and from mid-1892 meetings were regularly held. A correspondence committee was formed to sound out opinion in other northern centres. Advantage was taken of the Conference of Northern Local Authorities in May 1892 to obtain a declaration from delegates that "nothing short of Territorial Separation will meet the requirements of the North".<sup>218</sup> In August the Mayor of Townsville and the chairman of the Thuringowa

---

212. After Sir Charles Lilley's resignation in 1892, the salary of the Chief Justice was increased so that Griffith could accept the position without financial embarrassment. Vockler, Griffith, pp. 282-286.

213. *TES*, 16 November 1892.

214. Griffith to Lady Musgrave 28 November 1892, Musgrave Papers.

215. *TH*, 15 April 1891.

216. *Ibid.*, 25 March 1891. *NQH*, 7 October, 9 December 1891.

217. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 4 May 1892. Cf., *ibid.*, 6, 13 April, 18 May, 29 June, 6 July 1892. Letters to the Editor, *ibid.*, 27 July 1892. Report of public meeting, *ibid.*, 10 August 1892.

218. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1892. Parkes to Norman 30 May 1892, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 505.

Divisional Board - both active separationists - telegraphed Philp that Townsville and district favoured territorial separation only, adding that if the provincial scheme was forced on the north it would be accepted only as a step towards separation and not as a final settlement.<sup>219</sup>

A further reason for the revival was Griffith's famous *volte-face* over the Pacific Island labour traffic. Faced with depression in the sugar industry and a general economic downturn in Queensland, with slow implementation of the central-mill system and failure of a government-sponsored experiment for importing Italian agriculturalists, Griffith in February 1892 persuaded the government to reverse the decision of 1885 and resume the Islander labour traffic.<sup>220</sup> The Townsville Committee were keenly aware that inaction at this time would be construed as proof that re-introducing coloured labour had satisfied separationists.<sup>221</sup> However, from this time, except during the electoral campaign in 1893, it was almost exclusively the Townsville Committee who conducted the movement; all other leagues, with the exception of that in Mackay, were dormant.

When Constitution Bill No. 2 was rejected the Committee stepped up its propaganda effort, distributing pamphlets and leaflets and sending a lecturer to major northern towns.<sup>222</sup> Griffith's scheme was denounced as a "last effort to bolster up Brisbane Supremacy" and delay separation,<sup>223</sup> and northern representatives were criticized for accepting it.<sup>224</sup> Robert Philp, cognizant of the approaching elections, stated definitely that he and other northern members would not again support the bill.<sup>225</sup> However plans for an interview with the new Secretary of State, Lord Ripon, were scotched when W.V. Brown, then in London, informed the London Committee that the Constitution Bill would be reintroduced in the next session; for this interference Brown

219. *NQH*, 17 August 1892.

220. Mercer, *Attitudes Towards Melanesians*, pp. 192-212.

221. Report of committee meeting, *NQH*, 4 May 1892. Cf., Coote's letter to the Editor, *ibid.*, 20 April 1892.

222. *Ibid.*, 18, 25 January, 8 March 1892.

223. Stephens, *Why Separation*, p. 26. See also *ibid.*, pp. 22-25. *Herberton Advertiser*, 30 December 1892.

224. Stephens, *op. cit.*, p. 23. Coote's letters to the Editor, *NQH*, 6, 13 January, 10 February, 16 March 1892.

225. *TES*, 22 November 1892.

was condemned in Townsville.<sup>226</sup>

Ripon's answer to a central Queensland deputation in February 1893 was dispiriting. The Secretary of State stressed that it would be inconsistent with the respect due to the legislatures of self-governing colonies if on the eve of a general election, turning, he supposed, mainly on the separation issue, the Colonial Office were to decide the question; it would be improper, he said, for the British government to take independent action before knowing what course the new parliament intended to adopt in the next session. He added that he did not mean to imply that the British government would be exclusively guided by the course which the Queensland legislature chose to take, or that if southern members continued to refuse concessions the British government would refrain from taking any action it deemed necessary. Lord Ripon explained that nothing would be lost by the delay, for it would be impossible to carry a separation bill through the House of Commons with an election pending in the colony.<sup>227</sup>

During the election campaign the Townsville Committee unsuccessfully attempted to obtain pledges from candidates claiming to be separationists; in vain the Committee sought their commitment to press for separation and nothing short of it, to refuse office, and to form a compact northern separation party opposing any political party which refused to assist the movement.<sup>228</sup> The move both recognized the influence which northern parliamentary members had acquired in the

---

226. Doran, *Separatism in Townsville*, pp. 116-117. E.F. Sandeman to Philip 20 January 1893, Philip Papers, Series 1, p. 28. In London Brown had consulted Sir Robert Herbert, who had retired from the Colonial Office in early 1892, about the probable outcome of an interview with the Secretary of State. Herbert predicted, correctly, that the reply would not be favourable and that separationists would probably be told to wait for the general election. Acting on Herbert's advice, Brown told the London Committee that he would not attend a deputation; consequently the plan was abandoned. Report of Brown's speech in Townsville, *MM*, 18 April 1893.

227. Extract from *The Times*, 25 February 1893, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 514. Though commending Ripon's reply for its prudence, *The Times*, influenced by reports from its special correspondent in Queensland, Flora Shaw, was considerably more sympathetic towards separationists than previously, conceding that the case for separation was a strong one and remarking that "the division of the unwieldy territory has apparently become desirable, and is almost certainly inevitable." *The Times*, 27 February 1893. See Lugard, *Letters from Queensland*, pp. 93-110.

228. *TES*, 14 December 1892.

movement, and reflected growing dissatisfaction with their handling of the issue. The Townsville Committee actively campaigned for the return of separationists in northern constituencies, printing and distributing 2,500 pamphlets as well as leaflets in response to requests from local leagues.<sup>229</sup>

In 1893 north Queensland pastoral and mining districts returned seven Labour candidates, who were joined in the Assembly by nine Labour representatives from the south.<sup>230</sup> Anthony Ogden's success in a by-election in Townsville in January 1894, following the death of the sitting member, G.R. Burns, brought the northern Labour contingent to a total of eight out of sixteen northern members. Of these sixteen, only nine were avowed separationists, though none except John Hoolan had declared against the movement. Apart from Hoolan the only candidate who stood as an anti-separationist, W. Bonar in Woothakata, was at the bottom of the poll.<sup>231</sup> In Charters Towers W. Dawson and J. Dunsford had been instructed by the local branch of the Labour party to support both northern and central separation because a survey had shown that local opinion favoured the movements.<sup>232</sup>

Before the election, some Labour supporters had adopted separation after Griffith's manifesto on Pacific Island labour demonstrated that attachment to the south was no guarantee against imported coloured labour.<sup>233</sup> Labour's electoral success in the north made separation still more appealing. In August 1890 the first conference of the

---

229. Reports of committee meetings, *NQH*, 18 January, 8, 29 March 1893.

230. Supporters of the ministry, A.S. Cowley of Herbert, R.H. Smith (Bowen), D.H. Dalrymple (Mackay), J. Hamilton (Cook) and R. Philp (Townsville) were re-elected in their constituencies; J. Hoolan, a Labour member, was again returned in the Burke electorate. New northern Labour members were C. McDonald (Flinders), G. Jackson (Kennedy), W. Rawlings (Woothakata), W. Dawson and J. Dunsford (Charters Towers), and W.H. Browne (Croydon); the new ministerialists were T.J. Byrnes (Cairns), G. Phillips (Carpentaria), J.V. Chataway (Mackay), and G.R. Burns (Townsville). See Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, pp. 205-206.

231. Townsville Committee to Ripon 20 February 1894, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 537.

232. *Herberton Advertiser*, 27 January 1893. Dawson, *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 781. Dunsford said he had supported separation in 1890 when the Charters Towers poll was taken. Dunsford, *ibid.*, p. 784. However he had been involved, with Hoolan, in breaking up a separation meeting in Charters Towers in January 1887. *NM*, 31 January 1887.

233. Browne, *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 779; Dawson, *ibid.*, p. 781.

# NUTS FOR NORTHERN MINERS TO CRACK.

## £24,000,000

Sterling, was the value of the minerals produced in the North to the end of 1891. For the 25 years ending 31st December of that year, the Gold alone exported from Queensland was 7,722,167 ounces, equal in value to £27,032,584 Sterling. The North alone during the years 1890-1-2, yielded over a million ounces of Gold, valued at £3,484,599, the yield for the last of the three years being 370,586 ounces, value £1,297,051, or nearly equal to £16 per head of the total population. These are figures to conjure with. They show what a valuable factor the miner is in the progress and prosperity and development of this wonderful North—vast in area, rich beyond imagination in mineral deposits, and capable of illimitable expansion in success and material wealth.

But these figures also lead to the questions—What benefits does the miner enjoy for his valuable services to the Colony; and how is his continued connection with the South, and the control of his affairs by a Brisbane Government justified? Benefits, forsooth? Rather ask—what are his disabilities, and the gross impositions under which he labours?

The Colonial Treasurer estimates an increase to the year's revenue of £134,429 from the new tariff, and to secure this the miner is to be bled through the nose to a disgraceful extent. Candles are taxed 44% on cost price; Currants, 150%; Cheese, 66%; Condensed Milk, 50%; Coffee (raw), 33⅓%; Flour, 9%, or £1 per ton; Jams, 66⅔%; Kerosene, 120%; Oatmeal, 28%; Onions, 20%. These are but a few of the necessities of life on which heavy protective duties are levied. Then, men's boots are taxed 60 per cent. on cost price; Felt and Straw Hats, 25%; Moleskin Trousers, 25%; and Crimean Shirts, 25%. How do the miners relish this state of things at the *ipse dixit* of a Brisbane Government? Further injustice is wrought by the increase of duty on mining machinery from 15 to 25 per cent., and by the iniquitous tax of 25 per cent. on cyanide of potassium, so largely used in connection with gold-saving appliances. All round, indeed, the miners are shamefully pressed by Customs' taxation; and if figures are worked out they will prove that the purchasing power of a miner with a wife, and say 3 or 4 children, is restricted by about 25 per cent. compared with what it was last year, and £3 per week now is of no more value than £2 5s. was before the present tariff was imposed.

How are miners treated in the matter of railway charges? Why, it costs £2 14s. 6d. to carry a ton of ore from Croydon to Normanton, as against 13s. for a ton of wheat the same distance on a Southern line. On all lines but those of Cairns and Normanton ores are in the mineral classification of goods at 1/3 per ton for the first ten miles, and 1d. per ton for every additional mile; but on the two lines referred to ores are placed in the "No. 1 Merchandise" class, and that means 7/6 per ton for the first ten miles, and between 7d. and 8d. per ton for every additional mile. In regard to passenger fares, they are 3d. and 2d. per mile, for 1st and 2nd class respectively, on all but the Cairns and Normanton lines, whilst on these they are 5d. and 3d. And all this in the face of the fact, that the Normanton-Croydon line is the cheapest in the Colony, paying £3 5s. 7d. per cent. on the cost of construction.

Are not incontrovertible facts, of which the foregoing are but a few of the many available, irresistible arguments in favor of Territorial Separation from the South—freedom from the unjust and flagrant taxation impositions of Brisbane Governments—and liberty to rule the North by the people of the North, and for the benefit of the North? Let every miner ask his conscience these questions.

## DIFFERENT EFFECTS OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND SEPARATION.

---

**W**HAT would be the effect on the North of the passing into law of the Premier's Constitution Bill ?

The North would be as literally and emphatically tied to the South, and be as supremely under its control, as now, because—

1. There would still be a concentration of the profits of government in Brisbane and the South.
2. The seat of general government would still be in the South.
3. There would not be a recognition of the diversity of interest of North and South.
4. The physical impossibility of Northern affairs being adequately directed by any Southern Government would not be regarded or acknowledged.
5. Brisbane would remain the capital of the United Provinces and the seat of Government.
6. There would be in Brisbane--2 Governors, 4 Houses of Parliament, 4 Presidents, 12 Ministers, 134 Members, all drawing salaries.
7. The North would be put off with a Legislative Chamber, Deputy-Governor, Speaker, 4 Ministers, 32 Members.
8. The United Provinces House of Representatives would consist of 32 Southern and 9 Northern Members.
9. Nine Northern members would have no possible chance of getting justice to the North against 32 Southern men.
10. Northern Members would be excluded from any effective voice in the making of laws for the peace, order, and good government of the United Provinces, the General Assembly having this power vested in them.
11. The Civil Service Board, Railway Commissioners, Land Board, would be controlled by the Government of the United Provinces.
12. All Northern land rents, a third of the gross earnings of railways, and such other monies as the United Provinces might prescribe, would have to be paid over every month to the Treasury in Brisbane.
13. The number of Southern Members might be increased at any time to 40 by a majority vote.
14. Southern Members would practically control the most important public service departments, collect the principal part of the provincial revenue, and might collect the whole; pledge the credit of the colony as security for loans, and might appropriate the proceeds as they pleased.
15. The power of the South to rob the North of over £150,000 a year would be perpetuated without let or hindrance.

**“Look on That Picture, and on This:”**—In the event of Territorial Separation—

1. The North will raise its own revenue, dictate and control its own expenditure.
2. The North will commence business with a revenue about double that of Victoria in 1851, and over four times that of Queensland in 1860.
3. The North will be able to keep its expenditure well within the revenue, and show a substantial annual surplus.
4. The North can afford Self-Government, for it pays far more than the cost of that now to a Government in which it has but little voice, and not the slightest real control over.
5. The North can now claim that if left to itself it would be the most solvent amongst the Australian Colonies.
6. The North could apply its surplus revenue to the advantage of the North, to which it properly belongs.
7. The North would have the imposition of its own tariff, adjustment of taxation, disposal of all revenue, appropriation of expenditure, determination of routes or precedence of lines of railway, making of mining and other laws, and regulation of immigration.
8. The North would have absolute freedom from a control which has hitherto been like a millstone around its neck—hampering its industries, playing ducks and drakes with its surplus revenue, and treating it as the veritable Cinderella of the colonies.

The foregoing are a few of the benefits that would follow Separation.  
**Are they not worth fighting for?**

---

Australian Labor Federation in Brisbane had resolved:

That in the opinion of the General Council of the Australian Labor Federation the workers have nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by the separation of Northern from Southern Queensland so long as the political power is held by the capitalistic class and the majority of the people are disfranchised....<sup>234</sup>

The election of 1893 seemed to show that the balance of political power was shifting and many expected that at the next election a majority of Labour representatives would be returned in the north; if there was separation there would be a Labour government in the north. In Charters Towers the *Eagle*, a Labour newspaper, envisaged a northern Labour colony, which it named Torrea:

This is our goal- the foundation of a Labor State- and we preach, or decry Separation according as it is a means to that end.<sup>235</sup>

Therefore after the election the *Eagle* urged Labour supporters to take up the separation crusade; a Labour government in the north was regarded as especially desirable since it could curtail the entry of coloured labour.<sup>236</sup>

If the success of northern Labour candidates brought working class converts to the cause, it also made many former stalwarts hesitate. Robert Philp, though not admitting that this influenced his own views, observed that:

The return of such a large proportion of labor candidates in the North has made several of my Separationist colleagues in the Assembly feel that it would be wiser to defer starting a new colony until further political experience has opened the minds of many of the people of that new colony for the reception of important economical and social facts which seem to most of us to be obvious enough...a motion in favour of [separation] would not receive the support of several Separationist Northern Members until those of their colleagues who belong to the labor party have shown by their conduct in Parliament that it would not be disastrous to Northern industries if in the new colony the balance of power should be placed by the electors in their hands.<sup>237</sup>

---

234. *The Worker*, 1 September 1890. The A.L.F. was a Queensland-wide federation of trade unions.

235. Quoted by *MM*, 3 June 1893.

236. McDonald, *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 788.

237. *NQH*, 7 June 1893.

The threat of Labour domination in the north was especially worrying for sugar producers, recently relieved of many of their labour problems by Griffith's extension of the period for importing Pacific Islanders. This policy reversal no doubt removed one of their most pressing grievances against the government; the Labour party's electoral strength and aversion to coloured labour were additional reasons to drop separation. After the 1893 election the *Mackay Mercury* had second thoughts about separation, for it had demonstrated

the power of the miners and others who, for want of a proper appreciation of the facts, are opposed to our chief agricultural industry. If, as is very probable, the feeling against Separation is due to the objections of the miners and pastoral employees to Kanaka labour, it is possible that our past failures to move the Imperial Government to divide the colony are not entirely devoid of good effect for us.<sup>238</sup>

Preservation of the sugar industry, the *Mercury* declared, took precedence over separation, for "we can live without Separation, but we cannot hope to exist in this district without the sugar industry".<sup>239</sup>

Fundamental changes in the pattern of support for separation were evident in the debate in September 1893 on Burns' separation motion. Bowing to pressure from the Townsville Committee,<sup>240</sup> Burns moved that "in the opinion of this House, territorial separation of the Northern portion of the colony is desirable, and would be for the best interests of the whole colony".<sup>241</sup> As well as repeating the familiar arguments for separation, Burns stated that while a majority of north Queenslanders had desired separation even before the general election, the election had shown workers and miners that they would have fair representation in the new colony; clear majority support for separation had therefore been put beyond all doubt.<sup>242</sup> Corfield of Gregory moved

238. *MM*, 20 May 1893.

239. *Ibid.*, 21 January 1893. Cf., *ibid.*, 24 January, 2 February 1893.

240. Report of public meeting, *NQH*, 6 September 1893.

241. *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 767.

242. *Ibid.*, p. 770. Burns argued that separation would be advantageous for the south as well as the north, since it would enable the south to devote itself wholly to developing its own resources. *Ibid.*, p. 769. George Phillips (Carpentaria) said he disapproved of territorial separation but urged financial separation on the basis of four provinces - the usual South, Centre and North, with an additional province of western Queensland with Normanton and Burketown as its ports. *Ibid.*, p. 771. Phillips' amendment that there should be no dismemberment of north-western Queensland failed, 38 votes to 11.



an amendment that the southern boundary of north Queensland should follow the 22nd parallel to the 144th degree of east longitude, and then the 23rd parallel to the western boundary of Queensland;<sup>243</sup> although it was supported by the members for Mackay and Townsville and three others, the amendment was defeated.<sup>244</sup>

T.J. Byrnes, member for Cairns, predicted disastrous consequences, especially for the sugar industry in his constituency, if a Labour colony was established in northern Queensland. For this reason, and because separation was inopportune during a period of financial difficulty, he opposed the motion.<sup>245</sup> Other speakers referred to the motion as untimely.<sup>246</sup> Burns himself acknowledged this, but he explained that it might take two or three years for separation to be accomplished even if the motion was carried.<sup>247</sup> Explaining his decision to vote against the motion after supporting the movement since 1885, D.H. Dalrymple said that he and his constituents had adhered to separation at the 22nd parallel; since that had been rejected he could no longer do so, for Mackay would be cut off from its hinterland. In addition, Dalrymple agreed with Byrnes that the Labour party's principles of socialism, nationalization and opposition to coloured labour would lead to economic chaos, especially in the Mackay district.<sup>248</sup> Dalrymple had previously voted against central separation because of the boundary issue,<sup>249</sup> which had been prominent in the 1893 election in Mackay, all candidates pledging themselves to press for a boundary at the 22nd parallel.<sup>250</sup> The boundaries proposed in Griffith's provincial scheme had raised fears in Mackay that the country from Clermont to Nebo, currently trading with the port, would be cut off from it; fearing a hostile tariff so near their port, Mackay residents determined to support separation only on the basis of the 22nd parallel and a straight

---

243. *Ibid.*, p. 775.

244. *Ibid.*, p. 778.

245. *Ibid.*, pp. 780-781. The separation issue had not been raised during the election campaign in Cairns, jealousy of Townsville still dissuading local residents.

246. Thorn (Fassifern), *ibid.*, p. 773; Dickson (Bulimba), *ibid.*, p. 774.

247. *Ibid.*, p. 828.

248. *Ibid.*, pp. 785-786.

249. *Ibid.*, p. 569.

250. H.B. Black's address, *MM*, 1 April 1893; Dalrymple's address, *ibid.*, 16 April 1893. See also *ibid.*, 18 February, 2 March, 22, 25 April 1893.

line westwards, rather than the sinuous boundary, beginning at Cape Palmerston and diverging northward, which Griffith had proposed.<sup>251</sup>

Burns' motion was rejected, 31 votes to 16. Of 16 northern members, ten voted in favour of the motion, and one paired in favour; as Speaker, A.S. Cowley was unable to vote, but he had been returned as a separationist. One northern member, Byrnes, who was Attorney-General and practised in Brisbane as a lawyer, voted against the motion. Chataway, Dalrymple, Rawlings and Corfield of Gregory abstained from voting though present in the House. Commenting on the debate in a letter to the Agent-General, McIlwraith asserted that in a division in the parliament on separation, the result of which was not a foregone conclusion, the representatives of all northern sugar districts would vote against it.<sup>252</sup> Of those who voted for Burns' motion, ten were members of the Labour party, five of them northern Labour members.

In September 1893 McIlwraith wrote two letters to his Agent-General, commenting on debates on the motions of G.S. Curtis for central separation, and of G.R. Burns for northern separation; the Chief Secretary intended these letters to be distributed to the London press. He asserted that since the general election the question of separation had taken on an entirely new aspect because so many Labour candidates had been elected in the northern and central districts. This, he said, was especially worrying because the "great majority of the leaders of the so-called Labour party are professed socialists of the most pronounced type, who look forward to the earliest opportunity for the confiscation of all capital".<sup>253</sup> Labour men, he went on, finding that they commanded nearly a majority of votes, had dropped their hostility to the separation movement; Charters Towers, for instance, had become a strongly separatist electorate.

The capitalists, on the other hand- that is, men who have anything to lose by anarchy- have taken alarm at the position; and the men formerly most earnest for Northern Separation, who own property in almost any shape, have changed their views, and are now opposed to any dismemberment of the colony.<sup>254</sup>

---

251. *Ibid.*, 22 April 1893.

252. McIlwraith to Garrick 28 September 1893, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 516.

253. McIlwraith to Garrick 14 September 1893, *ibid.*, p. 515.

254. *Ibid.*

As a result, McIlwraith remarked, "but for the Labour representatives, Separation is dead in the North..."<sup>255</sup> He expressed the opinion that, on the basis of the current franchise, either central or northern separation would be disastrous for Queensland; this new aspect should be seriously weighed by men of capital in England who had sided with the separation movement, since their interests would be gravely affected by the success of the movement.<sup>256</sup> McIlwraith's interpretation later received support from Griffith's successor as Premier, H.M. Nelson, who stated that when the result of the 1893 elections was declared,

the question of Separation assumed a perfectly new complexion, and it became a matter of serious consideration, even with the most ardent Separationists, whether in supporting the movement they were hastening the advent, not so much of Territorial Autonomy, as of an industrial revolution.<sup>257</sup>

Unquestionably there was much truth in this interpretation. Sugar producers, for example, especially in the Mackay district which had so constantly supported the movement since 1884, were wavering, although the abstentions of the members for Mackay from voting on Burns' motion were not attributable solely to fear of the Labour party, the boundary issue also being important. In Bowen R.H. Smith confessed his concern:

At one time the working men of the North were pronounced anti-Separationists, but since the general election they seem to have come to view Separation as the best thing that could possibly be brought about....It is implied that Separation meant destruction to the sugar industry. If the issue were Separation and destruction to the development of a tropical Queensland, I would let Separation sleep until people came to their senses.<sup>258</sup>

However, in the other leading centre of separatism, Townsville, there was no evidence that fear of Labour altered attitudes to separation. In October 1893 members of the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, a group most likely to be influenced by such fears, unanimously agreed that the Labour victories had not diminished the commitment of local

---

255. McIlwraith to Garrick 28 September 1893, *ibid.*, p. 516. Cf., McIlwraith, *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 778.

256. McIlwraith to Garrick 14 September 1893, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 515.

257. Nelson to Norman 12 April 1894, *ibid.*, p. 564.

258. *PDT*, 31 March 1894.

businessmen to separation, the chairman declaring that McIlwraith's allegations were "absolutely false".<sup>259</sup> In the early months of 1893 separation was still ardently advocated at least in Townsville where, according to one visitor, "the word [was] in everybody's mouth".<sup>260</sup> However with the onset of an acute financial crisis, heralded by bank closures in May 1893, preoccupation with personal financial problems led to neglect of the separation movement.<sup>261</sup> Largely a result of Australia's satellitic connection with Britain, the crisis was precipitated by curtailment of British funds for overseas investment in the aftermath of the Baring crisis.<sup>262</sup> The most severe depression in the Australian colonies in the 19th century, it had an impact comparable with that of the Great Depression of the 1930s, bringing a period of expansionism to an abrupt end;<sup>263</sup> it also destroyed the optimism which had accompanied rapid development, and which was an important ingredient in the desire for northern separation.

Nevertheless in February 1894 the Townsville Committee reopened correspondence with the Colonial Office on the grounds that the new government had given no sign of reviving the Constitution Bill, and that in the general election separationists had been returned in every northern electorate except Cairns.<sup>264</sup> The Committee also defended the movement against imputations contained in McIlwraith's letters to the Agent-General. The Committee had hoped to persuade northern members to sign the letter to the Colonial Office, but Burns intimated that they were unwilling.<sup>265</sup>

In his comments on northern and central correspondence with the Colonial Office Nelson, who became Premier in March 1893 when Griffith resigned to take up the Chief Justiceship, repeatedly stressed that

- 
259. Report of Chamber of Commerce meeting, *NQH*, 1 November 1893. Cf., *ibid.*, 7 February 1894.
260. G. Boothby, *On the Wallaby or Through the East and Across Australia* (London 1894), p. 169. Cf., extract from *Sydney Morning Herald*, *MM*, 7 March 1893.
261. Townsville Committee to Ripon 20 February 1894, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 541. Burns, *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 828.
262. Butlin, "Colonial Socialism", pp. 75-76.
263. Lewis, *Ports of Queensland*, pp. 81-82. Norman to Ripon 25 May 1893, Ripon Papers Vol. 70, British Library Manuscripts, Add.43560.
264. Townsville Committee to Ripon 20 February 1894, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, pp. 537-538.
265. Report of committee meeting, *NQH*, 15 November 1893.

the financial crisis made consideration of separation inopportune, since

at no period of the history of Queensland has there been a time when a deviation of the energy of its united people from the straight path toward prosperity into a field of contention could be more injurious to the interests of the colony.<sup>266</sup>

Lord Ripon in reply to several northern and central memorials endorsed Nelson's view, asking the Governor to inform separationists that

in view of the present financial and commercial position of the colony the moment does not appear to me to be favourable for considering any scheme or schemes of territorial partition....<sup>267</sup>

An attempt in September 1894 to revive the movement in Townsville by calling a meeting of all former agitators failed, despite exhortations from Coote who had prepared a new up-dated separation petition in expectation of a revival.<sup>268</sup>

There were several reasons for the decline of the movement by 1894. Regular rebuffs from the Colonial Office had destroyed separationists' early confidence, and it was difficult to attract support when failure seemed inevitable. Philp was among those who came to think that the Imperial authorities would never intervene,<sup>269</sup> and this played at least some part in his decision to accept office in 1893.<sup>270</sup> Some suggested that the movement was declining because its parliamentary leaders had been systematically suborned by the government:

How could it be anything else but dead so far as the North was concerned when it was acknowledged that Sir Thomas had nobbled the leader - Mr. M. Hume Black - and sent him to England; when he had placed Mr. A.S. Cowley in the Speaker's chair; when he gave

---

266. Nelson to Norman 6 February 1894, *QV&P*, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 535. Cf., Nelson to Norman 5 April 1894, *ibid.*, p. 564; Nelson to Norman 12 April 1894, *ibid.*

267. Ripon to Norman 13 June 1894, *ibid.*, p. 565.

268. *NQH*, 5 September 1894.

269. *Ibid.*, 18 April 1894. Cf., Cowley, *QPD*, Vol. 67, 1892, pp. 852-853; Lissner, *ibid.*, p. 881.

270. Philp's statement to electors, *NQH*, 7 June 1893.

Mr. R. Philp the portfolio of Mines; and when he gave Mr. Dalrymple and Mr. Chataway, the members for Mackay, a sop in the form of a central sugar mill.<sup>271</sup>

Moreover, at this time several other leaders were lost to the movement through death or departure from the north.<sup>272</sup> The Labour party frightened off some conservative elements, particularly in sugar districts, when after the 1893 election the threat of Labour dominance in the north appeared real. On the other hand, separation was not the main objective of Labour supporters, as the General Council of the A.L.F., which met in Charters Towers in February 1894, resolved:

the Party is of the opinion that in the interests of the Labour movement generally, it is advisable to leave the question of Northern or Central Separation an open question, but at the same time it would respectfully urge the various labour organizations not to attach too much importance to it as it is merely a side issue and has no important bearing on the Labour cause.<sup>273</sup>

Perhaps the even balance of numbers between Labour supporters and ministerialists dissuaded followers of both parties from pressing separation, since neither could be sure of supremacy in a new colony.<sup>274</sup> Certainly class issues gradually assumed a pivotal role in politics; regional issues became correspondingly less important. The financial crisis absorbed the attention of northerners and undermined their optimism. Although there was a clear intention to revive the movement after financial stability was regained, it was allowed to lapse; later inertia acted against a revival. In the later years of the decade the separation issue was eclipsed by moves for Australian federation.

---

271. Kerr at Central Queensland Separation Convention October 1893, *QV&P*, 1894, vol. 1, p. 529. Black was appointed emigration agent in England. Cf., *Mackay Standard*, 25 August 1893; G.J. Perkins (vice-president of Mackay Separation League) to the Editor, *ibid.*, 14 August 1893; Dawson, *QPD*, Vol. 70, 1893, p. 523, p. 782; Archer, *ibid.*, p. 785; McDonald *ibid.*, p. 526; *Democrat*, 21 December 1895, 12 June 1897; *Cairns Argus*, 24 April 1897.

272. E.g., A.G. Bundock, William Kirk, Canon Tucker (vice-president of Townsville Separation League).

273. Moles, *Separatist Movements*, p. 100.

274. Jenkins, *Attitudes Towards Federation*, p. 97.

## CHAPTER 12

### SEPARATION AND FEDERATION

After 1894, when the movement began to decline, there was no separatist organization in the north, and separationists in central Queensland tended to make the running. In November 1894 central members of parliament addressed a petition to the Secretary of State,<sup>1</sup> and in April 1895 the Central Queensland League presented an address to the Governor in Rockhampton, which was conveyed to the Secretary of State.<sup>2</sup> Lord Ripon persisted in the view that the time was inopportune.<sup>3</sup> In September 1895, when central members addressed a new Secretary of State, Joseph Chamberlain,<sup>4</sup> the obstacles raised by the financial crisis continued to be stressed at the Colonial Office:

the present moment is a most unfortunate one.... Queensland has by strict economy just made two ends meet but the Colony is still far from having any surplus revenue to play with and these experiments whatever good they may ultimately effect will be costly at first - the new Colonies would start with deficits, and Queensland stock which has kept up well would probably go down with a run.<sup>5</sup>

One official remarked that in view of these problems and the imminence of Australian federation, "it would not be wise...for us to coquet with or in any way encourage these sectional tendencies at present", and that therefore "we should again give these petitioners an evasive answer";<sup>6</sup> his draft reply formed the basis of the final despatch,

- 
1. Central Members to Ripon 24 November 1894, *QV&P*, 1898, Vol. 3, pp. 823-825.
  2. Central Queensland Separation League to Norman 1 April 1895, *ibid.*, p. 826.
  3. Ripon to Norman 26 February 1895, *ibid.* Ripon to Norman 14 June 1895, *ibid.*, p. 827.
  4. Central Members to Chamberlain September 1895, *ibid.*
  5. Lambert, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No. 105, CO234/62.
  6. Anderson, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No. 105, CO234/62.

which repeated the formula answer used by the Colonial Office over all the preceding years, adding as consolation to separationists the possibility of federation:

The question appears to me to be pre-eminently one which should be decided by local agreement. Even if such local agreement had been reached, the difficulties and risks attending any attempt to divide the colony are in present circumstances very great, and in its absence, unless an overwhelming case could be made out against the existing arrangements, Her Majesty's Government would not be justified in asking the Imperial Parliament to undertake so delicate and difficult a task, especially in the face of the opposition of a large majority of the representatives of the colony. Most, if not all, of these difficulties will disappear should the several colonies of Australia enter into a federal union at an early date... [If this is accomplished] the extension of complete autonomy in purely local matters will be comparatively easy, and the people of Central Queensland will no doubt find the Federal Parliament, when constituted, ready to listen to any reasonable scheme which may be submitted to it....<sup>7</sup>

In September 1896<sup>8</sup> W. Kidston, senior member for Rockhampton, introduced a motion in the Legislative Assembly for a referendum of northern and central electors on separation, arguing that despite Chamberlain's expectations several years would elapse before federation, and that the results of a referendum would assist in preparing an "overwhelming case".<sup>8</sup> The motion was regarded as an attempt to bring in "by a side-wind" the principle of referendum,<sup>9</sup> which was a major plank in the Labour platform, and consequently it was resisted by non-Labour members, including northerners Philp, Byrnes, Dalrymple, Chataway and Smith; the motion was defeated, 25 to 14.

Kidston's motion had been considered by a thin House:<sup>10</sup> "the debate...was spiritless and apathetic, little, if any, interest being

---

7. Chamberlain to Lamington 15 January 1896, *QV&P*, 1898, Vol. 3, p. 828.

8. *QPD*, Vol. 75, 1896, pp. 886-888.

9. Byrnes, *ibid.*, p. 896. Cf., *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 19 September 1896. The principle of the referendum had recently been eliminated from the Federation Bill, after a hard fight by the Labour party aided by the opposition.

10. Byrnes, *QPD*, Vol. 75, 1896, p. 894 - "Now if the important question of separation has resolved itself into this - that it can only elicit a listless debate in a thin House, nothing more deadly can come to it." Cf., Curtis, *ibid.*, p. 892.



taken in it...."<sup>11</sup> Repeated debates on separation in the Assembly had, over the years, produced carelessness among southern members who regarded them as merely academic exercises, the seasonal airing of an old subject<sup>12</sup> - an attitude which in 1897 led to curious results. In November 1897 when the Assembly considered another motion introduced by Kidston for a referendum on separation at the time of the next general election, G.S. Curtis, member for Rockhampton, moved an amendment that

the time has now arrived when the Central and Northern Divisions of this Colony should be constituted separate Colonies in compliance with the petitions of the inhabitants thereof.<sup>13</sup>

On 4 November a division was carried against Kidston's motion, 20 to 15, but voting on Curtis' amendment being equal, 18-18, the Speaker, A.S. Cowley, gave his casting vote with the "Ayes"; the motion was then carried in the affirmative on the casting vote of the Speaker.<sup>14</sup> Andrew Dawson of Charters Towers was the only northern member who voted against it, on the grounds that on the only occasion when public opinion had been tested in his electorate the result had been adverse to separation, although he believed that current opinion was more favourable;<sup>15</sup> not a single southern representative voted in favour of the motion.

The Premier, Sir Hugh Nelson, immediately declared that the government would take no action on the resolution, treating it as a catch vote and therefore not indicative of the true feeling of parliament.<sup>16</sup> The *Brisbane Courier* derided the vote as "the joke of the session."<sup>17</sup> On the other hand it was hailed by separationists as proof that "the separation movement in Queensland is now approaching a victorious consummation."<sup>18</sup> The government immediately sent

- 
11. *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 19 September 1896.
  12. Cf., *BC*, 8 November 1897.
  13. *QPD*, Vol. 77, 1897, p. 945.
  14. *QPD*, Vol. 78, 1897, p. 1408. Voting on the substantive motion was equal, 20-20, when Cowley gave his casting vote.
  15. *Ibid.*, p. 1288.
  16. *BC*, 5 November 1897.
  17. *Ibid.*, 8 November 1897.
  18. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1897, quoting J.F. Hogan, London representative of the Central Queensland League.

the Agent-General in London, Sir Henry Norman, the result of the division along with a list of members who were absent from the House when it was taken.<sup>19</sup> J.F. Hogan, member of the House of Commons and London representative of the Central Separation League, complained in the London press that Norman had been used to disseminate partisan statements discrediting the decision of the Legislative Assembly.<sup>20</sup>

On the day after the vote, 25 members of the Assembly, including W. O'Connell of the Musgrave constituency in north Queensland, informed the Premier that the resolution had been carried only on the casting vote of the Speaker; that it was passed in a thin House after a late sitting the previous night; and that it was brought on unexpectedly, so that many members who were actually within the precincts of the House were absent from the Chamber - so unexpected was the division that Curtis himself had been absent.<sup>21</sup> The members recorded their "emphatic dissent" from the terms of the resolution.<sup>22</sup>

Relying mainly on this declaration, Nelson pointed out to the Secretary of State "that the circumstances under which the motion... was carried were not such as could cause the vote to be regarded as in any way representing the sentiment of the Assembly."<sup>23</sup> Analyzing the vote, the Premier reported that out of a House of 72 members, 21 including the Speaker voted for, and 20 against the motion. Two members known to be opposed to separation were absent in England, and one member who was present, D.H. Dalrymple, walked outside the bar, probably because of continuing fears of Labour.<sup>24</sup> Of the remaining 29 members, 25 objected to the motion. Even if the other four favoured separation, the results in a full House would have been 45 to 24 against the motion, excluding the Speaker. As a final cut, Nelson remarked that "at no time since the commencement of the Separation

---

19. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1897.

20. *Ibid.*, 15 November 1897.

21. As the Governor, Lord Lamington, told the Secretary of State, the government whip was a northern member and presumably "on this occasion he was not very strenuous in the performance of his duties." Lamington to Chamberlain secret, 18 November 1897, CO234/65.

22. Certain members of Queensland Legislative Assembly to Nelson 5 November 1897, *QV&P*, 1898, Vol. 3, pp. 829-830.

23. Nelson to Lamington 15 November 1897, *ibid.*, p. 829.

24. *NQH*, 17 November 1897 - "The Minister for Education [Dalrymple] has got a big brain, and has got a mixture of Socialism, the horrors of the French Revolution, the Paraguay fiasco, and labor in Queensland politics on it."

movement has public opinion been so apathetic upon the subject."<sup>25</sup>

Hence the victory of 4 November 1897 proved hollow, as the *Northern Miner* predicted:

a vote which ten years ago would have sent the colony wild was snatched, and will be read of this morning with a pitying smile. Sir Hugh Nelson says the Government will take no notice, and Mr. Chamberlain's frozen attitude can be taken for granted.<sup>26</sup>

In November the following year 21 members representing northern and central constituencies argued that the resolution had been secured in a legitimate way and was therefore entitled to consideration, adding that the question of separation could not by its very nature be settled by local agreement, that is, by the interested parties.<sup>27</sup> From the Colonial Office this only drew the comment: "It would be absurd to pay any attention to a decision of the legislative assembly obtained by a chance division and the casting vote of the Speaker."<sup>28</sup>

Even in the 1860s north Queenslanders considered federation of the Australian colonies probable, and the relationship between federation and northern separation was always an issue. In January 1867, discussing plans for an Intercolonial Conference in Melbourne in February of the next year, the *Port Denison Times* looked forward to Australian federation as a desirable, if long-term, objective;<sup>29</sup> in 1870 the Royal Commission on federation in Victoria evoked a similar response, and the need to prepare for federation was emphasized.<sup>30</sup> However, as early as 1867, at a time when confederation of the Canadian provinces had drawn public attention to the advantages of unification, the argument was raised that it would be better for Queensland to remain united instead of creating, by subdivision, additional obstacles to Australian federation.<sup>31</sup> Henceforth this

---

25. Nelson to Lamington 15 November 1897, *QV&P*, 1898, Vol. 3, p.829.

26. Extract from *NM, BC*, 10 November 1897.

27. Northern and Central Members to Chamberlain November 1898, *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, pp. 121-122.

28. Cox, minute 14 February 1899, on despatch No. 1, CO 234/68.

29. *PDT*, 19 January 1867. Cf., *ibid.*, 9 January 1869, 4 November 1871.

30. *Ibid*, 5 November 1870.

31. *QPD*, Vol. 6, 1867-8, p. 795. Archer raised this point during debate on his Provincial Councils Bill in December 1867.

argument was given increasing emphasis by anti-separationists.<sup>32</sup>  
 Separationists countered that subdivision would ease federation:<sup>33</sup>

To us it is quite evident...that the Federation of Australia will never be satisfactorily effected until with a judicious selection of boundaries the settled portions are divided and subdivided until they are about the size of Victoria, or even smaller, purely local matters entrusted to the different colonies or provinces as they are to counties in England or to the States of America, and national matters reserved for the consideration of one Federal Government for the whole country.<sup>34</sup>

It was argued that if the states of the federation were unequal in area or resources, one or more would dominate the federation, to its detriment.<sup>35</sup> These arguments were adopted virtually unchanged by separationists and their opponents until the end of the century. For instance, in the 1870s the *Cooktown Courier*, which preferred decentralization to separation, affirmed: "We are Australians, and we don't want every two hundred miles of the coast of our common country intersected by lines of custom-houses."<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the separationist *Cooktown Herald* argued that all states should enter a federation as equal partners, and that Queensland would forfeit its importance if it joined as a single state.<sup>37</sup>

At an Intercolonial Conference in 1880 Sir Henry Parkes proposed a Federal Council with limited legislative powers, but nothing was achieved until activity by foreign powers in the Pacific impressed Australian colonists with the need for united defence. In 1883 McIlwraith's annexation of southern New Guinea in order to forestall Germany gave impetus to federation. The British government initially repudiated the annexation, which unified the Australian colonies:

- 
32. E.g., John Douglas, before his conversion, used this argument against separation. *PDT*, 2 December 1871. Cf., extract from *European Mail*, *ibid.*, 24 June 1871; extract from *Queenslander*, *ibid.*, 20 July 1872.
33. *Ibid.*, 25 May 1872.
34. *Ibid.*, 21 October 1871. Cf., *ibid.*, 5 November 1870; *CC*, 25 November 1876.
35. *PDT*, 5 November 1870.
36. *CC*, 11 October 1876.
37. *CH*, 16 January 1875. Cf., *PDT*, 4 March, 17 June 1876.

The actual impulse came...from Queensland where Sir Thos. McIlwraith's action in hoisting the British flag in New Guinea, having been disavowed by Lord Derby on behalf of the Imperial Government, received the<sup>38</sup> support of the other Australian Premiers....

The need for a united voice in representations to the British government was brought home by the crisis. Later that year a conference of all Australasian colonies, including New Zealand and Fiji, drafted an Act to establish a Federal Council of Australasia, which was passed with slight modifications by the Imperial parliament; the Federal Council met for the first time in Hobart in February 1886.<sup>39</sup>

Consequently, federation played an increasingly prominent part in arguments about separation during the 1880s and 1890s. The 1885 Separation Convention was careful to insert a paragraph in the petition affirming that

in view of the federation of the Australian Colonies, it is essential that the important district of North Queensland should be formed into a separate colony; as otherwise it will be deprived of all the privileges of representation in the Federal Council. <sup>40</sup>

Griffith's report on the petition argued that separation would retard federation, impressing upon Colonial Office officials the importance of Australian federation for British defence policy:

until the colonies have arrived at some more satisfactory basis of common action, the multiplication of independent Governments would tend materially to retard the establishment of that Federal Union of the Australasian colonies which is, in my judgement, one of the most essential conditions for the consolidation of the interests of the British Empire in the Pacific, and to perpetuate the inconveniences (which have recently been so apparent) resulting from the want of continuous action on the part of those colonies. <sup>41</sup>

Expounding his slogan, "Federation before Separation", in 1888, McIlwraith took a similar stance, arguing that a united Queensland could more effectually promote the cause of federation.<sup>42</sup> The

38. A. Deakin, *The Federal Story* (Melbourne 1944), p. 9.

39. Griffith presented correspondence on northern separation to the Council, explaining that he considered the matter of general Australasian interest, especially because of its connection with the coloured labour issue. *Debates of Federal Council of Australasia*, Session of 1886, pp. 74-75.

40. *QV&P*, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 440.

41. Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 425.

42. McIlwraith's manifesto, Adams, *The Australians*, pp. 309-310.

Townsville Committee, countering these arguments in 1890, were able to cite Sir Henry Parkes' statement to the effect that "such a subdivision of colonies of excessive area as would secure at least ultimate equality of federal power must precede either Colonial or Imperial Federation in Australia."<sup>43</sup> Morehead in his report in 1890 suggested that in view of the approach of federation it was inopportune to consider altering colonial boundaries, while a federal parliament when established would undoubtedly have the necessary powers for dividing Queensland.<sup>44</sup>

In the north it was argued that there was no reason why federation should precede separation: federation would not be accomplished for some years, and it would be unjust to prolong the iniquities of the status quo; north Queensland demanded a voice in the federal settlement, having a particular interest, for example, in whether a fiscal union was to be established; the federal parliament would have no special qualifications for the delicate task of dividing a colony and would probably be swayed by the protests of the colonial government against separation; separation would hasten federation by helping to equalize colonial territories and might set a desirable precedent for further subdivision in South Australia and Western Australia; since northerners favoured federation, even if for no other reason than that they wanted intercolonial free trade, separation would create no obstacle to federation.<sup>45</sup> In January 1890 a northern separationist attending a conference of the Australian Natives' Association in Melbourne succeeded in amending a resolution that the division of any colony be left to the colonial legislature, arguing that no colonial parliament would consent to dismemberment.<sup>46</sup> Macrossan was expected to perform a similar service, and to air the question of separation generally, at the Intercolonial Conference in Melbourne in 1890;<sup>47</sup> he stressed that the conference had no power

---

43. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 808. Cf., *TH*, 12 January 1889.

44. Morehead to Norman 28 March 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 823.

45. E.g., *TH*, 20 July, 16, 30 November 1889, 18 January, 8, 15 February, 20, 27 September 1890, 10 June 1891; *NA*, 12, 13 March 1890; *First Annual Report of Townsville Separation League*, QSA GOV/A18, p. 42. Cf., Northern and Central members to Chamberlain November 1898, *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, p. 123.

46. *TH*, 1 February 1890.

47. Report of committee meeting, *NA*, 31 January 1890.

to deal with separation, but advocated giving the federal parliament the same authority to deal with territorial questions as the Imperial parliament then possessed.<sup>48</sup>

When Sir Henry Norman visited the north in April 1890, he mentioned in a speech in Townsville the argument against separation that Queensland would have less influence in the federal parliament as three small colonies than as one large colony. William Coote replied that in the latter case northerners would have no influence at all, because the southern majority in Queensland would return its own representatives; moreover, they would persuade the federal parliament not to interfere in Queensland's affairs to allow separation; and in any case it would take years to accomplish federation, while northern grievances would remain unaddressed.<sup>49</sup> Ironically Norman had anticipated Coote's rebuttal, for in early April, before his northern tour, he reported to the Secretary of State:

Looking at the question of separation from a general Queensland point of view...there can be no doubt that in a Federated Australian Parliament the views and interests of Queensland would be more likely to have weight if Queensland was one great and increasing colony as at present...instead of being two or three smaller colonies. I do not know, however, that this would be a good ground for disallowing separation if Her Majesty's Government on other grounds were disposed to allow it. As to the question of separation standing over in order that it may be dealt with in a Federal Parliament, there seems to be a good deal in the contention that it may be a long time before federation is accomplished, nor does it seem that there is any particular reason why, if the Northern Queenslanders desire separation, their desire should be subject to the approval of Tasmania and other distant colonies with which hitherto they have had little or no connection. 50

After returning to office, Griffith continually stressed that separation would present fresh obstacles to federation by creating an additional centre of colonial jealousy.<sup>51</sup> When he brought forward the provincial proposal, the fortunes of the federation and separation movements became inter-related: for instance, Griffith urged

---

48. *Ibid.*, 12 February 1890.

49. *Further Considerations*, pp. 8-9.

50. Norman to Knutsford 7 April 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 824.

51. E.g., Griffith's address to Townsville Separation League, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, pp. 1180-1183.

that the Colonial Office postpone consideration of separation until the Federal Convention in Sydney in March 1891 decided upon the respective powers of the federal and state governments,<sup>52</sup> a suggestion in which Lord Knutsford concurred.<sup>53</sup> Finally in December 1898 J.R. Dickson restated the argument against separation in terms of federation, linking it to Imperial policy considerations:

the tendency of the statesmanship of the present day is toward the consolidation of States rather than toward disintegration, and at a time when the virile nations of the civilised world are demanding enlarged territorial spaces to enable them to perpetuate their existence among the peoples of the globe, the multiplication of small and feeble States does not command itself as a desirable feature in Imperial policy. A divided Queensland would become an insignificant factor, impotent for good, but not incapable of proving a source of embarrassment, in any scheme of Australian or Imperial federation. 54

These arguments were shrewd, as the Colonial Office had for a generation used every opportunity to stress the desirability in the long run of federation; indeed "the encouragement of federalism comes close to being that rather rare thing, a constant goal of British policy makers".<sup>55</sup> This was a consequence of the extension of responsible government; the prevailing military theory, which favoured concentration of forces; and constant concern about the cost of Imperial defence.<sup>56</sup> All three pointed to the withdrawal of British military protection from individual colonies, which in turn rendered desirable their combination into large units to facilitate self-defence. Thus as early as 1850, in the Act which constituted the colony of Victoria, provision was made for a federal legislature in Australia, empowered to decide fiscal policy, to create a Supreme

---

52. Griffith to Palmer 12 December 1890, *ibid.*, p. 1178.

53. Knutsford to Norman 21 March 1891, *ibid.*, p. 1189.

54. Dickson to Lamington 29 December 1898, *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, p. 125.

55. Cell, *British Colonial Administration*, p. 187. B.A. Knox dates British conversion to federation at 1864, with Cardwell's support for confederation of Canada. Knox, "The Rise of Colonial Federation as an Object of British Policy, 1850-1890" *British Studies*, Vol. 11, 1971, pp. 105-106.

56. Cell, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-187.



Court, and to raise revenue.<sup>57</sup> The proposal was not welcomed in Australia, however, and the British government did not attempt to impose its views. Nevertheless in succeeding years federation remained a long-term objective, to be encouraged at every opportunity, and care was taken not to raise any possible impediments to its final accomplishment.<sup>58</sup>

The progress of the federation movement appeared to the Colonial Office as a convenient pretext for delaying and ultimately shirking responsibility for making a decision on separation.<sup>59</sup> Thus in 1890 Morehead's suggestion that a federal parliament would be a body more suitable for resolving the question of separation was readily assented to, in spite of Norman's observations to the contrary.<sup>60</sup> Moreover British officials feared that Northern separation, by creating another colony, might also create an obstacle in the way of federation.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, as Herbert pointed out, if separation was granted and the Colonial Office undertook all the attendant work, after federation the new colony would, in effect, become merely a province such as Griffith's scheme would have made it.<sup>62</sup> These then were good reasons for the Colonial Office to stall separationists and place its faith in Griffith's plan.<sup>63</sup> It was believed that because of its claim to foster Australian federation, Griffith's scheme would probably also command greater support in the House of Commons than would separation.<sup>64</sup> A measure of Herbert's commitment

---

57. Keith, *Responsible Government*, Vol. 2, p. 597.

58. Thus in 1872 Lord Kimberley told a central Queensland delegation that the British government deprecated breaking up colonies and preferred to see them consolidated. Drury Cutting Book, No. 1, p. 277. J.O.L.

59. Pennell, minute 12 June 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO234/51; Herbert, minute 2 January 1891, on despatch No. 185, CO234/51; Anderson, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No. 105, CO234/62.

60. Mercer, minute 5 June 1890, on despatch No. 41, CO234/51. Cf., Anderson, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No. 105, CO234/62.

61. Herbert, minute 10 December 1890, on despatch No. 159, CO234/51. Lambert, minute 26 December 1895, on despatch No. 105, CO234/62.

62. Herbert, minute 10 December 1890, on despatch No. 159, CO234/51.

63. Knutsford to Norman 21 March 1891, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol. 1, p. 1189.

64. Mercer, minute 31 December 1890, on despatch No. 185, CO234/51.

to Griffith's proposal was his statement that if the other Australian colonies refused to allow Queensland to enter the federation as two or three provinces, that would be occasion for intervention by the Imperial parliament when passing the Act of Union.<sup>65</sup>

After Chamberlain's accession to the office of Secretary of State the federal movement in Australia approached its culmination, and federation became the most important factor influencing the attitude of the Colonial Office to separation. In January 1896 Chamberlain clarified his position, from which he never deviated: the question should be resolved locally and separationists would probably obtain autonomy from the federal parliament.<sup>66</sup> Though northern and central members of parliament later tried to show that certain clauses of the federal constitution would make the extension of autonomy far from easy,<sup>67</sup> Chamberlain was unmoved.

In 1897, during debate in the Assembly on the Federal Enabling Bill for the election of delegates to the Federal Convention, central and northern members contended for popular election of Queensland delegates, and urged that three separate electorates be constituted so that southern Queensland could not by overwhelming numbers dictate the choice of the colony's representatives.<sup>68</sup> Although the Premier, Sir Hugh Nelson, did not object to three electorates, no such provision was embodied in the bill, and on this ground G.S. Curtis moved against it; this was carried by an alliance of separationists, Labour members, and some southern members who opposed the bill as protectionists.<sup>69</sup> As a result Queensland did not participate in the 1898 Convention, for which J.R. Dickson, the new Premier, blamed separationists, and on this ground he questioned their professed

---

65. Herbert, minute 2 January 1891, on despatch No. 185, CO234/51.

66. See above p. 374.

67. Northern and Central members to Chamberlain November 1898, *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, pp. 121-124.

68. Curtis, *QPD*, Vol. 78, 1897, p. 1736; Smith, *ibid.*, p. 1743; Jackson, *ibid.*, p. 1749. Cf., *Cairns Argus*, 16 November 1897.

69. *QPD*, Vol. 78, 1897, p. 1758. Dickson to Lamington 29 December 1898, *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, p. 125. However northern non-Labour members Philip, Dalrymple and Hamilton voted against the withdrawal of the bill.

commitment to federation.<sup>70</sup>

Queensland did not take part in the first referendum on federation in 1898, but during the campaign in north Queensland prior to the second referendum, federation and separation were closely linked. As in Riverina,<sup>71</sup> the idea developed that the federal and separation causes were parallel and would confer the same benefits on north Queensland:<sup>72</sup>

By Federation, the southerners know that they will no longer be able to make a milch cow of the North, but that each division of a State will have only its own revenue to expend, and that all portions of the colony will share alike. 73

In parliament Philp advocated federation *inter alia* as a means of achieving separation in the long run.<sup>74</sup> One objective of the separation movement - intercolonial free trade - would almost certainly be achieved by federation.<sup>75</sup> It was argued that this would promote separation by reducing southern Queensland's commercial interest in the north:

- 
70. *Ibid.* See also *BC*, 5 February 1898. Cf., McIlwraith's comments on Dickson's commitment to federation: "I think Jimmie Dickson a veritable prig and one of the biggest humbugs we ever had in politics. He believes in Federation no more than I do, and yet for the sake of carrying Federation while he is Premier, he stands at the head of it..." McIlwraith to C. Palmer 2 June 1899, McIlwraith Papers. During Dickson's Premiership, Queensland again began to take part in the federal movement.
71. Whittaker, *Riverina*, p. 77, p. 126, p. 174, p. 188.
72. L.F. Green, *The Queensland Attitude to Federalism* (B.A. Hons. University of Queensland 1952), p. 51; Philp, *QPD*, Vol. 81, 1899, pp. 347-350.
73. *Croydon Express and Mining Record*, 11 September 1899. Cf., *Mackay Chronicle*, 16 July, 8, 15 November, 1 December 1897, 4, 25 April, 31 August, 26 September, 25 November 1898, 5 September 1899; *Cairns Daily Times*, 20 October 1899. Cf., in Western Australia there was an idea that federation would halt centralization within the colony. R.S. Parker, "New States for Australia. Why New States?" in *New States for Australia*, Proceedings of Australian Institute of Political Science, Spring forum Armidale, October 1955, p. 3.
74. *QPD*, Vol. 81, 1899, pp. 347-350.
75. *Charters Towers Herald*, 29 January 1899.

Once the present Intercolonial tariffs are removed, the South can have nothing to gain from holding the North in bondage, and the inducement to do so having been removed, there is infinitely more chance of the State agreeing to Separation than if the inducement is allowed to remain. 76

A.G.L. Shaw has noted a general trend for outlying districts to support federation, for reasons analogous to those at the root of separatism:

The "outback" whether in New South Wales, Queensland or Western Australia was strongly "federal"; in fact it was the "outback" that carried the day in these colonies. Here seemed to be a chance to attack the vested interests in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, which always managed to control all government and to diddle the countryman who regarded himself as the backbone of Australia. Anti-city feeling lies always close to the surface among primary producers; and the bushman felt more "nationalist", more an Australian, in his opposition to the mutually squabbling and jealous capital cities. 77

On the other hand, some separationists feared that federation would damage northern interests, questioning whether a parliament in a capital still more remote than Brisbane would be more attentive to northern Queensland:

The North has hitherto found it a matter of the greatest difficulty to get fair and equitable government and administration from the Southern portion of the Colony. Can the past and present comparatively unsatisfactory condition of things be improved by having the actual head of Government away down in Melbourne. 78

More alarming, however, were the new state clauses of the federal constitution, which made the consent of an existing state necessary for its subdivision:

---

76. *CP*, 31 August 1899.

77. A.G.L. Shaw, *The Story of Australia* (London 1972), pp. 190-191.

78. *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 10 August 1899. Cf., report of public meeting, *Charters Towers Eagle*, 19 August 1899.

The Parliament may admit to the Commonwealth or establish new States, and may upon such admission or establishment make or impose such terms and conditions, including the extent of representation in either House of the Parliament, as it thinks fit...A new State may be formed by separation of territory from a State, but only with the consent of the Parliament thereof, and a new State may be formed by the union of two or more States or parts of States, but only with the consent of the Parliaments of the States affected. 79

These clauses were based on the bill drafted by Griffith and adopted by the Sydney Convention in 1891,<sup>80</sup> which in turn was based almost word for word on the new states section of the constitution of the United States.<sup>81</sup> In 1897 and 1898 the Central Queensland League had requested the Federal Convention to provide for Queensland's admission to the federation as three separate states. Although this suggestion was not considered, the Convention discussed a motion for amending the draft constitution to reserve to the Crown any existing power to divide Queensland; this was rejected, partly because of fear of alienating Queensland from federation.<sup>82</sup> In November 1898 northern and central members had formally protested to the Secretary of State about the new state clauses, "which would leave us at the mercy of the people of Southern Queensland", and "deprive us of our right of appeal to the Imperial Parliament".<sup>83</sup> There was no sympathetic response from the Colonial Office: "The separation movement appears for the present to have cooled down and there is no reason to think that these members represent the general wishes of

---

79. Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, Chapter VI New States, clauses 121 and 124.

80. Griffith, draft of a Bill to Constitute Commonwealth of Australia. J.O.L.

81. Macrossan had suggested this at the 1891 Convention, but had later intended to move an amendment giving the federal parliament the same powers of subdivision as the Imperial parliament; his amendment died with him. Macrossan, *National Australasian Convention Debates*, 1891, p. 326; Thynne, *ibid.*, p.477.

82. See *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, pp. 123-124; *BC*, 10, 16 March 1898; Voss, *Separatist Movements in Central Queensland*, p. 109.

83. Northern and Central members to Chamberlain November 1898, *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, p. 122.

Northern or even of Central Queensland;<sup>84</sup> "it is time to snuff these people out".<sup>85</sup>

Several leading opponents of the Federal Bill emphasized the difficulties which would arise from the clauses, which

tied Queensland for an indefinite period, and placed almost unconquerable difficulties in the way of Separation, as the whole colony would vote on a referendum, and the Southern vote being numerically the stronger, would prevent the accomplishment of Separation by overwhelming the vote of those portions of the colony which desired to separate. 86

Nevertheless this issue was not given the same attention in north Queensland as in central Queensland,<sup>87</sup> doubtless because the separation movement itself was then weaker in the north. Still, it may be presumed that die-hard separationists constituted a significant proportion of the 16% who voted "NO" in the north.

In September 1899 Queensland recorded the lowest affirmative vote for federation in Australia, 38,000 to 31,000; 55% of Queensland voters favoured federation, compared to 72% of all Australian voters. In fact it was north Queensland that brought the colony into federation, the rest of the colony polling only 27,271 YES votes against 28,772 NO votes. Not a single northern electorate opposed federation, and of the 13,441 formal votes, 11,217 favoured federation, representing a YES vote of 84%.<sup>88</sup> In contrast the majority of southern electorates opposed the Federal Bill, and all Brisbane metropolitan electorates voted in opposition; southern farmers, merchants and manufacturers feared competition with New South Wales under a system of intercolonial free trade. On the other hand, free trade among the colonies with protection against imports was seen as a boon to sugar producers, more than compensating for

---

84. Wingfield, minute 14 February 1899, on despatch No. 1, CO 234/68.

85. Anderson, minute 14 February 1899, on despatch No. 1, CO 234/68.

86. G. Jackson's speech, *NM*, 30 August 1899. It was assumed that the state government would probably hold a referendum before deciding whether to support separation. Cf., Jenkins, *Attitudes Towards Federation*, pp.100-102.

87. *Ibid.*, p.100

88. See Appendix 10.

possible restrictions on coloured labour.<sup>89</sup> The arguments for and against federation were complex, and it may be presumed that the rationale of voters was no less so. Nevertheless D. Jenkins concludes that the strong support for federation in the north was partly attributable "to the feeling that an affinity existed between federation and separation, and that federation offered a solution to Northern problems".<sup>90</sup>

In 1900, in a final protest before the new state clauses were made law, ten central members of the Legislative Assembly requested the Secretary of State to amend the Commonwealth Bill so as to allow separation without state consent. The Premier, Robert Philp, responded by pointing to the silence of northern members:

the fact that the separationists of the Northern Division of the Colony, whose struggle for the cause of separation is of much older date than that of the separationists of the Central District, and whose sincerity in the cause, though not characterized at present by the same feverish agitation, is as unquestionable as theirs, have not submitted any similar Petition, is strong presumption that the provisions proposed to be amended are not regarded as rendering separation impossible for all time to come...the principle proposed to be enforced by the provisions is the same which has latterly governed Her Majesty's Government with regard to this question.... 91

In 1899 when the Federal Bill was introduced in the Assembly, central members opposed it on the ground that clause 124 would "extinguish all hope of self-government for generations to come".<sup>92</sup> The prediction proved to be accurate for, despite Philp's opinion, the new state clauses of the Commonwealth constitution entirely altered the outlook for separationists. No movement since federation attracted popular support comparable to that of the 1880s and 1890s, although separatist activity continued spasmodically. There was no specifically separatist organization in the north until the 1950s, but attempts were made, notably by central Labour representatives,

---

89. "Federationist" to the Editor, *Sugar Journal*, 15 April 1897. Editorial, *ibid.* *Ibid.*, 15 July, 15 November 1897, 15 February, 15 June 1899. *Mackay Chronicle*, 8 November 1897. *Cairns Argus*, 8 October 1897.

90. Jenkins, *Attitudes Towards Federation*, p.103.

91. Enclosed with Griffith to Chamberlain 16 February 1900, despatch No. 20, CO 234/70.

92. *QPD*, Vol.81, 1899, p.121.

to obtain a favourable resolution on separation in the Queensland Assembly or federal parliament.

In July 1910 T.J. Ryan, Labour member for Barcoo, moved in the Queensland parliament that "the time has arrived when Queensland should be divided into three States...";<sup>93</sup> the motion was carried, but no further action was taken.<sup>94</sup> In 1912 W.G. Higgs, Labour member for Capricornia, moved in the Commonwealth parliament for the formation of two new states in Queensland; the motion did not reach the Senate.<sup>95</sup> The following year J. Adamson, Labour member for Rockhampton, moved a similar motion in the Queensland Assembly, but it was defeated.<sup>96</sup> In 1914 when he again introduced this motion, it met the same fate.<sup>97</sup> Adamson's complaints about the administration of lands, railways, mines and immigration, familiar arguments from 19th century agitations, led to departmental enquiries, but no further action was taken.<sup>98</sup>

After the war, in 1922, F.M. Forde (Labour, Rockhampton) moved in the Assembly for remodelling the Commonwealth constitution to ease creation of new states; a favourable resolution was carried,<sup>99</sup> but no definite action followed. In the early 1920s a formal organization was established in the central district - the Central Queensland New State League. In 1922 the Labour Premier, E.G. Theodore, told a central deputation that the initiative for creating new states must come from the Commonwealth.<sup>100</sup> In contrast, the Prime Minister, S.M. Bruce, acknowledged the Queensland resolution of 1922 in the following year with this statement:

---

93. *QPD*, Vol.105, 1910, p.221.

94. *QPD*, Vol.107, 1910, p.3122. Ellis, *New States*, p.170.

95. *CPD*, Vol.69, 1912, pp.7691-7692. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p.171.

96. *QPD*, Vol.116, 1913, p.2681.

97. *QPD*, Vol.118, 1914, p.1146. *Daily Mail*, 6 May 1914.

98. QSA PRE/A467, No. 7536.

99. *QPD*, Vol.139, 1922, p.224.

100. Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp.171-173.



the first steps necessary will be for your Parliament to affirm the principle and fix the boundaries, terms of partition etc., and forward same to this Government, when the proposals will be submitted for the consideration of the Commonwealth Parliament as provided for in the Constitution. 101

Central separationists had reached an impasse in which all new staters up till the present eventually found themselves, state and federal governments both insisting that the initiative rested with the other.<sup>102</sup>

In 1923 the central movement held a convention at Rockhampton which was attended by representatives from all over Australia. Thereafter central, and later northern, separationists became part of the mainstream of the new states movement in Australia.<sup>103</sup> In 1920 there had been a strong revival of the New England movement, soon followed by efflorescences in Riverina, Monaro in south-eastern New South Wales, and central Queensland.<sup>104</sup> In 1922 the first All-Australia New States Convention was held in Albury to discuss amendment of the federal constitution to relax the provisions for new states;<sup>105</sup> representatives came from New England, Monaro, south coast and central west of New South Wales; from southern and central Queensland; and from Western Australia, where movements had recently sprung up in Albany and the eastern goldfields.<sup>106</sup> New state movements then became closely allied to the movement for constitutional revision, demanding in particular that creation of new states be made

---

101. *Ibid.*, p.168. Cf., Hughes to Higgs 30 October 1922, quoted *ibid.*, pp.160-161.

102. See *Canberra Times*, 3 May 1967, quoting H. Holt; *North Queensland Register*, 11 March 1972; *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13 April 1972; *Courier Mail*, 11 October 1972, quoting J. Bjelke-Petersen.

103. E.g., see *North Queensland Register*, 27 May 1972.

104. V.C. Thompson, "New States in Australia" *AQ*, September 1929, pp.47-53. H. Tubbs, "The New States of Australia" *United Empire*, July 1920.

105. Drummond, "The New States Movement", pp.49-50.

106. Ellis, *New States*, p.164.

contingent on a favourable referendum in the area concerned, rather than on consent from the state parliament.<sup>107</sup>

In this period the Australian new states movement also developed close connections with the Country Party, which shared the movement's anti-metropolitan ideology and which, from the time of its formation in New South Wales, incorporated a new states plank in its platform.<sup>108</sup> Prior to the First World War, the Australian Labor Party had endorsed new states, but by 1918 it had adopted a scheme for "unification", whereby legislative powers would be concentrated in the federal parliament; state governments would be abolished; and over 30 small provincial bodies would be created with powers delegated by the Commonwealth government.<sup>109</sup> This decision was altered by a subsequent Federal Conference of the Labor Party, the new resolution becoming a permanent plank of the federal platform of the party: to amend the Commonwealth constitution "to invest the Commonwealth Parliament with unlimited legislative powers and authority to create (or re-order) States or Provinces with delegated powers".<sup>110</sup> Conservative groups opposed this aim as a means of augmenting central

107. In 1929 the Peden Royal Commission which had been appointed by the federal government submitted a majority report recommending a constitutional amendment to allow the creation of a new state "out of an existing state without the consent of the State Parliament", and suggesting machinery for creation of new states. Almost immediately the government, the Bruce-Page coalition, fell, and the report was permanently shelved. Harman, "New State Agitation in Northern New South Wales, 1920-1929", p.36. D.H. Drummond, *The Australian Constitution and New States* (Sydney 1949). Pamphlet issued by New South Wales Constitutional League. See also *North Queensland Register*, 27 May 1972.

108. R.G. Neale, "New States Movement" *AQ*, September 1950, pp.16-18. D. Aitkin, *The Country Party in New South Wales: A Study of Organisation and Survival* (Canberra 1972), p.15, p.34. Opposition to the Lang government in New South Wales gave an impetus to the New England and Riverina movements. Drummond, "The New States Movement", pp.55-56.

109. See Ellis, *New States*, pp. 133-150.

110. A.A. Calwell, *Labor Party and New States* (Inverell 1950), p.2.

authority to facilitate socialization:<sup>111</sup> as the president of the New England movement warned the North Queensland Convention in 1956, "Unification is one of the basic objects of Communism".<sup>112</sup>

From the beginning of the century the need to develop and populate northern Australia in the interests of national defence had been emphasized in new state propaganda.<sup>113</sup> During the Second World War northern defencelessness and lack of development were brought home forcibly, and new staters also viewed with alarm the growth of federal power during the war. Afterwards, local organization began with the formation of Development Leagues in many northern towns. In 1948 a new state movement was organized in Townsville, supported by the Northern Country Party, local Chambers of Commerce, and anti-Labour elements.<sup>114</sup> The issue received considerable publicity during campaigning for the 1950 state election, when all parties made an appeal to new state sentiment. In their joint policy speech the Liberal and Country Parties promised a referendum:

The Country Party and the Liberal Party agree that the demand for separation is fully justified and that such a change would prove beneficial, not only to the northern part of the State, but also for Queensland as a whole. A representative convention will be called to make recommendations as to the proper boundaries of a new northern State and as to the terms and conditions of formation. After that we propose to submit the matter to a referendum of the people concerned and if approved, to undertake to proceed without delay with all the formalities which are necessary to make a New State an accomplished fact. 115

- 
111. See G.C. Sharman, "Federalism and the Study of the Australian Political System" *AJPH*, Vol.21, No.3, 1975, p.12. Cf., Drummond, *Australian Constitution and New States*. J.A. Lorimer, "Riverina Movement" *AQ*, June 1931, pp.59-61. Cf., E. Page, *The Issue of the Hour* (Sydney 1931), pp.8-9. For further objections to Labour's scheme, see W.G. Mohony, *Unification* (Tamworth n.d.).
112. New State for North Queensland Movement, *Report and Minutes of the Second Convention, Townsville 1956*. Queensland Univ. Library.
113. E.g., J.N. MacIntyre, *The Empty North Casts the First Stone* (1922). *Idem.*, *A High Explosive from the Empty North* (1922). Mitchell Library. Cf., U.R. Ellis, *New States for National Security* (Canberra 1954), pp.1-6.
114. I.N. Moles, *Federal and State Attitudes to Movements for Regional Self-Government, 1901-54* (B.A.Hons. University of Queensland 1955), p.74.
115. U.R. Ellis, *Capricornia New State Movement: financial and economic aspects of new states* (Canberra 1959).

The Labour Premier, E.M. Hanlon, promised to recommend new states as soon as they were financially viable; nevertheless he prophesied financial ruin to any new state immediately established and dealt brusquely with a deputation from the North Queensland Separation League, denigrating its demands for immediate action as "silly".<sup>116</sup>

Echoing the claims of 19th century forerunners, the league emphasized the viability of a northern state, referring to trade statistics, railway earnings, population, and even reviving the old comparison with Moreton Bay at the time of Queensland's separation from New South Wales. New staters contended that northerners were virtually disfranchised, with only 13 representatives in an Assembly of 75. Demands were made for increased representation, decentralization of industry and railway construction, especially in the interests of defence, and, as a preliminary, a measure of financial separation to prepare the way for a new state by dividing assets.<sup>117</sup> The decentralization argument was stressed, new staters denouncing the drift of population to Brisbane to the detriment of rural areas.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, their opponents used the concentration of population in the south as a major argument against separation.<sup>119</sup>

---

116. *Sunday Mail*, 21 January 1951. S.W. Jack's Cutting Book, No.44, pp.219-220. J.O.L. Neale, "New States Movement", p.19. In 1951 the Federal Conference of the Labor Party resolved that "Without necessarily accepting the conception of New States as a means of more rapid development of Australia, we support the opinion favouring a more effective subdivision of Australia, on a regional basis, with improved forms of local administration, as being essential for economic development, welfare and defence of Australia." Quoted in New England New State Movement, *The A.L.P. and New States* (Armidale 1963).

117. *Brisbane Telegraph*, 14 April 1950.

118. Between the census years 1933 and 1947 Queensland's population rose from 947,530 to 1,106,269, the population of Brisbane from 299,748 to 402,172. Brisbane registered the highest rate of increase of all state capitals, and in 1951 contained one-third of the state's population. While Brisbane's population increased by 102,424 in this period, north Queensland gained only 11,659, and central Queensland 4,427. *Sunday Mail*, 21 January 1951. Cf., *North Queensland Register*, 12 August 1972.

119. E.g., *ibid.*, 29 April 1972, quoting Sir Gordon Chalk, state leader of the Liberal Party, and then Treasurer.

At a convention in Mareeba in August 1955 the New State for North Queensland Movement was launched,<sup>120</sup> an organization consisting of district branches, each of which sent delegates to an annual convention where a central executive body, based in Townsville, was appointed. The movement immediately set about drafting a constitution for the proposed new state. The programme of the movement was to educate northerners about the advantages of self-government by means of public meetings, leaflets and newspaper publicity; to form branches and enlarge the movement; to promote northern productivity and, pending the formation of a new state, "to strive by all means to induce our present Queensland Administration to finance expansion programmes in North Queensland on a Production basis and not a per capita basis as at present".<sup>121</sup> Clearly the aims, arguments and methods of the movement closely resembled those of precursors in the 19th century.

The movement maintained close links with the New England movement, which had been revived after the war, and with the Australian new states movement in general, especially through U.R. Ellis, Director of the Office of Rural Research in Canberra and a leading votary of new states.<sup>122</sup> In the 1950s the central Queensland movement, then known as the Capricornia movement, was also revived, on the initiative of the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce.<sup>123</sup> There was close liaison between northern and central separationists: delegates were exchanged, and joint submissions and deputations to the Queensland government were organized.<sup>124</sup>

In 1957 a Liberal-Country Party coalition government was formed in Queensland, which had promised in its pre-election joint policy speech to take steps to form new states when petitions were received from local residents:

- 
120. New State for North Queensland Movement, *Report and Minutes of the First Convention, Mareeba 1955*. Queensland Univ. Library. W.J. Chapman of Townsville was appointed president, and A.D. Hooper of Townsville organizing secretary.
121. *New State for North Queensland Movement: Rules and Objects* (Townsville 1953). National Library.
122. *Armidale Express*, 9 December 1964. *New State News*, 30 June 1953.
123. *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 24 April 1959.
124. *Ibid.*, 20 May 1959. New State for North Queensland Movement, *Report and Minutes of the Second Convention, Townsville 1956*.

Our Parties favour the creation of New States as we believe their creation would decentralise and stimulate development. Our whole policy is based on bringing about decentralisation, both of people and industries, and the subdivision of our large State into smaller, compact self-governing units, under the terms of the Federal Constitution, would effectively bring that about.

For this reason, if petitioned by the people of North or Central Queensland or any other part of the State prepared to undertake the responsibilities of self-government, we would undertake the constitutional steps to create a New State. 125

In that year the third annual convention of the New State for North Queensland Movement at Charters Towers adopted a petition, and subsequently petitions signed by a total of 29,600 people, representing 12.5% of the total voting population, were sent from the central and northern districts.<sup>126</sup> But this elicited no positive action from the government, which then claimed that revenue and population were insufficient to support new states, and that the movements were not popular.<sup>127</sup>

In 1956, following an election undertaking of the Menzies government,<sup>128</sup> the federal parliament had appointed a Joint Committee on Constitutional Review, whose report was presented in November 1959. The Committee was unanimous in recommending that the Commonwealth be given power to create new states, and that the constitution should give the people of the new state area and of the whole state an opportunity to express their opinion at a referendum; despite pressure from members on both sides of the House, however, the report was never tabled for discussion in parliament.<sup>129</sup>

The northern movement then began to advocate a referendum, and this has remained its main objective until the present.<sup>130</sup> The

---

125. A.D. Hooper, *Why North Queensland Needs Self Government* (Townsville 1965), p.16.

126. *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 1 May 1959.

127. Capricornia New State Movement, *The Premier and New States! What Now?* (Leaflet produced in October 1959).

128. The initiative for this came from the New England New State Movement.

129. Hooper, *Why Self Government*, pp.8-9.

130. E.g., *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 10 December 1971, 26 February, 3 March 1972.

movement was reorganized in 1971 when the North Queensland Self Government League was formed at a public meeting in Townsville. In 1972 the league submitted its case to the Premier, J. Bjelke-Petersen, suggesting terms of reference for a committee of enquiry which, it argued, should include representatives of the state government, the federal government, and the league;<sup>131</sup> the government did not respond to the submission. In 1972 Bjelke-Petersen rejected a northern proposal for a referendum in the Northern Division to coincide with the state elections.<sup>132</sup>

In mid-1977 the North Queensland State Party was formed to contest all northern seats but one in the forthcoming state and federal elections. The party began an active publicity campaign, including full-page advertisements in local newspapers, slogans on T-shirts and bumper stickers, and a campaign song, "North Queensland Belongs To Me".<sup>133</sup> Presenting a very conservative party platform, it asked electors to vote first for a new state and then as they would normally.<sup>134</sup> The party hoped to gain the balance of power in the state parliament, but not one of its candidates was successful.

In April 1981 the North Queensland Self Government League was reconstituted, with branches in Townsville, Ayr, and Home Hill.<sup>135</sup> Northerners were indignant that in the new 18-man state cabinet there was only one northern representative, V. Bird, the Minister for Northern Development.<sup>136</sup>

Despite the persistence of a relatively small group of organizers, recent separatist movements have failed to attract popular support. Perhaps the importance of states has diminished in the public mind since the establishment of the Commonwealth government and the gradual extension of its functions; the creation of a national economy with modern transportation and a standardized technological culture has undermined regional barriers and ties.

---

131. North Queensland Self Government League, *Submission on the Establishment of a Committee of Enquiry* (Townsville 1972).

132. *North Queensland Register*, 11 March 1972.

133. *National Review*, 18-24 August 1977.

134. *The Bulletin*, 30 July 1977.

135. *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 22, 23 April 1981.

136. *Courier Mail*, 9 January 1981.

Class affiliations have become the main determinant of political behaviour, and party divisions have become entrenched. Moreover the Labor Party has not supported new states, advocating unification and small regional bodies instead. Finally the movements have been weakened, like all their forerunners, by internal dissensions over strategy,<sup>137</sup> and over the site of the new capital.<sup>138</sup>

---

137. Report of public meeting, *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 3 March 1972.

138. *Ibid.*, 9 September 1972. This has remained a source of contention despite the League's proposal to have different government departments centred in different towns.



## CONCLUSION

During the entire period from 1866 until at least 1894 separatism was a continuing influence on political behaviour in northern Queensland, although organizations aiming at achieving separation were active only during three periods - 1866-67, 1869-72 and 1882-94. Separatism was not dead in the intervening years: in part it was diverted to alternative schemes purporting to confer some of the same benefits, in part it was consciously marking time until circumstances became more propitious. Even after the demise of the movement in 1894, the advocacy of separation did not cease entirely.

The first movement arose in 1866 mainly in response to challenges to Bowen's early district supremacy, which had seemed to guarantee its destiny as future capital; amalgamating with separatists in the central district, the movement aimed for territorial separation with responsible government. After northern efforts were diverted for a short period to a scheme for provincial councils as an alternative to separation, another movement developed in 1869-72 when for the first time a separate colony was proposed in north Queensland as distinct from central Queensland; because northern population was still scanty, a Crown Colony was proposed. During the remainder of the 1870s northerners focused, without success, on schemes for financial separation, whereby local revenue would have been devoted to local works; on two occasions - in 1876 and 1878 - initiatives from Bowen for territorial separation proved fruitless. From 1882 to 1894 there was the most popular, most sustained, and best organized attempt to obtain separation, with responsible government. When this movement declined after 1894, northerners followed initiatives from the central Queensland separation movement; interest in separation did not die completely in the north, as was shown during campaigning prior to the federal referendum in 1899. However, federation completely altered the outlook for separatists; in this century separatist agitation has been sporadic and, compared to 19th century movements, has attracted little popular support.

The similarity between movements of organization, strategy and rationale is remarkable. Later movements cannot be understood fully without an appreciation of their indebtedness to forerunners

in north Queensland and, indeed, in southern colonies. In fact, northern movements in this century and even at the present day reflect this heritage. One especially significant example of continuity was the delimitation of north Queensland: since it was established as the proposed border in 1869, the "Cape Palmerston line", or approximately the 22nd parallel, has been adopted with only slight variation by separationists up to the present.<sup>1</sup> This was important in promoting a sense of regional identity.

As well as analyzing northern separation movements, this thesis has surveyed numerous 19th century schemes for financial separation and decentralization, mainly because of the close connection between their fates and the development of separation movements. Their continuity of form, following Palmer's bill of 1870 and culminating in Griffith's grand plan for a system of United Provinces within Queensland, has been shown. These schemes were virtually a permanent feature of Queensland parliamentary sessions, appearing even more regularly than separation motions and prompting one northern editor to write sardonically of the "decentralization ghost", doomed to walk the earth year after year and never be laid to rest.<sup>2</sup>

Those who advocated these schemes in good faith believed that they would provide a solution to many of the problems which separationists sought to remedy. Often they were proposed as political manoeuvres with no serious intention of putting them into effect; with the aim of mollifying or dividing separationists or disarming criticism from Britain. Griffith in particular demonstrated political finesse by judiciously-timed revivals of the decentralization promise. Northerners who supported such schemes sometimes hailed them as substitutes for separation; sometimes they welcomed them as stepping-stones to separation, thus giving southern representatives plausible grounds for opposition. Repeatedly, however, schemes drafted by southern parliamentarians failed to meet northern demands: the advantages of decentralization paled beside those expected from separation. Thus it was only during the movements' periods of

- 
1. See O.P. Coaldrake, *The Political Geography of a New State Boundary: An Appraisal of Factors Affecting North Queensland* (B.A.Hons. JCU 1973), pp.2, 6, 10-11.
  2. *TH*, 28 June 1890. Clearly their omnipresence was directly related to the persistence of northern separationists.

quiescence that decentralization attracted popular support in the north. Southerners, who usually thought that the schemes made far too many concessions, were also alienated from them. Mainly because of southern resistance - for in most cases northern members accepted them as positive, though inadequate, reforms - only two of the many schemes were enacted: the Provincial Councils Bill of 1864 and the Local Registries Bill of 1887. Of these only the latter proved of practical value.

Lack of success in achieving decentralization and disillusionment with southern promises stimulated separatism. The process by which regional feelings may be politicized has been one of the underlying concerns of this thesis. A sense of distinctiveness does not inevitably produce separatism: diverse regions may be complementary within a single polity. Nor is antagonism necessary for regionalism to become a political factor; a sense of separateness may develop from mere distinctiveness and the inhabitants of a region may aspire to give this separateness political expression. Nevertheless, strong separatist feelings have in practice developed where there has been a strong sense of grievance over existing political organization. In north Queensland antagonism towards the south arose from a clash of interests in which the advantage of one group came to be seen as the disadvantage of the other. Thus the idea of incompatibility became accepted in the north. Failure to achieve decentralization of administration was the most important reason why northerners became convinced that separation was the only possible solution for their problems.

Separatism derived support from all classes, all occupation groups, every district, virtually every town, and every political party in north Queensland, though not with equal fervour from all at any given time. The 1886 separation petition, allegedly signed by 10,006 adult males from all major towns and all occupations, illustrated the popularity of the movement, even though some of its signatures may have been invalid.

Of course the extent of adherents' commitment to the cause varied widely. Only a fairly small number were totally devoted to the movement to the extent of being willing to subordinate all other political objectives to it; they tended, moreover, to be men with relatively little influence outside the movement. No northern politician was prepared to sacrifice personal ambition and all other

political gains to separation; probably A. Ogden, who relinquished A.L.F. endorsement by insisting on advocating separation in parliament,<sup>3</sup> and W.V. Brown who sacrificed a ministerial position because he believed in separation,<sup>4</sup> came closest to this ideal. It seems clear that many joined the movement when it was popular and when success seemed probable - a band-wagon effect - but were not prepared to expend any great effort to advance it, least of all in adversity. Furthermore, some supported it not because they strongly desired separation but as a means of keeping northern interests before the Assembly and exerting pressure on government.

Separationists' motives were very complex, varying over time as well as among individuals, sectional groups, political parties and different localities. They included such diverse motives as a desire to prevent northern revenue being spent in the south; anger at tax impositions which bore more heavily upon the north; hopes of obtaining coolie or other coloured labour; a desire to retain northern offices for northerners; frustration born of political impotence; interest in reciprocity treaties with southern colonies; party political advantage; personal political ambition; and anticipation of higher property values after separation.

Historians have generally emphasized grievances against the south, especially economic grievances, but it has been argued in this thesis that aspirations also inspired separationists: the desire for genuine self-government, one they regarded as so basic a part of their British inheritance that it required no other justification; for political institutions which would reflect and foster a regional community regarded as distinctive; for expression and recognition of regional identity. Thus northern separatism had a positive, optimistic aspect; it was not simply a negative reaction to the existing regime. This explains the apparent paradox that in the 1880s and 1890s Townsville, which no-one could claim had been neglected by the government and which was then at the height of prosperity, led the separation movement. The fact that these sentiments are difficult to measure does not make them less real or less important. These are aspirations akin to those which have

---

3. *TES*, 8 April 1893.

4. *TH*, 28 January 1888.

led to the creation of many new nations in the last 40 years. Clifford Geertz has commented, analyzing the motives of peoples seeking to establish new states in contemporary times:

[they] are simultaneously animated by two powerful, thoroughly interdependent, yet distinct and often actually opposed motives - the desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions "matter" [and the] demand for progress, for a rising standard of living, more effective political order, greater social justice.... The one aim is...a search for an identity, and a demand that that identity be publicly acknowledged as having import....the other aim is practical.... 5

Economic interest was not the sole motive, but nevertheless gold and northern separatism were closely connected. The first movement in 1866 arose before the first significant gold discovery in the north - at Cape River in 1867 - showing that it was not an essential precondition for separatism. But gold fostered a sense of prosperity and progress in the north, an optimism which was a key component of northern separatism after 1866. Up to 1887 gold worth over £19 million was produced in Queensland, over £12 million of which was produced in the north.<sup>6</sup> Gold boosted northern revenue, income and exports, and through the operation of the multiplier stimulated many northern industries, most notably pastoralism; it seemed to guarantee the viability of a new colony; and it set north Queensland economically apart from the south.<sup>7</sup> For similar reasons the discovery of gold had given impetus to separation movements in the South Island of New Zealand;<sup>8</sup> it also contributed to moves towards responsible government in Western Australia;<sup>9</sup> revenue from gold produced at Mount Morgan was an important basis of the demand for

- 
5. C. Geertz, "The integrative revolution" in C. Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States* (New York 1963), p.108.
  6. Townsville Committee to Knutsford 11 January 1890, *QV&P*, 1890, Vol.1, p.808.
  7. Lewis, *Ports of Queensland*, pp.26-27, p.29.
  8. Morrell, *Provincial System*, p.126, p.133.
  9. Keith, *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, Vol.1, p.26.

central Queensland separation as well.<sup>10</sup> In the same way, the discovery of North Sea oil has stimulated Scottish nationalism,<sup>11</sup> and the discovery of large copper deposits has encouraged the movement for Bougainville secession from Niugini.<sup>12</sup>

There was no clear correlation between the rise and fall of separation movements and vacillations of the trade cycle.<sup>13</sup> If anything the evidence again points to a link between separatism and economic optimism rather than pessimism. The movement of 1866 blossomed before the financial crisis in July of that year and continued in spite rather than because, of severe economic recession. True, northerners attributed the crisis to the financial incapacity of the government and its dereliction in developing northern resources, but this was merely a convenient stick with which to beat the government. Rather than attributing separatism to the effects of economic downswing, contemporary commentators were almost unanimous in explaining the decline of the movement in terms of the debilitating effects of recession. Indeed in 1869-70, with the economy on the road to recovery and northern auguries looking particularly good because of the first major gold finds, separatism once again reared its head. In the decade after 1872 there was no concerted separatist moves despite the fact that during this period, as the investigations of the Royal Commission on Financial Separation revealed in 1877, the

- 
10. Mercer, minute 1 February 1894, on despatch No.215, CO 234/58. Morehead to Norman 22 May 1890, *QV&P*, 1891, Vol.1, p.1159.
  11. A. Birch, "Minority Nationalist Movements and Theories of Political Integration" *World Politics*, Vol.30, No.3, 1978, p.331. Regional movements flourished in the Basque country and Catalonia in Spain, and in Biafra and Katanga, all areas of relative prosperity.
  12. See J. Griffin, "Ethnonationalism and Integration: An Optimistic View" *Meanjin Quarterly*, Vol.34, No.3, 1975, p.246; L. Hannett, "The Case for Bougainville Secession" *ibid.*, p.292.
  13. An attempt was made to correlate separatist activity in the period 1885-94 with economic activity, using company registrations as an indicator of economic activity; no pattern was discernible. See Appendix 11.

discrepancy between revenue contributed by the north and public expenditure in the north was most marked;<sup>14</sup> in the early 1880s, on the other hand, when economic discrimination against the north, at least by Griffith's showing,<sup>15</sup> had been substantially mitigated, north Queensland's most sustained attempt to achieve separation was made. Robert Philp emphasized in 1886 that the movement was not a response to economic grievances:

This movement was started about four and a half years ago....It was commenced when the McIlwraith Government were in power; when there was a full supply of black labour; when a little loan money was being spent in the North; when that which has proved the greatest boon ever granted to the North - the British-India mail service - was established, and when apparently we had not much to complain of. 16

The final collapse of the movement coincided with widespread depression following the banking crisis of 1893. These trends - the reverse of what one would expect if economic grievances had been uppermost in the minds of separationists - bring conventional interpretations of northern separatism into question.

When north Queensland was first settled in the 1860s it was generally assumed that it would after a time be made a separate colony, mainly because the process of separation from the mother colony had become established in Australia as the normal course of political evolution and because of the huge area of Queensland. During the 19th century most Queenslanders, including many leading opponents of the movements, believed that northern separation was inevitable. Why then did it fail to eventuate? The basic reasons were southern resistance, northern disunity and, perhaps, separationists' inflexible notions of appropriate strategy.

Queensland governments, whatever their composition, invariably opposed separation. Even Premiers who in opposition, or outside of parliament, had expressed sympathy with or support for separatist movements, considered it their duty to oppose them whilst in office.

- 
14. E.g., see "Balances Adjusted", Appendix No.12, Report of Financial Separation Commission, *QV&P*, 1877, Vol.2, p.188.
  15. Section 3 and Appendix B, Griffith to Musgrave 19 January 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.1, pp.422-424, 426-435.
  16. *QPD*, Vol.49, 1886, p.563.

Of course they were also swayed by the views of ministerial colleagues and of their supporters in parliament. With few exceptions southern representatives, who formed a large majority of the Queensland parliament, voted as a bloc in opposition to separation, and even to most decentralization measures.

Constantly aware of this immovable opposition, separationists appealed to the British authorities who, ironically, wished above all to see the question resolved by local agreement. Recognizing the implications of responsible government, and unwilling to incur the wrath of other self-governing colonies by hasty interference in Queensland's internal affairs, the Colonial Office was content to support any expedient as a substitute for separation; gratefully, it seized upon any pretext to avoid a final decision. Two minutes of 1894 illustrate an underlying disinclination to act:

It is desirable to avoid as long as possible questions which provoke controversy locally. The line to take at the present moment seems to me to be that indicated at the conclusion of Mr. Nelsons's letter - that the present financial and commercial position of the colony is unfavourable to any schemes of territorial partition. 17

The present position of Queensland, & the result of the division on the question of N. Separation (11 N. members only out of 16 effectively supported the proposal) absolve us from taking action on the matter at present. 18

On the other hand, the Colonial Office at no time denied the right of colonists to appeal to the Crown for redress of grievances; nor did it repudiate the right of the British parliament to legislate on separation and colonial boundaries. But officials knew that even if the Colonial Office was convinced of the justice of separationists' demands, cabinet and then parliament would need to be persuaded. For this reason, an "overwhelming case" was required. The attitude of the Colonial Office to separation was not so negative as it has sometimes been portrayed; it is clear that in late 1890 it was prepared, for its own part, to introduce enabling legislation in the House of Commons, but was forestalled by Griffith's promise of a more extensive form of decentralization.

---

17. Mercer, minute 5 April 1894, on despatch No.9, CO 234/59.

18. Buxton, minute 31 May 1894, on despatch No.32, CO 234/59.



Pinning their hopes on the British authorities, separationists directed their campaign at the Colonial Office. Without doubt they were under a fundamental misapprehension about the separation powers of the Crown, and in spite of arguments from Queensland governments, a Governor, and the Colonial Office itself, they refused to be enlightened. It is easy to conclude, as opponents, in an effort to intimidate, always said, and as adherents increasingly suspected, that their whole strategy was misguided. Yet few other options were available. Certainly there was little chance that by concentrating their campaign on the Queensland parliament they would have been more successful: despite separationists' persistence over a period of 50 years, southerners not only refused to concede separation but also rejected lesser reforms such as financial separation or decentralization. The possibility of secession was considered only rarely, and never seriously. Secession is by nature a revolutionary act, and separationists were profoundly constitutional in their approach; their belief in the separation powers of the Crown made secession seem unnecessary.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps separationists would have been more successful in threatening or cajoling the Queensland parliament, or in stirring the Colonial Office into action, if they had been more united. Internal dissension was a recurring handicap, contributing to the failure of every attempt to obtain separation or decentralization. Rivalry between central and northern districts undermined the movements in 1866 and 1869-72; lack of co-operation was probably a source of weakness in the 1890s as well. Sectional antagonism - between townspeople and squatters in the 1860s, between miners and sugar producers in the 80s and 90s - made it difficult to secure unity. During the 1870s there was no consensus on the relative merits of territorial separation, financial separation, and the various government proposals to reduce northern problems. In the 1880s and 1890s inter-town rivalries, party differences, and class suspicions combined to blast all hope of unity. The presence of an

---

19. As the *Townsville Herald* remarked, "we have not been fairly treated by Lord Knutsford in the matter of our demand for self-government. But we know that, in the end, the Imperial Government will yield, with good grace to our solicitations. Had we only a Brisbane Government to look to for this measure of justice, we should, feeling that all argument was useless, prepare at once for revolt." *TH*, 10 August 1889.

organized counter movement was especially damaging since British officials, dependent upon the reports of an antagonistic government, a disapproving Governor, and interested separationists, found it impossible to gauge its strength.

Rivalry and jealousy between northern settlements were constant problems. Competition for selection as the new capital was especially divisive, leading, for example, to Bowen's virtual abandonment of the movement in the 1890s after more than two decades of constancy. Most often the question resolved itself into one of attitudes towards Townsville. In the 1880s and 1890s Townsville was widely regarded as the strongest contender for the honour; Townsville was closely identified with the separation movement itself; and Townsville had earned an onerous reputation for self-aggrandizement as a result of its success in competition both for trade and for public expenditure. The result was that the capital question alienated many northerners from the movement.<sup>20</sup>

Localism proved in many ways to be a divisive force. The interests of most northern towns were tied to one of the north's three great industries - grazing, sugar-growing, or mining - which had separate, and to some extent conflicting, economic interests. But even among towns with the same industrial interests, rivalry over trade and government expenditure made co-operation difficult;<sup>21</sup> the government was able to play upon these local rivalries, practising a version of "divide and rule" by dangling public funds for projects such as the Herberton-coast railway before particular northern constituencies.

Notwithstanding, localism should not be seen as a force inherently counteractive to regional ties and separatism.<sup>22</sup> At times local attachments provided motive force for separation movements. In Townsville, for instance, separation was regarded as a means of

---

20. Yet there is no evidence that the possibility of its establishment as capital was a major influence on separationists in Townsville. No doubt many saw it as a possible, even probable, fringe-benefit, while for some such as land holders it may have been the most salient advantage of separation. But for most people in Townsville it seemed that the general benefits of separation were sufficient to motivate their leadership of the movement in the 1880s and 1890s.

21. Sullivan, *Localism in North Queensland*, p.i, pp.128-129.

22. Cf., *ibid.*, p.i, p.11, p.85, p.117.

uplifting the status of the town, which was expected to continue its rôle as commercial capital in the new colony even if it failed to become political capital. Likewise in Charters Towers separation was interpreted as a means of forming a new mining colony where the miner would be paramount and Charters Towers, as the largest producer in the industry, would be accorded due recognition. It is probable that in every northern settlement separation had a different meaning, its nuances varying according to local perspectives.<sup>23</sup>

In view of the multiplicity of definitions of a region, the development of many different group ties in north Queensland is not unexpected. Of relevance is the geographer's distinction between formal and functional regions: a formal region is defined by certain dominant characteristics spread evenly across its area, whereas a functional region is defined in terms of a significant economic, social or political relationship. A town and its hinterland, for example, form a functional region determined by a commercial trading relationship. In north Queensland this led to a set of group ties, usually labelled "localism": there were many different regions within north Queensland each evoking loyalty from its inhabitants. The relationships between these various group identifications were complex and ever-changing. There was no necessary conflict between them - people could belong at the same time to many different groups and find their identity in many different ways; as Hans Kohn pointed out in his famous enquiry into the concept of nationalism, "group-consciousness is never exclusive".<sup>24</sup> There was no necessary, fundamental conflict between localism and loyalty to north Queensland, but neither was there an automatic identity, or even harmony, of interest; at times conflicts arose and when they did there was no guarantee that even the most ardent separationist would always subordinate local to north Queensland loyalty.

---

23. Cf., D.J. Bercuson, "Regionalism and 'Unlimited Identity' in Western Canada" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, p.124 - "This regionalism was only an extension of the allegiances and experiences of the immediate neighbourhood. It is reflected in the tendency that westerners have to speak about what 'the west' feels and what 'the west' wants when in truth they are only talking about their province, their city, even their neighbourhood."

24. Quoted by Potter & Manning (eds.), *Nationalism and Sectionalism in America*, p.83.

Together with political weakness as a result of the overwhelming number of southern representatives, party rivalry was another important cause of the failure of the movement of the 1880s and 1890s. After the rudiments of a party system had developed in Queensland by the 1880s, the separation movement became entangled in party politics. Opposition to the government of the day naturally increased separatist fervour; opposition to the policies of the government often manifested itself as opposition to the existing distribution of functions between central government and regions. There was always a temptation to try to use separation to promote a party. This was accomplished most successfully by McIlwraith's followers, who could point to Griffith's determined opposition to the movement, and less successfully by the Labour party in the 1890s, although Liberals also tried to turn the separation issue to party advantage. This was yet another source of internecine friction within the movement. Its effects were particularly evident among northern members of parliament.

Two organizational components of the movement can be identified—the northern leagues, and the parliamentary representatives; this was recognized in 1886 when the representatives were accorded *ex-officio* membership of the Separation Council. The movement always repudiated any authority on the part of the Queensland parliament to grant or withhold separation, but it courted parliamentary members as accredited representatives of northerners; their influence was increased and they were identified in England as leaders of the movement when sent as delegates to the Colonial Office. However the years 1886–94 witnessed a progressive falling-out between these two centres of separatist organization. Repeatedly disillusioned separationists bemoaned their betrayal by northern members. However members worked within a context entirely different from that of northern agitators: confronted by an overwhelming southern majority, members sought to protect northern interests by creating a solid northern phalanx in the Assembly, but since the northern group included anti-separationists, unanimity could be achieved only on measures short of separation. The exigencies of the parliamentary system often forced separationist members to co-operate and to compromise with other northern representatives. Party rivalry also swayed members' attitudes: northern members' opposition to Griffith's decentralization bills in 1887 was a clear instance;

Macrossan's silence on financial separation, decentralization and separation during his terms of office can only be interpreted in this way. Separation could also be compromised by members' personal ambition: many attributed the decline of the movement in the mid-1890s partly to McIlwraith's astute policy of conciliating its parliamentary leaders with portfolios and other distinctions.

The separation movements thus failed in their avowed objective, but they still produced a number of tangible results. Most importantly, by keeping northern interests consistently before the Queensland Assembly they probably secured for north Queensland more political concessions than would otherwise have been the case; no doubt this was all some supporters expected or desired. The Local Registries Act of 1887 divided the colony into three administrative divisions, following the boundaries set out in previous decentralization bills, which in turn were based on the claims of northern and central separationists. In September 1900 the boundaries were amended to add to the northern division the North Gregory, which had been claimed by northern separationists in the 1880s and 1890s. Thus the tripartite division of Queensland for administrative purposes was an indirect legacy of separation movements. Northern separatism may also have provided some of the impetus for the Local Government Act of 1878, which provided for the establishment of municipalities, and for the Divisional Boards Act of 1879.<sup>25</sup> The practice of keeping separate divisional financial accounts, which was continued until 1898 for revenue and expenditure, and until 1902 for loan apportionments, was another result of separatist agitation.<sup>26</sup>

Northern separatism was very much a part of the colonial era of Queensland. Politics were fairly informal, political groupings were largely personal, politicians were mainly amateur, and parties as we know them did not exist. The transformation brought about by the rise of the Labor Party and the achievement of federation left no room for a movement with the aims, methods and range of support of the separationists.

---

25. See Morrison, *Local Government in Queensland*, p.17.

26. In 1914 Adamson requested its restoration, but cabinet refused. Adamson to Barnes 8 January 1914, QSA PRE/A467, No.98267, with No.7536.

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX I1882 Committee of Northern Separation League

L.F. Sachs (president)	W.P. Walker
W. Kirk (vice-president)	Halloran
T. Willmetts (vice-president)	W. Macpherson
G. Simpson	W. Hollis Hopkins
W.J. Castling	Richardson
Cannan	J. Marshall
R. Philp	P.F. Hanran
Hurst	W. Lennon
R. Rollwagen	Knapp
Cowley	Norris
W.T. Morris	A.G. Bundock
Armati	H. Benwell
Hobson	D. Clarke
R.A. Goldring	Barrett
Ayton	S.N. Allen
Miller	Rev. W. Gray

From *TH*, 24 December 1887.

APPENDIX 2Committee of Mackay Separation League at 31 December 1884

M.J. Fay (president)	W. Robertson
W.G. Hodges (secretary)	J. Mackay
E.P. Ashdown (treasurer)	T. Stewart
T. Pearce	E.M. Long
J. Harney	G.H. Chidgey
H.B. Black	W.T. Paget
E.V. Reid	A.R. Mackenzie
P.M. Hynes	P. Raymond
A.T. Ball	W.J. Cameron
A.H. Lloyd	J.P. Kemp
J. Ellis	F.H. Smith
D. Lacy	A.R. McGregor
D.H. Dalrymple	J.V. Chataway
C.C. Rawson	J.H. Sharp
A. Florence	C.R. Dutailis
H. Bell	Dimmock
C. Webster	Abbott
E. Bromberg	

From *MM*, 29 October, 15, 22 November 1884.



APPENDIX 31885 Separation Convention

<u>District</u>	<u>Delegate</u>	<u>Townsville Men</u>
Townsville	T. Willmet, J. Ahearne	Willmet, Ahearne
Hughenden	R.A. Goldring, W. Hayes	Goldring, Hayes
Burdekin	R.W. Graham, W. Oliver	
Ingham	A.S. Cowley, J. Macintosh	Macintosh
Port Douglas	K. Thomas, J.A. Rutherford	
Bowen	W.F. Tucker, R.H. Smith	
Cooktown	E.B. Power, R. Morrey	
Mackay	E.S. Rawson, M.J. Fay	
Walkerston	D.H. Dalrymple	
Eton	E.H. Kable	
Cloncurry	R.B. Taylor	Taylor
Herberton	A. Forsyth	Forsyth
<hr/>		
Secretaries - R.A. Abraham, J. Marshall		Abraham, Marshall
Corresponding Secretary - W. Coote		Coote

From *MM*, 11 April 1885. *TH*, 24 December 1887. W.J. Doherty, *The Townsville Book* (Brisbane 1920), p.123.

## APPENDIX 4

Separation Council

<u>Member</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Origin</u>
T. Willmatt (president)	Townsville	McIlwraith	Townsville
J. Ahearne (vice-president)	"	"	"
W.F. Tucker (vice-president)	Bowen	Unknown	Bowen
W. Hayes (treasurer)		McIlwraith	Townsville
W. Coote (secretary)		"	"
R.B. Taylor	Cloncurry	Unknown	"
J. Macintosh	Ingham	McIlwraith	"
J. Macpherson	Georgetown	Unknown	"
W.P. Walker	Cairns	McIlwraith	"
P.F. Hanran	Cumberland	Griffith	"
F.A. Rochfort	Ravenswood	Unknown	"
J.N. Parkes	Georgetown	McIlwraith	"
T.B. Coe	Ravenswood	Unknown	"
E. Reddin	Ross Island	Griffith	"
R.A. Goldring	Hughenden	Unknown	"
R.H. Smith	Bowen	McIlwraith	Bowen
M.J. Fay	Mackay	Griffith	Mackay
E.S. Rawson	"	McIlwraith	"
W. Oliver	Burdekin	Unknown	Burdekin
J. Mackenzie	"	"	"
D.H. Dalrymple	Walkerston	McIlwraith	Mackay
E.H. Kable	Eton	Unknown	Eton
A.S. Cowley	Ingham	McIlwraith	Ingham
R. Russell	Charters Towers	"	Charters Towers
H. Ross	"	"	"
D.P. Thomas	Port Douglas	Unknown	Port Douglas
G. Rutherford	"	"	"
E.B. Power	Cooktown	"	Cooktown
H. Morrey	"	"	"

From *MM*, 18 April 1885. *TH*, 24 December 1887. *Report of NQSC*, QSA GOV/A14, p.160.

APPENDIX 5Northern Separation League Executive Committee

<u>Member</u>	<u>Party</u>
W. Kirk (president)	Unknown
P.F. Hanran (vice-president)	Griffith
T. Willmet (vice-president)	McIlwraith
J. Marshall (secretary)	Griffith
W.T. Morris (treasurer)	Unknown
J. Ahearne	McIlwraith
W.P. Walker	"
G. Simpson	Griffith
R.A. Goldring	McIlwraith
W. Hayes	"
R.B. Taylor	Unknown
J. Macintosh	McIlwraith
G. Deane	"
R. Abraham	Unknown

From *PDT*, 13 December 1884.

APPENDIX 6

Analysis of Signatures to Separation Petition  
by Place at which they were Collected

Townsville	4078	Reedy Springs	68
Ross Island	365	Daintree	44
Mackay	1407	Johnstone River	16
Charters Towers	833	Normanby	17
Ravenswood	454	Bloomfield River	32
Bowen	294	Lammermoor	35
Ayr	291	Lower Burdekin	20
Cooktown	238	Nebo Creek	11
Hughenden	236	Gregory Downs	11
Ingham	230	Macnade	4
Port Douglas	232	Manfred Downs	9
Cairns	253	Redcliffe	9
Geraldton	139	St. Anns	14
Cumberland	92	Beaudesert	11
Cloncurry	87	Woodhouse	3
Watsonville	81	Oakhills	2
Coolgara	55	Cardington	18
Herberton	55	Rockwood	4
Georgetown	69	Cluden	3
Maytown	30	S.S. "Midge"	59
Richmond	14	Sydney	219
Cardwell	27		
Normanton	88		
Leichhardt River	43		
		TOTAL	<u>10300</u>

Note: 294 of these signatures were expunged from the petition before it was sent to Brisbane. These included 64 signatures given more than once and 105 women's signatures. *NQTS*, 5 June 1886.

From Appendix A, NQSC to Musgrave 15 April 1887, *QV&P*, 1887, Vol.1, p.439

Signatures Collected in Each Electoral District

<u>Kennedy</u>		<u>Cook</u>		<u>Burke</u>	
Charters Towers	833	Cooktown	238	Cumberland	92
Hughenden	236	Port Douglas	232	Georgetown	69
Richmond	14	Cairns	253	Normanton	88
Rockwood	4	Maytown	30	Leichhardt River	43
Beaudesert	11	Daintree	44	Gregory Downs	11
St. Anns	14	Bloomfield River	32		
Manfred Downs	9	Normanby	17		<u>303</u>
Lower Burdekin	20	Woodhouse	3		
Lammermoor	35				
Oakhills	2		<u>849</u>		
Cloncurry	87				
	<u>1265</u>				

---

<u>Townsville</u>		<u>Bowen</u>		<u>Mackay</u>		<u>Musgrave</u>	
Townsville	4078	Bowen	294	Mackay	1407	Ayr	291
Ross Island	365		<u>294</u>	Nebo Creek	11	Ingham	230
	<u>4443</u>			Macnade	4	Geraldton	139
					<u>1422</u>	Herberton	55
						Cardwell	27
						Johnstone R.	16
						Watsonville	81
						Coolgara	55
						Cluden	3
						Cardington	18
						Reedy Springs	68
						Ravenswood	454
							<u>1437</u>

Note: "Redcliffe" (9 signatures) could not be placed.

<u>Electoral District</u>	<u>Signatures</u>	Total Adult Males (exclusive of Adult Male Chinese, Polynesian, and other alien Races)	<u>Signatures as a Percentage of Adult Male European Population</u>
Kennedy	1265	3978	31.8
Cook	849	2326	36.5
Burke	303	3491	8.7
Townsville	4443	2947	150.8
Bowen	294	1143	25.7
Mackay	1422	2379	59.8
Musgrave	1437	1797	80.0

From Census of 1886, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol.2, p.753.

The main drawback to this analysis is that many people signed the petition outside their electoral district, notably in coastal centres. From this the impossible result for Townsville arises, and it probably also increased the percentage for Musgrave and Mackay; of course this throws all other results out as well.

APPENDIX 7Analysis of Signatures to Petition by Occupation

Clergy	23	Agriculturists	466
Professional	356	Miners	941
Bankers	25	Tradesmen	1163
Merchants	129	Artisans	1323
Graziers	385	Labourers	1098
Sugar Planters	117	Other Occupations	3986
			<u>10006</u>

*Report of NQSC QSA GOV/A14, p.171.* An attempt was made to calculate the percentage of those in each occupational category who signed the petition, but this proved impossible because occupational categories in the Census did not match those of the Separation Council, and because Census statistics described all males, including minors. See Census of 1886, *QV&P*, 1886, Vol.2, p.765.

APPENDIX 8Townsville Separation League in March 1889

J.N. Parkes (president)	J. Macintosh
J. Gordon (vice-president)	W.A. Williams
T. Page (vice-president)	Lawes
L. Allen (treasurer)	A. Glover
J. Ahearne (corresponding secretary)	M. McKiernan
W. Coote (corresponding secretary)	M.J. Thomsen
F.B. McIlwaine	Gaveston
A. Henry	J. Tupling
A.G. Bundock	W. Atkinson
H. Hubert	T. Willmet

From *TH*, 23 March 1889.



APPENDIX 9Public Debt Per Head of Australian Colonies in 1890

Colony	Population in 1890 (,000)	Public Debt £ (,000)	Public Debt Per Head £
New South Wales	1113	47736	43
Victoria	1134	38865	34
South Australia	319	20331	64
Queensland	392	27723	71
Tasmania	145	5320	37
Western Australia	49	1379	28

From A.R. Hall, *The London Capital Market and Australia 1870-1914* (Canberra 1963), Table 29, p. 161 and appendix III, Table 1, p. 205. Population statistics from Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Commonwealth Year Book 1901-1907*, No. 1, 1908, p. 163.

## APPENDIX 10

Results of 1899 Federation Referendum

Electorate	Yes	No	Yes Votes as a % of Formal Votes
Bowen	516	96	84
Burke	394	19	95
Cairns	931	89	91
Carpentaria	273	26	91
Charters Towers	2581	863	75
Cook	503	53	91
Croydon	809	41	95
Flinders	684	86	89
Herbert	484	51	91
Kennedy	418	180	70
Mackay	1337	307	81
Townsville	1494	359	81
Woothakata	793	54	94
<hr/>			
North Queensland	11217	2224	84
Centre	12132	6862	64
South	15139	21910	41
<hr/>			
Queensland	38488	30996	55
<hr/>			

From *QV&P*, 1899, Vol. 1, p. 753.

APPENDIX 11

Registration of Mining and Other Companies in Northern and Southern Queensland 1885-94

	<u>1885</u>	<u>1886</u>	<u>1887</u>	<u>1888</u>	<u>1889</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1892</u>	<u>1893</u>	<u>1894</u>
GOLD, SILVER AND TIN MINING	99	101	160	196	65	60	112	74	53	41
SOUTH	32	33	70	113	38	31	28	20	32	35
NORTH	67	68	90	83	27	29	84	54	21	6
OTHER	42	36	56	66	49	38	33	26	39	48
SOUTH	36	32	45	59	35	27	28	21	23	36
NORTH	6	4	11	7	14	11	5	5	16	12

From QSA COM/1 and QSA A/18939.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. *Manuscripts*

- Archer Family Papers, 1833-1929. M.L.
- Atherton, J. Papers. J.O.L.
- Black, J.M. Letters 1866. M.L.
- Clarke, W.B. Papers. M.L.
- Colonial Office Records. Australian Joint Copying Project.  
 CO 201/559 New South Wales original correspondence, 1871.  
 CO 234/26-27 Queensland original correspondence, 1871.  
 CO 234/46-70 Queensland original correspondence, 1885-1900.  
 CO 881/7 (confidential prints) Australian No. 114.  
 CO 881/9 (confidential prints) Australian Nos. 145, 147, 149.
- Coote, W. Letter to A.G. Stephens, 6 March 1893. Fryer Library.
- Creaghe, E.C. Diary 1882-83. M.L.
- Dalrymple, G.E. Letter 12 February 1862. J.O.L.
- de Satge, O. Letterbook 1885-88. M.L.
- Ellis, U.R. Collection. National Library.
- Griffith, S.W. Papers. Dixson Library.
- Griffith, S.W. Papers. J.O.L.
- Henry, E.M. Journal 1866-67. Letters and Journals 1861-82. M.L.
- Hogg, J.J. An Early Day Rush: Reminiscences of J.J. Hogg. 1873. Fryer Library.
- Howard, S. Papers 1873-76. M.L.
- Hurle, H. Diaries 1885-90. J.O.L.
- Lang, J.D. Collection. National Library.
- Lang, J.D. Draft of a pamphlet, in Papers of J.D. Lang. M.L.
- McIlwraith, T. Papers 1835-1900. J.O.L.
- Mackay Planters' Association Minute Book. JCU Library.
- Martin, J.J. Diaries 1876-79. M.L.

Martin, W. Letters 1873-76. M.L.

Metator (pseud.) Some Early Experiences of a Surveyor in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, 1872-90. 1937. M.L.

Miles, E.D. Letter 25 April 1885. Townsville Municipal Library.

Milne, J.W.D. Letter 26 June 1866. M.L.

Musgrave, Papers of Sir Anthony and Lady. 1862-1912. J.O.L.

Neame, A. Diaries 1870-97, 1877-82. M.L.

Nisbet, J. Pioneering Days in Queensland, 1857-78. M.L.

Parkes, J.N. Letter 11 March 1890. M.L.

Philp, R. Papers 1851-1922. J.O.L.

Queensland State Archives.

GOV/2 Despatches from Secretary of State to Governor, 1861.

GOV/22-24 Governor's Despatches to Secretary of State, 1860-65.

GOV/28 Governor's Despatches to Secretary of State, 1883-88.

GOV/82 Confidential Official Letters Received by Governor, 1891-93.

GOV/12-26 Local Official Letters to Governor, 1884-94.

PRE/A467, PRE/A490 Premier's In-letters, 1914-15.

PRE/6 Premier and Chief Secretary's Department: Papers respecting proposed separation of central and northern parts of Queensland, 1871-99.

PRE/Y1 Copies of Telegrams from Agent-General, 1887-97.

COL/90-124 Agent-General's Despatches, 1884-94.

AGE/G24 Letterbook of Agent-General, 1885.

Agent-General's Letterbooks Nos. 43 and 44, 1890.

COL/N1-25 Letterbooks of Letters to Agent-General, 1872-96.

COL/461 Colonial Secretary's Department: Newspaper Cuttings, 1894.

COL/A26-712 Colonial Secretary's Department: General Correspondence, 1862-92.

COM/1 Index to Companies Registered, 1863-88.

A/18939 Register of Companies, 1889-96.

Raven, J.W. Reminiscences of a Western Queensland Pioneer, 1833-1925.

Ripon Papers. British Library.

Towns, R. Letterbook 1866-67. M.L.

Towns, R. Papers 1853-74. M.L.

Wright, R.D. & Hogbin, J. Report on Civilian Morale in North Queensland. 1943. M.L.

## 2. Government Publications

*British Parliamentary Papers, Australia, 1889-90.*

*Colonial Office List, 1886-93.*

*Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Commonwealth Year Book 1901-1907, No.1, 1908.*

*Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.*

*Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, 1912.*

*Debates of Federal Council of Australasia, 1886.*

*Debates of Queensland Legislative Assembly, 1865-1922.*

*Debates of Queensland Legislative Council, 1892.*

*Government Year Book 1888, London, 1888.*

*Journals of Queensland Legislative Council, 1862.*

*National Australasian Convention Debates, 1891.*

*North Queensland, Australia, Brisbane, 1908.*

*Queensland Official Year Book 1901, Brisbane, 1901.*

*Votes and Proceedings of New South Wales Legislative Assembly, 1859-62.*

*Votes and Proceedings of Queensland Legislative Assembly, 1860-99.*

## 3. Newspapers

*Armidale Express 1964.*

*Australian Republican 1890-91.*

*Bowen Observer 1888-91.*

*Brisbane Courier 1865-74, 1877, 1885-92, 1897-98.*

*Brisbane Telegraph 1950.*

*The Bulletin 1890-99, 1977.*

*Cairns Argus 1890, 1897-98.*

*Cairns Daily Times 1899-1900.*

*Cairns Post 1885-90, 1893, 1899.*

*Canberra Times 1967.*

*Charters Towers Eagle* 1899.

*Charters Towers Herald* 1887, 1899.

*Charters Towers Mining Standard* 1896-1900.

*Cleveland Bay Express* 1875-76.

*Cooktown Courier* 1874-79.

*Cooktown Herald* 1874-77.

*Cooktown Independent* 1890.

*Courier Mail* 1957, 1972, 1979-81.

*Croydon Express and Mining Record* 1899.

*Croydon Golden Age* 1895-97.

*Croydon Mining News* 1889.

*Cummins & Campbell Monthly Magazine* 1931-50.

*Daily Mail* 1914.

*Daily Northern Standard* 1883.

*The Democrat* 1895-97.

*Endeavour Times* 1891.

*Herberton Advertiser* 1885, 1892-93.

*Hodgkinson Mining News* 1877-79.

*Mackay Chronicle* 1897-99.

*Mackay Mercury* 1867-79, 1882-93.

*Mackay Standard* 1886, 1893.

*National Review* 1977.

*New State News* 1953, 1958.

*Northern Advocate* 1873-77.

*Northern Age* 1890-91.

*Northern Miner* 1876-77, 1880-91, 1899.

*Northern Standard and Townsville Argus* 1878-79.

*North Queensland Herald* 1891-95.

*North Queensland Register* 1972.

*North Queensland Telegraph and Territorial Separationist* 1885-89.  
*Port Denison Times* 1864-72, 1876-78, 1884-94.  
*Queensland Daily Guardian* 1866-67.  
*Queenslander* 1866, 1869, 1885-87.  
*Queensland Express* 1868-70.  
*Queensland Times* 1869-70.  
*Ravenswood Miner* 1870-74.  
*Ravenswood Times* 1876.  
*Rockhampton Bulletin* 1867-72, 1955-59.  
*Sugar Journal* 1893-1902.  
*Sunday Mail* 1951.  
*The Times* 1885, 1890, 1893.  
*Townsville Daily Bulletin* 1887, 1971-72, 1980-81.  
*Townsville Evening Star* 1889-94.  
*Townsville Herald* 1878, 1886-91.  
*Townsville Times* 1875-76.  
*Wild River Times* 1890.  
*The Worker* 1890-93.

#### 4. Books, Articles, etc.

Adams, D. (ed.) *The Letters of Rachel Henning*, Ringwood, 1969.  
 Adams, F. *The Australians: a social sketch*, London, 1893.  
 Adcock, W.E. "The Separation Movement in the North" *Victorian Review*, February 1885, pp.431-437.  
 Allen, C.H. *A Visit to Queensland and her Goldfields*, London, 1870.  
 Allen, W. *How Constitutional Government was won for Australia: Reminiscences of half a century by an old colonist*, Rockhampton, 1898.  
 Archer, T. *Queensland: her history, resources and future prospects*, London, 1883.



Australian Cutting Book No. 7. J.O.L.

Beasley, F.R. "The Secession Movement in Western Australia"  
*AQ*, March 1936, pp.31-36.

Boothby, G. *On the Wallaby or Through the East and Across Australia*, London, 1894.

British India & Queensland Agency Co. Ltd. *Handbook of Information for the Colonies and India*, Brisbane, 1892.

Brooks, S.W. Newspaper Cuttings, 3 Vols. Fryer Library.

Burns, Philp & Co. Ltd. *All About Burns, Philp & Co. Ltd.*, Sydney, 1903.

Burns, Philp & Co. Ltd. *Queensland Handbook of Information*, Sydney, 1884.

Calwell, A.A. *Labor Party and New States*, Inverell, 1950.

Capricornia New State Movement. *Historical Notes*, Rockhampton, n.d.

Capricornia New State Movement. *The Premier and New States! What Now?* Rockhampton, 1959.

Central Queensland Separation League. *Interview with George Pearce-Serocold*, Rockhampton, 1895.

Central Queensland Separation League. *Report of Sixth Quarterly Meeting*, Rockhampton, 1891.

Central Queensland Separation League. *The Case for Central Queensland Territorial Separation*, Rockhampton, 1893.

Chandler, A. *The case for secession: how federation oppresses and represses Western Australia*, 1926. National Library.

Coote, W. *History of the Colony of Queensland: from 1770 to the close of the year 1881*, 2 Vols., Brisbane, 1882.

Coote, W. "Proposed New Colony of Northern Queensland"  
*Victorian Review*, Vol.12, No.67, 1885, pp.58-70.

Corfield, W.H. *Reminiscences of Queensland, 1862-1899*, Brisbane, 1921.

Courtayne, H. "Tripartite Division of Queensland" *Sydney Quarterly Magazine*, Vol.8, No.3, September 1891, pp.196-200.

Cowley, A. Cutting Book No. 2. J.O.L.

Craig, G.C. "Sir Thomas McIlwraith's Retirement" *Queensland Review*, Vol.1, No.3, June 1886, pp.284-285.

Craig, G.C. (The Editor) "The Griffith Policy" *Queensland Review*, Vol.1, No.3, June 1886, pp.197-207.

Daintree, R. *Queensland, Australia*, London, n.d.

de Satge, E. & O. *Pages from the journal of a Queensland Squatter*, London, 1901.

Dilke, C.W. *Problems of Greater Britain*, London, 1890.

Drummond, D.H. *The Australian Constitution and New States*, Sydney, 1949.

Drummond, D.S. "The New States Movement. Its Basis and Objective" *AQ*, June 1931, pp.46-57.

Drury Cutting Book, Nos. 1 & 2. J.O.L.

Dutton, C.B. *Memorandum*, 1884. M.L.

Eastern and Australian Mail Steam Co. *Handbook of the Singapore Route to Australia*, London, 1875.

Eden, C.H. "An Australian Search Party" in *Illustrated Travels*. M.L.

Eden, C.H. *My Wife and I in Queensland*, London, 1872.

Ellis, U.R. *Attempt to sprag new state referendum*, Armidale, 1965.

Ellis, U.R. *Capricornia New State Movement: financial and economic aspects of new states*, Canberra, 1959.

Ellis, U.R. *New States for National Security*, Canberra, 1954.

Ellis, U.R. *North Queensland New State: Independent Commission Proposed*. M.L.

Ellis, U.R. *Speech at Third Convention of the New State for North Queensland Movement*, Charters Towers, 1957. M.L.

Ellis, U.R. *The Case for the State of North Queensland*, 1955. M.L.

Fielding, W. *Australian Trans-Continental Railway*, London, 1881. M.L.

"Financier". "Financial Result of Eighteen Months of Griffith Administration" *Queensland Review*, Vol.1, No.11, September 1885, pp.101-108.

Finch-Hatton, H. *Advance Australia! : An Account of eight years' work, wandering and amusement in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria*, London, 1885.

- Finch-Hatton, H. "North Queensland Separation" *National Review*, Vol.6, February 1886, pp.796-809.
- Garran, A. (ed.) *The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, Sydney, 1886.
- The Goldfields of Queensland: Croydon and the Etheridge Goldfields*, Brisbane, 1899. Newstead House.
- Gray, G.H. *The New State of Capricornia*, Rockhampton, n.d.
- Gray, R. *Reminiscences of India and North Queensland 1857-1912*, London, 1913.
- Griffith, S.W. *National Australasian Convention: Draft of a Bill to Constitute the Commonwealth of Australia* (ed. by G.B. Barton), 1891. J.O.L.
- Griffith, S.W. "The Coloured Labour Question in Australia" *Antipodean*, 1893. JCU Library.
- Hill, W.R.O. *Forty-Five Years' Experiences in North Queensland, 1861-1905*, Brisbane, 1907.
- Hodgkinson, W.O. "A Memorable Chapter in Queensland Politics: The Great Stonewall" *Centennial Magazine*, Vol.2, 1889-90, pp.602-608.
- Hooper, A.D. *Why North Queensland Needs Self Government*, Townsville, 1965.
- Ivimey, A.J. *Mining and Descriptive Queensland, or travels through the Queensland Goldfields*, Brisbane, 1889.
- Ivimey, A.J. *Mining and Separation in North Queensland*, Brisbane, 1888. Queensland Parliamentary Library.
- Jack, S.W. Cutting Book No.44. J.O.L.
- Kennedy, E.B. *Four Years in Queensland*, London, 1870.
- Lane-Poole, S. (ed.) *Thirty Years of Colonial Government: A Selection from the Despatches and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir George Ferguson Bowen, G.C.M.G.*, Vol.1, London, 1889.
- Lang, J.D. *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales from the founding of the colony in 1788 to the present day*, London, 1875.
- Lang, J.D. *Cooksland in North-Eastern Australia; the future Cotton-Field of Great Britain*, London, 1847.
- Lang, J.D. *Cooksland; or, the Moreton Bay District of New South Wales, a highly eligible field for immediate and extensive colonization*, London, 1848.

Lang, J.D. *Freedom and Independence for the golden lands of Australia: the right of the colonies and the interest of Britain and of the world*, London, 1852.

Lang, J.D. *Queensland, Australia*, London, 1861.

Lang, J.D. *Reminiscences of my Life and Times* (ed. by D.W.A. Baker), Melbourne, 1972.

Lang, J.D. Separation of Northern Districts: press contributions 1857-65. M.L.

Lorimer, J.A. "Riverina Movement" *AQ*, June 1931, pp.58-63.

Lugard, F. *Letters from Queensland*, London, 1893.

MacIntyre, J.N. *A High Explosive from the Empty North*, 1922. M.L.

MacIntyre, J.N. *The Empty North Casts the First Stone*, 1922. M.L.

Map of north Queensland showing planned telegraph lines, 1867. Victorian State Library.

Map of Queensland showing Proposed Transcontinental Railway and Grand Trunk Line to South Australia. Queensland Lands Department, 1880. Victorian State Library.

Marjoribanks, E. *Queensland: A Wide Field for the Safe and Profitable Investment of British Capital, more particularly in the Growth of Cotton*, Edinburgh, 1865.

Meston, A. *Geographic History of Queensland*, Brisbane, 1895.

Mitchell Library Newspaper Cuttings, Vol.179.

Mohony, W.G. *Unification*, Tamworth, n.d.

Morrison, W.F. *The Aldine History of Queensland*, Sydney, 1888.

Muir & Morcom. *Jubilee History of Queensland*, Brisbane, 1888.

New England New State Movement. *The A.L.P. and New States*, Armidale, 1963.

New State for North Queensland Movement. *Report and Minutes of the First Convention, Mareeba 1955*. Queensland University Library.

New State for North Queensland Movement. *Report and Minutes of the Second Convention, Townsville 1956*. Queensland University Library.

New State for North Queensland Movement. *Rules and Objects*, Townsville, 1953.

Northern Separation League. *Territorial Separation: Southern Queensland in 1859-60, and Northern Queensland in 1884, showing the relative position between North and South*, Townsville, 1884.

North Queensland Self Government League. *Submission on the establishment of a Committee of Enquiry*, Townsville, 1972.

North Queensland Separation Council. *First Annual Report of North Queensland Separation Council*, Townsville, 1886, QSA GOV/A14, pp.160-175.

Page, E. *The Issue of the Hour*, Sydney, 1931.

Palmer, E. *Early Days in North Queensland*, Sydney, 1903.

Parker, G. *Round the Compass in Australia*, Sydney, 1892.

*Port Denison Times Almanac 1867*, Sydney, 1867.

*Fugh's Almanac 1865*, Brisbane, 1865.

*Queensland 1900: A Narrative of her Past, together with biographies of her leading men*, Brisbane, 1900.

Queensland Constitution Bills. M.L.

"Queenslander". "Six Years of Queensland Politics" *Victorian Review*, Vol.8, May 1883, pp.60-73, 158-169.

*The Queenslanders' New Colonial Camp Fire Song Book*, Sydney, 1865.

Queensland Land League Committee. *Land League Papers*, Rockhampton, 1866. Rockhampton Municipal Library.

Rea, W. *Lord Normanby's Legacy!* Rockhampton, 1874.

*Slater's Queensland Almanac*, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1873. La Trobe Library.

South Australian Association. *Outline of the Plan of a Proposed Colony*, Hampstead Gardens, 1978.

Stephens, A.G. *The Griffilwraith: Being an Independent Criticism of the Methods and Manoeuvres of the Queensland Coalition Government, 1890-1893*, Brisbane, 1893.

Stephens, A.G. *Why North Queensland Wants Separation*, Townsville, 1893.

Stirling, A.W. "The Political Outlook in Queensland" *Fortnightly Review*, Vol.44, 1888, pp.721-727.

Swanwick, S. (ed.) *The Premier's "Fairplay"; or, How Cairns Got the Railway*, Brisbane, 1886.

Thompson, V.C. "New States in Australia" *AQ*, September 1929, pp.47-53.

Townsville Chamber of Commerce. *Annual Reports*, 1889-94. Townsville Municipal Library.

Townsville Separation League. *First Annual Report of the Committee of the Townsville Separation League*, Townsville, 1890, QSA GOV/A18, pp.39-42.

Townsville Separation League. *Further Considerations on Separation*, Townsville, 1890. Townsville Municipal Library.

Townsville Separation League. *Grand Separation Carnival, Fair and Ball Programme*, Townsville, 1890. Townsville Municipal Library.

Trollope, A. *Australia and New Zealand*, Melbourne, 1876.

Tubbs, H. "The new states of Australia" in *United Empire*, July 1920. National Library.

Veritas (pseud.) *Queensland Our Home*, Brisbane, 1886.

Walker, H. de R. *Australasian Democracy*, London, 1897.

Westgarth, W. *The Colony of Victoria*, London, 1864.

White, G. *Thirty Years in Tropical Australia*, London, 1918.

Willmetts & Co. *Cooktown Almanac, Northern Queensland Directory and Miner's and Settler's Companion for 1876*, Townsville, 1876. M.L.

Willmetts & Co. *Northern Queensland Almanac and Directory 1883*, Townsville, 1883. M.L.

Wright, P.A. *Decentralization*, 1966. M.L.

## B. SECONDARY SOURCES

### 1. Books and Articles

Aitken, H.G.J. "Defensive Expansionism: The State and Economic Growth in Canada" in H.G.J. Aitken (ed.), *The State and Economic Growth*, New York, 1959, pp.79-114.

Aitkin, D. *The Country Party in New South Wales: A Study of Organisation and Survival*, Canberra, 1972.

Alexander, D. "New Notions of Happiness: Nationalism, Regionalism and Atlantic Canada" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, pp.29-42.

Alexander, F. *Moving Frontiers: An American Theme and its Application to Australian History*, Melbourne, 1947.

Allen, H.C. *Bush and Backwoods: A Comparison of the Frontier in Australia and the United States*, Michigan, 1959.

Allingham, A. "Taming the Wilderness": the First Decade of Pastoral Settlement in the Kennedy District, Townsville, 1977.

Alomes, S.G. "Island, Nation and Empire: Collective Identifications in Hobart during the Boer War" *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, Vol.23, No.1, 1976, pp.9-20.

Austin, C.G. "Influence of Queensland on Federation" *JRHSQ*, Vol.4, No.4, December 1951, pp.509-523.

Battye, J.S. *Western Australia*, Oxford, 1924.

Bauer, F.H. "Significant Factors in the White Settlement of Northern Australia" *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, 1963, pp.39-48.

Beaglehole, J.C. "The Colonial Office 1782-1854" in *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand Selected Articles, Second Series*, Carlton, 1967, pp.1-29.

Beasley, F.R. "The Secession Movement in Western Australia" *AQ*, March 1936, pp.31-36.

Bell, P. "Houses in North Queensland Mining Towns, 1864-1914" in K.H. Kennedy (ed.), *Readings in North Queensland Mining History*, Vol.1, Townsville, 1980, pp.299-328.

Bercuson, D.J. "Regionalism and 'Unlimited Identity' in Western Canada" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, pp.121-126.

Bernays, C.A. "Notes on the Political History of Queensland - 1859-1917" *JRHSQ*, Vol.1, No.4, January 1918, pp.185-283.

Bernays, C.A. *Queensland Politics During Sixty Years, 1859-1919*, Brisbane, n.d.

Bernays, C.A. "The Governors of Queensland", from *BC*, 1922, 1923. Mitchell Library.

Billington, R.A. (ed.) *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*, Englewood Cliffs, 1961.

Birch, A. "Minority Nationalist Movements and Theories of Political Integration" *World Politics*, Vol.30, No.3, 1978, pp.325-344.

- Birch, A. "The Organization and Economics of Pacific Island Labour in the Australian Sugar Industry 1863-1906" *Business Archives and History*, Vol.6, No.1, 1966, pp.53-77.
- Bird, J.T.S. *The Early History of Rockhampton*, Rockhampton, 1904.
- Black, J. *North Queensland Pioneers*, Charters Towers, 1931.
- Blackton, C.S. "Australian Nationality and Nationalism 1850-1900" *HS*, Vol.9, No.36, 1961, pp.351-367.
- Blain, L., Paterson, D.G. & Rale, J.D. "Regional Impact of Economic Fluctuations during Inter-War Period - Case of British Columbia" *Canadian Journal of Economics*, Vol.7, No.3, 1974, pp.381-401.
- Blainey, G. *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History*, Melbourne, 1968.
- Blake, D.E. "The Measurement of Regionalism in Canadian Voting Patterns" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.5, No.1, 1972, pp.55-81.
- Blakeley, B.L. *The Colonial Office, 1868-1892*, Durham, 1972.
- Bolton, G.C. *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920*, Canberra, 1963.
- Bolton, G.C. *Richard Daintree: A Photographic Memoir*, Brisbane, 1965.
- Bolton, G.C. "The Founding of Cairns" *JRAHS*, Vol.45, part 1, 1959, pp.28-37.
- Bolton, G.C. "The Rise of Burns, Philp, 1873-1893" in A. Birch & D.S. Macmillan (eds.), *Wealth & Progress: Studies in Australian Business History*, Sydney, 1967, pp.111-127.
- Bolton, G.C. "Valley of Lagoons: A Study in Exile" *Business Archives and History*, Vol.4, No.2, 1964, pp.99-116.
- Browne, S. *A Journalist's Memories*, Brisbane, 1927.
- Bryan, H. *John Murtagh Macrossan: his Life and Career*, Brisbane, 1958.
- Brym, R.J. "Regional Social-Structure and Agrarian Radicalism in Canada - Alberta, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick" *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, No.3, 1978, pp.339-351.
- Burke's Peerage*, London, 1956.



- Butlin, N. "Colonial Socialism in Australia, 1860-1900" in H.G.J. Aitken (ed.), *The State and Economic Growth*, New York, 1959, pp. 26-78.
- Butlin, N. *Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1900*, Cambridge, 1964.
- Buxton, D. "Self-Government for the Australian Capital Territory?" *AQ*, March 1965, pp.40-49.
- Buxton, G.L. *The Riverina 1861-1891: An Australian Regional Study*, Carlton, 1967.
- The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol.3, London, 1959.
- Careless, J.M.S. *Canada: A Story of Challenge*, London, 1959.
- Careless, J.M.S. "Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History" *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.35, 1954, pp.1-21.
- Careless, J.M.S. "'Limited Identities' in Canada" *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.50, No.1, 1969, pp.1-10.
- Cell, J.W. *British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Policy-Making Process*, New Haven, 1970.
- Cell, J.W. "The Colonial Office in the 1850's" *HS*, Vol.12, No.45, 1965, pp.43-56.
- Cilento, R. (ed.) *Triumph in the Tropics: An Historical Sketch of Queensland*, Brisbane, 1959.
- Clark, C.M.H. *A History of Australia*, 4 Vols., Melbourne, 1968.
- Clark, C.M.H. (ed.) *Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900*, Sydney, 1955.
- Clark, M. *A Short History of Australia*, Sydney, 1969.
- Clark, M. *Sources of Australian History*, London, 1957.
- Cloher, D.U. "A Perspective on Australian Urbanization" in J.M. Powell & M. Williams (eds.), *Australian Space Australian Time: Geographical Perspectives*, Melbourne, 1975.
- Cole, A.E. "Early History of the Queensland Railways" *JRHSQ*, Vol.3, No.4, February 1945, pp.284-311.
- Collinson, J.W. "Cardwell, A Gateway to the West" *JRHSQ*, Vol.4, No.2, December 1949, pp.182-189.
- Collinson, J.W. *Early Days of Cairns*, Brisbane, 1939.
- Collinson, J.W. "The Origin and Growth of the Sugar Industry in the Cairns District" *JRHSQ*, Vol.3, No.4, February 1945, pp.260-264.

- Collinson, J.W. "The Rise and Decline of Port Douglas" *JRHSQ*, Vol.4, No.4, December 1951, pp.559-567.
- Colwell, L.J. "The North Queensland Goldfields" *Lectures on North Queensland History*, Townsville, 1974, pp.73-81.
- Connor, W. "The Politics of Ethnonationalism" *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.27, No.1, 1973, pp.3-21.
- Corris, P. "Pacific Island Labour Migrants in Queensland" *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol.5, 1970, pp.43-64.
- Creighton, D. *Dominion of the North: A History of Canada*, London, 1958.
- Crowley, F. (ed.) *A New History of Australia*, Melbourne, 1974.
- Crowley, F.K. *Australia's Western Third*, London, 1960.
- Courtenay, P.P. "The White Man and the Australian Tropics: A Review of Some Opinions and Prejudices of the Pre-War Years" *Lectures on North Queensland History. Second Series*, Townsville, 1975, pp.57-65.
- Cumbræ-Stewart, F.W.S. "Some Queensland Memoir Writers" *JRHSQ*, Vol.2, No.1, February 1920, pp.1-26.
- Cumpston, M. "The Contribution to Ideas of Empire of Flora Shaw, Lady Lugard" *AJPH*, Vol.5, No.1, 1959, pp.64-75.
- Currey, C.H. *British Colonial Policy 1783-1915*, London, 1916.
- Dalton, B.J. *Origins of the American Civil War*, Melbourne, 1967.
- Dalton, B.J. *War and Politics in New Zealand 1855-1870*, Sydney, 1967.
- Dalton, J.B. "An Interpretative Survey: The Queensland Labour Movement" in D.J. Murphy, R.B. Joyce & C.A. Hughes (eds.), *Prelude to Power: The Rise of the Labour Party in Queensland 1885-1915*, Milton, 1970, pp.3-27.
- Davidson, B.R. *The Northern Myth*, Melbourne, 1965.
- Davidson, D. *The Attack on Leviathan: Regionalism and Nationalism in the United States*, Chapel Hill, 1938.
- Davies, A.J. "Australian Federalism and National Development" *AJPH*, Vol.14, 1968, pp.37-51.
- Davis, R. "The 'Federal Principle' Reconsidered Pt.I" *AJPH*, Vol.1, No.1, 1955, pp.59-85.
- Davis, R. "The 'Federal Principle' Reconsidered Pt.II" *AJPH*, Vol.1, No.2, 1955, pp.223-244.
- Deakin, A. *The Federal Story*, Melbourne, 1944.

- de Brune, A. (ed.). *Fifty Years of Progress in Australia 1878-1928*, Waterloo, 1929.
- de Tocqueville, A. *Democracy in America*, 2 Vols., New York, 1963.
- Dickinson, R.E. *Regional Concept: The Anglo-American Leaders*, London, 1976.
- Dickinson, R.E. "Regionalism: its theory and practice" in M. Shafi & M. Raza (eds.), *Studies in Applied and Regional Geography*, Aligarch, 1971, pp.25-33.
- Dictionary of National Biography*, Supplement 1901-1911, Vol. 2.
- Doherty, W.J. *The Townsville Book*, Brisbane, 1920.
- Eddy, J.J. *Britain and the Australian Colonies 1818-1831: The Technique of Government*, London, 1969.
- Eldershaw, M.B. *Phillip of Australia: An Account of the Settlement at Sydney Cove*, London, 1972.
- Elford, K. "A Prophet Without Honour: The Political Ideals of John Dunmore Lang" *JRAHS*, Vol.54, part 2, 1968, pp.161-175.
- Ellis, U.R. *Bibliography: Australian New States Movement*, Canberra, 1956.
- Ellis, U.R. *New Australian States*, Sydney, 1933.
- Ellis, U.R. *The Case of West Virginia*, 1934. National Library.
- Evans, R., Saunders, K., & Cronin, K. *Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination: Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, Sydney, 1975.
- Farnfield, J. *Frontiersman: A Biography of George Elphinstone Dalrymple*, Melbourne, 1968.
- Feetham, J.O. & Rymer, W.V. (eds.). *North Queensland Jubilee Book 1878-1928*, Townsville, 1929.
- Fitzpatrick, B. *The British Empire in Australia: an economic history, 1834-1939*, Melbourne, 1949.
- Frappell, L.O. "The Riverina Separation Agitation, 1856-1866" *JRAHS*, Vol. 63, part 1, 1977, pp.1-25.
- Frost, A. *Convicts and Empire: a naval question, 1776-1811*, Melbourne, 1980.
- Geertz, C. "The integrative revolution" in C. Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States*, New York, 1963, pp.105-157.
- Gilbert, E.W. "The Idea of the Region" *Geography*, Vol. 45, 1960, pp.157-175.

- Gilchrist, A. (ed.) *John Dunmore Lang: Chiefly Autobiographical 1799-1878*, Melbourne, 1951.
- Glazer, N. "The Universalization of Ethnicity" *Encounter*, Vol.44, No.2, 1975, pp.8-17.
- Glynn, S. *Urbanisation in Australian History, 1788-1900*, Melbourne, 1970.
- Gollan, R. "American Populism and Australian Utopianism" *Labour History*, No.9, November 1965, pp.15-21.
- Gollan, R. *Radical and Working Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia 1850-1910*, Carlton, 1960.
- Gourevitch, P. "Regional Politics and the Politics of Regionalism" *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol.1, No.3, 1973, pp. 172-176.
- Greenwood, G. (ed.) *Australia: A Social and Political History*, Sydney, 1974.
- Griffin, J. "Bougainville - Secession or Just Sentiment" *Current Affairs Bulletin*, Vol.48, No.9, 1972, pp.258-280.
- Griffin, J. "Ethnonationalism and Integration: An Optimistic View" *Meanjin Quarterly*, Vol.34, No.3, 1975, pp.286-293.
- Grimshaw, C. "Australian Nationalism and the Imperial Connection 1900-1914" *AJPH*, Vol.3, 1957, pp.161-182.
- Hall, A.R. *The Export of Capital from Britain, 1870-1914*, London, 1968.
- Hall, A.R. *The London Capital Market and Australia 1870-1914*, Canberra, 1963.
- Hall, H.L. *The Colonial Office*, London, 1937.
- Hancock, W. *Discovering Monaro: a study of man's impact on his environment*, London, 1972.
- Hannett, L. "The Case for Bougainville Secession" *Meanjin Quarterly*, Vol.34, No.3, 1975, pp.240-249.
- Harman, G. "New State Agitation in Northern New South Wales, 1920-1929" *JRAHS*, Vol.63, part 1, 1977, pp.26-39.
- Harney, R. "Organisational Conflicts in the Queensland Labour Movement, 1888-1893" *Labour History*, No.4, May 1963, pp.19-35.
- Harris, C.P. *Local Government and Regionalism in Queensland 1859 to 1977*, Canberra, 1978.
- Harris, R. McL. "The 'Princeland' secession movement in Victoria and South Australia, 1861-1867" *AJPH*, Vol.17, No.3, 1971, pp.365-376.

Harris, W.J. *First Steps: Queensland Workers' Moves Towards Political Expression, 1857-1893*, Canberra, 1966.

Harris, W.J. "The Struggle Against Pacific Island Labour, 1868-1902" *Labour History*, No.15, November 1968, pp.40-48.

Hechter, M. *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, London, 1975.

Hechter, M. "The Persistence of Regionalism in the British Isles, 1885-1966" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.79, No.2, 1973, pp.319-342.

Hirst, J.B. *Adelaide and the Country 1870-1917: their Social and Political Relationship*, Melbourne, 1973.

*Historical Society of Queensland Bulletin*, No.34, April 1945.

Hodgins, B.W. & Wright, D. "Canada and Australia: Continuing but Changing Federations" in B.W. Hodgins, D. Wright & W.H. Heick, *Federalism in Canada and Australia: The Early Years*, Canberra, 1978, pp.289-304.

Hogan, J.F. *The Gladstone Colony*, London, 1898.

Holmes, J.H. "Population Concentration and Dispersion in Australian States: A Macrogeographic Analysis" *Australian Geographical Studies*, Vol.11, No.2, 1973, pp.150-170.

Holmes, J.M. *The Geographical Basis of Government: Specially Applied to New South Wales*, Sydney, 1944.

Holmes, J.M. "The 'New State' Idea and its Geographic Background" *AQ*, September 1932, pp.59-72.

Hooper, M. "The Naval Defence Agreement 1887" *AJPH*, Vol.14, 1968, pp.52-74.

Hughes, C.A. & Graham, B.D. (eds.) *A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics 1890-1964*, Canberra, 1968.

Jacobs, M.G. "The Colonial Office and New Guinea, 1874-1884" *HS*, Vol.5, No.18, 1952, pp.106-118.

Jacobs, W.R. (ed.) *America's Great Frontiers and Sections: Frederick Jackson Turner's Unpublished Essays*, Lincoln, 1965.

Jensen, M. (ed.) *Regionalism in America*, Madison, 1951.

Jones, D. *Cardwell Shire History*, Brisbane, 1961.

Jones, D. *Trinity Phoenix: A History of Cairns and District*, Cairns, 1976.

Jose, A. *Australia, Human and Economic*, London, 1932.

Joyce, R.B. "S.W. Griffith: towards the biography of a lawyer" *HS*, Vol.16, No.63, 1974, pp.235-257.

Keith, A.B. *Responsible Government in the Dominions*, 2 Vols., London, 1928.

Keith, A.B. *The Constitutional Law of the British Dominions*, London, 1933.

Kingston, B. "The Origins of Queensland's 'Comprehensive' Land Policy" *Queensland Heritage*, Vol.1, No.2, 1965, pp.3-9.

Kingston, B. "The Search for an Alternative to Free Selection in Queensland; 1859-66" *Queensland Heritage*, Vol.1, No.5, 1966, pp.3-9.

Knight, D.B. *A Capital for Canada: Conflict and Compromise in the Nineteenth Century*, Chicago, 1977.

Knox, B.A. "'Care is more important than haste': Imperial Policy and the creation of Queensland, 1856-9" *HS*, Vol. 17, No.66, 1976, pp.64-83.

Knox, B.A. "Moreton Bay Separation: A Problem of Imperial Government, 1825-1856" *HS*, Vol.14, No.56, 1971, pp.561-578.

Knox, B.A. "Reconsidering Mid-Victorian Imperialism" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol.1, 1972-3, pp.155-172.

Knox, B.A. (ed.) *The Queensland Years of Robert Herbert, Premier: Letters and Papers*, Brisbane, 1977.

Knox, B.A. "The Rise of Colonial Federation as an Object of British Policy, 1850-1870" *British Studies*, Vol.11, 1971, pp.92-112.

Kubicek, R.V. *The Administration of Imperialism: Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office*, Durham, 1969.

Lake, M. *A Divided Society: Tasmania During World War I*, Carlton, 1975.

Lamb, P.N. "Historians and Australian Railways" *AJPH*, Vol.18, No.2, 1972, pp.250-260.

Lawson, A. & Lawson, P. *Townsville: An Early History*, Adelaide, 1977.

Leach, R.H. "The New State Movement in Australia" *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol.3, 1965, pp.20-31.

Legge, J.D. *Central Authority and Regional Autonomy in Indonesia: A Study in Local Administration 1950-1960*, New York, 1961.

Lewis, G. *A History of the Ports of Queensland: A Study in Economic Nationalism*, Brisbane, 1973.

- Lewis, G. "Queensland Nationalism and Australian Capitalism" in E.L. Wheelwright & K. Buckley (eds), *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism*, Sydney, 1978, pp.110-147.
- Loveday, P. "The Member and his Constituents in New South Wales in mid-nineteenth century" *AJPH*, Vol.5, No.2, 1959, pp.202-212.
- Loveday, P. & Martin, A.W. *Parliament, Faction and Parties*, Melbourne, 1966.
- Lovering, J. "The Theory of the 'Internal Colony' and the Political Economy of Wales" *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol.10, No.3, 1978, pp.55-67.
- McCarty, J.W. "Australian Capital Cities in the Nineteenth Century" *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol.10, No.2, 1970, pp.107-137.
- McCarty, J.W. "Australian Regional History" *HS*, Vol.18, No.70, 1978, pp.88-105.
- Mackenzie, J. *Australian Paradox*, Melbourne, 1961.
- MacKirdy, K.A. "Clio's Australian Accent: Main Trends of Recent Historical Writing in Australia" *Canadian Historical Association Report*, 1958, pp.77-98.
- McNaughton, I.D. "The Case of Benjamin Kitt" *JRHSQ*, Vol.4, No.4, December 1951, pp.535-558.
- McQueen, H. *A New Britannia*, Ringwood, 1970.
- Mandel, E. *Late Capitalism*, London, 1975.
- Mandel, E. *Marxist Economic Thought*, 2 Vols., New York, 1968.
- Manion, J. *Townsville Yesterday*, Townsville, 1978.
- Marchak, P. "The Two Dimensions of Canadian Regionalism" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, pp.88-97.
- Martin, A.W. (ed.) *Essays in Australian Federation*, Melbourne, 1969.
- Martin, A.W. "The Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, 1856-1900" *AJPH*, Vol.2, No.1, 1956, pp.46-67.
- Matthews, R. "The Significance and Explanation of Regional Divisions in Canada: Toward a Canadian Sociology" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, pp.43-61.
- Mayo, J. "From Protectorate to Possession: British New Guinea 1884-8" *AJPH*, Vol.21, No.3, 1975, pp.54-69.
- Melbourne, A.C.V. *Early Constitutional Development in Australia, St Lucia*, 1963.

- Melbourne, A.C.V. "The Financial Crisis of 1866" *Daily Mail*, 1, 15, 29 January, 18 February 1927.
- Minshull, R. *Regional Geography theory and practice*, London, 1967.
- Moles, I.N. "The Indian Coolie Labour Issue in Queensland" *JRHSQ*, Vol.5, No.5, 1957, pp.1345-1372.
- Moore, G. *The Missouri Controversy 1819-1821*, Lexington, 1966.
- Morison, S.E., Commager, H.S. & Leuchtenburg, W.E. *The Growth of the American Republic*, 2 Vols., New York, 1969.
- Morrell, W.P. *British Colonial Policy in the Mid-Victorian Age*, London, 1969.
- Morrell, W.P. *The Provincial System in New Zealand 1852-76*, Christchurch, 1964.
- Morrison, A.A. "Colonial Society 1860-1890" *Queensland Heritage*, Vol.1, No.5, 1966, pp.21-30.
- Morrison, A.A. *Local Government in Queensland*, Brisbane, n.d.
- Morrison, A.A. "Politics in Early Queensland" *JRHSQ*, Vol.4, No.3, December 1950, pp.293-312.
- Morrison, A.A. "Queensland: A Study in Distance and Isolation" in E.L. French (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education*, 1960-1961, pp.191-203.
- Morrison, A.A. "The Government of Queensland" in S.R. Davis (ed.), *The Government of the Australian States*, London, 1960.
- Morrison, A.A. "William Coote" in D. Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.3, Melbourne, 1969, pp.456-457.
- Morrison, A.A. "William Coote, the Man and his Writings" *JRHSQ*, Vol.5, No.4, 1956, pp.1218-1232.
- Murdoch, J.R.M. "The Western Australian Party in the 1906 Federal Elections: A Comment on Early Federal Feeling in the West" *AJPH*, Vol.13, No.2, 1967, pp.247-250.
- Murphy, D.J., Joyce, R.B. & Hughes, C.A. (eds.) *Prelude to Power: The Rise of the Labour Party in Queensland 1885-1915*, Milton, 1970.
- Musgrave, A. "The History of the Cooktown District" *JRAHS*, Vol.40, part 4, 1954, pp.225-243.
- Nadel, G. *Australia's Colonial Culture: Ideas, Men and Institutions in Mid-Nineteenth Century Eastern Australia*, Melbourne, 1957.



- Neale, R.G. "Economic History" in *Introducing Queensland*, Brisbane, 1961, pp.176-183.
- Neale, R.G. "New States Movement" *AQ*, September 1950, pp.9-23.
- Neale, R.G. "The New England New State" *AQ*, September 1955, pp.18-29.
- Neale, R.G. "The New State Movement in Queensland: An Interpretation" *HS*, Vol.4, No.15, 1951, pp.198-213.
- Newell, P. *Queensland Sketchbook*, Brisbane, 1976.
- Nilsson, J. "Mackay in the Nineteenth Century" *JRHSQ*, Vol.7, No.2, 1963-64, pp.355-367.
- Northern Regional Study Policy Committee, *Northern Region: Basic Investigation of Prospects and Problems*, September 1973.
- O'Donoghue, K.K. "Princeland: The Colony That Might Have Been" *Twentieth Century*, Vol.6, No.1, 1951, pp.22-31.
- Odum, H.W. *Southern Regions of the United States*, Chapel Hill, 1936.
- Odum, H.W. "The Promise of Regionalism" in M. Jensen (ed.), *Regionalism in America*, Madison, 1951, pp.395-425.
- Odum, H.W. & Moore, H.E. *American Regionalism: A Cultural-Historical Approach to National Integration*, New York, 1938.
- Ogier, J.C.H. "The Riverina" *Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Victoria) Journal*, Vol.29, 1912, pp.49-85.
- Ouellet, F., Smith, L.A.H., Creighton, D.G. & Parker, W.H. *Constitutionalism and Nationalism in Lower Canada*, Toronto, 1969.
- Palma, G. "Dependency: A Formal Theory of Underdevelopment or a Methodology for the Analysis of Concrete Situations of Underdevelopment?" *World Development*, Vol.6, No.7/8, 1978, pp.881-924.
- Palmer, V. (ed.) *A.G. Stephens: His Life and Work*, Melbourne, 1941.
- Palmer, V. *The Legend of the Nineties*, Carlton, 1954.
- Parker, R.S. "New States for Australia. Why New States?" in *New States for Australia*, Proceedings of Australian Institute of Political Science, Spring forum, Armidale October 1955.
- Parnaby, O.W. *Britain and the Labour Trade in the South-West Pacific*, Durham, 1964.
- Penny, B. "The Age of Empire: An Australian Episode" *HS*, Vol.11, No.41, 1963, pp.32-42.

- Penny, B. "The Blake Case" *AJPH*, Vol.6, No.2, 1960, pp.176-189.
- Perry, H.C. *Memoirs of the Hon. Sir Robert Philp KCMG 1851-1922*, Brisbane, 1923.
- Philipp, J. "1890 - The Turning Point in Labour History?" *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand Selected Articles. Second Series*, Carlton, 1967, pp.126-136.
- Pike, D. *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*, London, 1957.
- Pletsch, C. "'The Socialist Nation of the German Democratic Republic' or the Asymmetry in Nation and Ideology between the Two Germanies" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.21, No.3, 1979, pp.323-345.
- Potter, D.M. *The South and the Sectional Conflict*, Baton Rouge, 1968.
- Potter, D.M. & Manning, T.G. (eds.) *Nationalism and Sectionalism in America 1775-1877: Select Problems in Historical Interpretation*, New York, 1966.
- Powell, J.M. *Environmental Management in Australia 1788-1914*, Melbourne, 1976.
- Powell, J.M. & Williams, M. (eds.) *Australian Space Australian Time: Geographical Perspectives*, Melbourne, 1975.
- Price, A.G. *Foundation and Settlement of South Australia*, Adelaide, 1973.
- Pringle, R. "The Federation Issue in New South Wales Politics 1891-99" *AJPH*, Vol.21, No.2, 1975, pp.1-12.
- Pugh, R.B. "The Colonial Office, 1801-1925" in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol.3, London, 1959, pp.711-768.
- Quaife, G.R. "Make Us Roads No Matter How: A Note on Colonial Politics" *AJPH*, Vol.15, No.1, 1969, pp.47-54.
- Queensland Government. *Our First Half Century: A Review of Queensland's Progress*, Brisbane, 1909.
- Regionalism and Australia: Origins and Diversity*, Study Guide B, Geelong, 1979.
- Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol.10, No.3, 1978, pp.1-12, "Uneven Regional Development: An Introduction to this Issue".
- Reynolds, H. "Australian Nationalism: Tasmanian Patriotism" *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol.5, No.1, 1971, pp.18-30.
- Reynolds, H. "Racial Violence in North Queensland" *Lectures in North Queensland History. Second Series*, Townsville, 1975, pp.21-29.

- Reynolds, H. "Regionalism in Nineteenth Century Tasmania" *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, Vol.17, No.1, 1969, pp.14-28.
- Reynolds, J. *Edmund Barton*, Sydney, 1948.
- Richardson, J.E. *Patterns of Australian Federation*, Canberra, 1973.
- Robinson, A.J. "Regionalism and Urbanization in Australia: A Note on Locational Emphasis in the Australian Economy" *Economic Geography*, Vol.39, No.2, 1963, pp.149-155.
- Robinson, K.W. "Processes and Patterns of Urbanisation in Australia and New Zealand" *New Zealand Geographer*, Vol.18, No.1, 1962, pp.32-49.
- Roden, D. "Regional Inequality and Rebellion in the Sudan" *Geographical Review*, Vol.64, No.4, 1974, pp.498-516.
- Rodoman, B.B. "Principal Types of Geographical Regions" *Soviet Geography*, Vol.13, No.7, 1972, pp.448-454.
- Roe, M. *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851*, Melbourne, 1965.
- Rose, A.J. "Dissent from Down Under: Metropolitan Primacy as the Normal State" *Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol.7, No.1, 1966, pp.1-27.
- Roth, H.L. *The Discovery and Settlement of Port Mackay Queensland*, Halifax, 1908.
- Rowley, C.D. "Clarence River Separatism in 1860. A Problem in Communications" *HS*, Vol.1, No.4, 1941, pp.225-244.
- Schindler, C. "The Evolution of Political Parties" *JRHSQ*, Vol.1, No.3, August 1917, pp.130-139.
- Semmel, B. *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism 1750-1850*, London, 1970.
- Serle, P. (ed.) *Dictionary of Australian Biography*, 2 Vols., Sydney, 1949.
- Shann, E. *An Economic History of Australia*, London, 1948.
- Sharman, G.C. "Federalism and the Study of the Australian Political System" *AJPH*, Vol.21, No.3, 1975, pp.11-24.
- Shaw, A.G.L. (ed.) *Great Britain and the Colonies 1815-1865*, London, 1970.
- Shaw, A.G.L. *The Story of Australia*, London, 1972.
- Shields, R.A. "Australian Opinion and Defence of the Empire: A Study in Imperial Relations 1880-1890" *AJPH*, Vol.10, 1964, pp.41-53.

Simeon, R. & Elkins, D.J. "Regional Political Cultures in Canada" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.7, No.3, 1974, pp.397-437.

Smith, A. "Metaphor and Nationality in North America" *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.51, No.3, 1970, pp.247-275.

Stevenson, G. "Canadian Regionalism in Continental Perspective" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, pp.16-28.

Stilwell, F.J.B. "Economic Factors and the Growth of Cities" in I.H. Burnley (ed.), *Urbanization in Australia: The Post-War Experience*, London, 1974.

Stoodley, J. "Hodgkinson" in D. Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne, 1972, pp.404-405.

Sumner, R. "Some Early Illusions Concerning North Queensland" *LINQ*, Vol.3, Nos. 3 & 4, 1974, pp.74-87.

Sumner, R. "The Entrepot of North Queensland: Development of the Townsville Area to 1900" in D. Hopley (ed.), *Geographical Studies of the Townsville Area*, JCU Geography Department, Occasional Paper 2, pp.115-120.

Symanski, R. & Newman, J.L. "Formal, Functional, and Nodal Regions: Three Fallacies" *Professional Geographer*, Vol.25, No.4, 1973, pp.350-352.

Tapp, E.J. *Early New Zealand*, Melbourne, 1958.

Tapp, E.J. "The Colonial Origins of the New England New State Movement" *JRAHS*, Vol.49, part 3, 1963, pp.205-221.

Taylor, G. "Geographical Factors Controlling the Settlement of Tropical Australia" *Queensland Geographic Journal*, Vol.32-33, 1918, pp.1-67.

Taylor, G.P. "Business and Politics in Queensland, 1859-1895" *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol.1, No.1, 1967, pp.75-92.

Taylor, G.P. "Political Attitudes and Land Policy in Queensland, 1868-1894" *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol.37, No.3, 1968, pp.247-264.

*Townsville Bulletin Jubilee Souvenir 1863-1913*, 27 August 1913.

*Townsville Chamber of Commerce Jubilee Brochure, 1882-1932*, Townsville, 1932.

*Townsville 100: 1864-1964*, Townsville, 1964.

- Turner, F.J. *The Significance of Sections in American History*, Gloucester, 1959.
- Vance, R.B. "The Regional Concept as a Tool for Social Research" in M. Jensen (ed.), *Regionalism in America*, Madison, 1951, pp.119-140.
- Van Dyke, V. "The Individual, The State, and Ethnic Communities in Political Theory" *World Politics*, Vol.29, No.3, 1977, pp.343-369.
- Walker, R.B. *Old New England: a history of the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales 1818-1900*, Sydney, 1966.
- Walpole, S. *The Life of Lord John Russell*, Vol.2, London, 1891.
- Ward, J.M. *Earl Grey and the Australian Colonies, 1846-1857; a study of self-government and self-interest*, Melbourne, 1958.
- Ward, J.M. "The Responsible Government Question in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, 1851-1856" *JRAHS*, Vol.63, part 4, 1978, pp.221-247.
- Waterson, D.B. *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament, 1860-1929*, Canberra, 1972.
- Watson, L. *The Townsville Story*, Townsville, 1952.
- Watt, E.D. "Secession in Western Australia" *University Studies*, Vol.3, No.2, 1958, pp.43-86.
- Westfall, W. "On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature" *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.15, No.2, 1980, pp.3-15.
- Whebell, C.F.J. "A Model of Territorial Separatism" *Proceedings of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol.5, 1973, pp.295-298.
- Windeyer, W.J.V. "The Creation of New States" in G.V. Portus (ed.), *Studies in the Australian Constitution*, Sydney, 1933.
- Wirth, L. "Localism, Regionalism and Centralization" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.42, 1937, pp.493-509.
- Wirth, L. "The Limitations of Regionalism" in M. Jensen (ed.), *Regionalism in America*, Madison, 1951, pp.381-393.
- Wright, D. "'The Tyranny of Distance': A Note on Western Australia and Federation, The First Decade" *University Studies*, Vol.5, No.3, 1969, pp.33-41.
- Wolf, L. *Life of the First Marquess of Ripon*, 2 Vols., London, 1921.
- Yarwood, A.T. "The 'White Australia' Policy, a Reinterpretation of its Development in the Late Colonial Period" *HS*, Vol.10, No.39, 1962, pp.257-269.

2. *Theses and other Unpublished Material*

- Adamson, S. The Queensland Sugar Industry 1860-1917, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1953.
- Bassett, P.G. Politics in Queensland, 1888-1893, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1967.
- Birrell, M. The Political Influence of the Squatters, 1850-1885. 1950. M.L.
- Brown, H.C. Queensland's Annexationist Ambitions in New Guinea 1859-1884, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1968.
- Brown, R.B. A History of the Gilbert River Goldfield, 1869-1874, B.A.Hons., JCU, 1974.
- Bryan, H. The Political Career of John Murtagh Macrossan, M.A., University of Queensland, 1954.
- Caldwell, J.C. New England Politics 1856-1865, B.A.Hons., UNE, 1958.
- Callaghan, P.S. Political Alignments in the Queensland Legislative Assembly 1878-99, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1968.
- Clark, C. The Royal Commissions of Queensland 1859-1901, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1962.
- Clark, K.N. An Examination of Queensland Attitudes to the Federal System 1900-1920, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1960.
- Clarke, D.P. The Attitude of the Colonial Office to the Working of Responsible Government 1854-1868, Ph.D., University of London, 1953.
- Coaldrake, O.P. The Political Geography of a New State Boundary: An Appraisal of Factors Affecting North Queensland, B.A.Hons., JCU, 1973.
- Collinson, J.W. Papers. J.O.L.
- Colwell, L.J. Some Aspects of Social Life in Charters Towers from 1872 to 1900 with some emphasis on the Nineties, B.A.Hons., JCU, 1969.
- Cook, M. Cables and Co-operation? A Study of the Development of Submarine Cables to Australia and the concomitant expansion of land telegraphy within the Continent between 1859 and 1910 with special reference to Queensland, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1969.
- Cotter, P.M.L. The Development of the Ports and Harbours of Queensland during the Years 1860-1890, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1958.

Dignan, D.K. Sir Thomas McIlwraith: His Public Career and Political Thought, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1951.

Doran, C. Separatism in Townsville, 1884-1894, B.Ed.-B.A.Hons., JCU, 1978.

Farnfield, J. George Elphinstone Dalrymple - His Life and Times in Queensland 1859-1874, Ph.D., University of Queensland, 1968.

Fowler, J. Queensland 1860-1888: Political, Social and Religious Comments, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1962.

Green, L.F. The Queensland Attitude to Federalism, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1952.

Hardy, M. Constitutional and Political Developments in Queensland during the Governorship of Sir George Bowen, M.A.Qual., University of Queensland, 1972.

Harman, G.S. Politics at the Electoral Level - A Study in Armidale and New England, 1899 to 1929, M.A.Hons., UNE, 1964.

Hart, B. New State Movements in Queensland Since 1885, unpublished thesis, University of Queensland, 1950. J.O.L.

Hunt, T.A. A Short History of Cooktown. Fryer Library.

Jay, R. The Queensland Separation Movement. J.O.L.

Jenkins, A.D. Attitudes Towards Federation in North Queensland, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1969.

Jobson, J.X. A Biography of Sir Arthur Hunter Palmer, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1960.

Kelly, P. Sir George Bowen, Governor of Queensland 1859-1868, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1952.

Kingston, B. Theory and Practice in the Pastoral Settlement of Queensland, 1859-1869, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1963.

Lewis, G. The Crisis Years: Economic Development in Queensland 1885-1895, B.Ec.Hons., University of Queensland, 1964.

Loos, N.A. Aboriginal-European Relations in North Queensland, 1861-1897, Ph.D., JCU, 1976.

Loos, N.A. Frontier Conflict in the Bowen District 1861-1874, M.A.Qual., JCU, 1970.

Mason, K.J. The Honourable John Douglas C.M.G., B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1969.

McCaig, R. Labour Organisation and Objectives in Queensland 1890-1920, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1950.

- McCormack, J. The Politics of Expediency: Queensland Government in the Eighteen Nineties, M.A., University of Queensland, 1974.
- McDonald, L.L. Land Settlement in the Northern Districts of Port Curtis and Leichhardt, 1853-1869, M.A.Qual., University of Queensland, 1975.
- McGavin, P. The Role of Railways in the Economic Development of Colonial Queensland, M.Econ. Studies, University of Queensland, 1976.
- McPheat, W.S. John Dunmore Lang: With Special Reference to his Activities in Queensland, M.A., University of Queensland, 1953.
- Mather, L.D. Notes on the Political History of Rockhampton and District for the first forty years. 1965. J.O.L.
- Mercer, P.M. An Analysis of Racial Attitudes Towards Melanesians Expressed in the Queensland Legislative Assembly and Newspapers, 1877-92, B.A.Hons., JCU, 1972.
- Moles, I.N. A Brief History of the Separatist Movements in North Queensland: A particular study in Australian regionalism, B.A.Pen.Hons., University of Queensland, 1955.
- Moles, I.N. Federal and State Attitudes to Movements for Regional Self Government...1901-54, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1955.
- Moore, C.R. Kanaka Maratta: A History of Melanesian Mackay, Ph.D., JCU, 1981.
- Morrison, A.H. The Influence of Party Politics on Local Government in Queensland 1910-1932, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1933.
- Nilsson, J.A. History of Mackay, the Sugar Town 1862-1915, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1963.
- O'Hara, R.L. The Influence of the Moreton Bay Separation Movement in New England and the Clarence 1850-1862, B.A.Hons., UNE, 1967.
- O'Rourke, T.J. Problems of Queensland Defence 1878-1901, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1969.
- Pearson, J.E.R. Sir Charles Lilley in Queensland History. 1952. J.O.L.
- Powell, M. The Rise, Courses and Consequences of the Crisis of 1866 in Queensland, B.Econ.Hons., University of Queensland, 1969.
- Robinson, J.A. The Political Role of the Governor in Queensland, 1859-89, B.A.Hons., JCU, 1972.



- Scott, B. The Governorship of Sir Anthony Musgrave, 1883-1888, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1955.
- Sharman, R.C. The Annexation of New Guinea by the McIlwraith Government in 1883 and its aftermath, M.A., University of Queensland, 1969.
- Sheppard, J.P.C. The Pacific Islander in Queensland 1863-1883, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1966.
- Shiels, D.A. Local Government in Townsville, 1879-1888, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1964.
- Stevens, J.F. Townsvale and Townsville: The Activities of the Hon. Robert Towns, M.L.C., in Queensland, 1848-1873. M.L.
- Stoodley, J. Some Social Aspects of Early Gold-Mining in Queensland, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1951.
- Stoodley, J. The Queensland Gold-Miner in the Late Nineteenth Century: His Influence and Interests, M.A., University of Queensland, 1964.
- Sullivan, J. Localism in North Queensland 1865-1887, B.A.Hons., JCU, 1970.
- Vockler, J.C. Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1953.
- Voss, V.R. de V. Early Pastoral Settlement in the Coastal District of Central Queensland, Sydney University, 1951. Newstead House.
- Voss, V.R. de V. Separatist Movements in Central Queensland in the Nineteenth Century, B.A.Hons., Sydney University, 1952.
- Wallis, L. Some Aspects of the Townsville Municipal Council, 1889-1901, B.A.Hons., JCU, 1972.
- Whittaker, J.L. The Riverina: Popular Political Movements of the Nineteenth Century, M.A., UNE, 1961.
- Wilson, P.D. The Political Career of the Honourable Arthur Macalister, C.M.G., B.A.Hons., University of Queensland, 1969.