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George Nadel in the introduction of his *Australia's Colonial Culture* observed that researchers of the 19th century are confronted from the outset with an "embarras de richesse", or overabundance of source material. Despite the common efforts of archivists, literary critics, students of journalism and political scientists, Australian newspaper history has advanced little beyond the methods of the early investigators. In part this failure can be explained by the prolific and ephemeral character of 19th century newspapers themselves. The Golden Age of the press might well be renamed the Era of Instability, for the salient feature of press ownership, individual or collective, is undoubtedly its ephemerality. In Queensland, metropolitan papers changed hands every five years while, in the provinces, turnover was as high as every two years. Although Queensland boasts a sizeable body of press writing, the task of identifying numerous individual publications and proprietors has absorbed researchers to the exclusion of sustained written commentary.

The prolific character of the 19th century press has important implications for general historians as well as for specialist newspaper researchers. In the absence of systematic research into the newspaper sources upon which they depend, most historians cite the press in piecemeal fashion without any consideration of proprietorial politics or the audience for which the paper was intended; they prefer to consult colonial papers which have survived into the 20th century and to avoid journals which have long since disappeared, even though the latter may have been more informative and influential in their time. A further consequence of the selective use of "established" newspapers by historians is the tendency to produce a more conservative picture of the press than is in reality the case. Only one work on the 19th century press exists which is sufficiently thorough and comprehensive to merit serious recommendation. Robin Walker's volume on 19th century New South Wales succeeds in providing a cohesive commentary on southern newspaper development and plugs most of the holes in the potted press tradition. On the subject of unsuspected competition, he reminds readers that both the *Atlas*, in the 1840s, and the *Empire* in the 1850s, competed strongly against the *Herald*. Any discussion of mid century constitutional and land
developments would be unwise to ignore these sources.

Implicit in the bibliographical and journalistic approach is the assumption that Queensland newspapers, because of their instability, were incapable of providing systematic discussion of issues and are therefore unworthy of close attention. In a recent Marxist analysis of colonial Queensland, however, William Thorpe has stressed the need to study ideologies and to identify political entrepreneurs operating behind the scenes of government. The strategic importance of the press as a vehicle for ideas and a medium of political organisation cannot be overemphasized. To the extent that it announces social formations and political pressure groups (Town Liberals, squatters, farmers and planters) the press permits valuable insights into a much wider cross-section of colonial society than has hitherto been acknowledged.

Editorial authorship is an obvious starting point, though not the sole focus for such an analysis. As the self-conscious mediator of newspaper policy and public opinion, the colonial editor enjoyed a privileged position in the newspaper world. One distinctive aspect of 19th century authorship was a polemical tradition which operated simultaneously against government officials and other newspaper editors. The verbal aggression of colonial editors demonstrates a latitude which is no longer tolerated in their 20th century counterparts. In Queensland, it has been equated with rabid provincial journalism. The potted biographical tradition, and the cult of personality surrounding early Queensland editors, have tended to obscure their collective contribution as a significant fraction of the colonial intelligentsia. The argument employed by Manion and Kirkpatrick that Queensland editors were not uniformly well educated does not detract from their significant performance as ideologues and organisers of local opinion. A cursory survey of mid-century Queensland editors confirms their status as intellectuals by revealing a substantial literary output in the form of reminiscences, histories, poetry, immigration works, technical treatises and almanacs. Regrettably, it is this broader achievement, removed from the turbulent political context of journalism, for which they are generally remembered.

Scathing outbursts against editorial opponents should not be allowed to distract the attention of modern researchers from the serious debates in which the press became involved. At the risk of diverging significantly from the accepted priorities of Australian press research, this study sets out to identify those debates which formed the basis for ongoing colonial discussion. Such an approach ensures that the contribution of individual editors will not be assessed in isolation but can be integrated into a precise intellectual framework. For the purposes of this work, three broad debates—land, constitution and race—have been postulated as the dominant preoccupations of the Queensland press during the years 1846-1871.

While the newspaper editorial ensured a regular social and political commentary, it was the insertion of provocative contributions on specific issues which gave the colonial press its cutting edge. The persistent practice by
which editors opened their columns to anonymous correspondents was the facet of 19th century journalism which most incensed officialdom. The "Colonist" series of the Hobart Town Gazette and the "Vox Populi" letters of Wardell's Australian were important landmarks in the clashes with Governors Arthur and Darling. Governor Fitzroy, commenting in 1848 on the newspapers of the southern colonies, complained that "there is not one of them that would refuse admission to any article, however personal or offensive it might be". Although it emerges as an integral component of the free press debate, contributory authorship has been all but ignored by press historians. Even the more able commentators of the colonial press, R.B. Walker and R. Kirkpatrick, have signally failed to examine this distinctive dimension of colonial journalism. Morris Miller, one of the few writers to grapple with the clandestine literary tradition, has shown that the confusion over authorship with existed in the minds of colonial Governors has carried over into the work of modern press historians. To fully assess the significance of contributory authorship, it is important to examine the content of these polemical articles and, where possible, to try to identify the writers concerned. In a few instances, their authorship was an open secret; for the most part, however, establishing their identity requires a sound understanding of the social and political networks operating around the press. Jim Gibbney, an A.D.B. historian who spent several decades researching and identifying colonial journalists, has emphasized the formidable problems confronting researchers "when ordinary journalistic anonymity is reinforced by the political pressures of a sometimes clandestine operation".

The success of colonial newspapers in winning liberty of speech ahead of their British counterparts may be attributed to their aggressive use of the Junius tradition. The tactics of Junius, the celebrated correspondent of late 18th century England, were imported from the Motherland and adapted to colonial culture. In keeping with the correspondence which appeared mysteriously in the Public Advertiser of 1768, many of Junius' 19th century offspring addressed themselves to Governors, eminent politicians and lawyers. Their professed aim was to expose chicanery and resist oppression from the Executive in a style ranging from lofty eloquence to biting invective. Because of its Liberal rhetoric, the Junius tradition has been associated almost exclusively with pressure for constitutional reform. Junius' self-appointed role as a constitutional critic deserves close attention; yet it is not the only significant thematic context for studying contributory authorship. Anonymous correspondents also played an important role in prolonged controversies over the Native Mounted Police. During both the land crisis of the 1840s and the racial debate of the following decade, frontier squatters like William Forster and W.H. Walsh adapted the Junius tradition to their own political ends.

In analysing the colonial press, authorship must be set against other determining factors. This study proposes a redefinition of the 19th century newspaper based upon an integrated analysis of authorship and ownership. Changes
of ownership, especially company formation and takeovers, played a decisive part in shaping editorial policy. Research into Brisbane Joint Stock companies reveals sharp fluctuations in the fortunes of polemical journalism. In this respect, ownership provides the economic "context" and necessary complement to authorship. Irrespective of the instability of colonial publications, ownership remains the permanent category which frames a clandestine yet vigorous political culture.

Central to a discussion of ownership is the persistent inference that the 19th century was a Golden Age of journalism when low capital investment and healthy competition were most conducive to Liberal idealism and independent political thought. The tenacity with which press apologists cling to the Golden Age interpretation in the face of sharp criticism may be a little more than a nostalgic reaction to a contemporary age of media monopolies and monolithic vested interests. One pattern of ownership which spans the 19th and 20th centuries is the long-standing control of leading metropolitan newspapers by individual families. The Fairfax of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the Symes of the *Age* spring to mind as the earliest and most influential representatives of this austere newspaper tradition. For the purposes of this study, the ascendancy of the *Herald* is undoubtedly the more noteworthy with respect to time and location. The rise of the *Herald* by the middle of the 19th century coincides closely with the decades examined in this work. Gavin Souter's recently published history of the *Herald*, despite its clarity and length fails to address the central question of the *Herald's* growing power in colonial society. Michael Roe's brief but pertinent analysis in *Quest for Authority* is still one of the few informative sources on the *Herald's* early development. This study extends Roe's analysis by demonstrating that the *Herald* was at its most effective when it relentlessly attacked the political reputations of leading Liberal politicians, like J.D. Lang, (Chapter Two) or A.J.P. Lutwyche (Chapter Three). The biblical self-righteousness of the *Herald* was never more apparent than during the protracted feud with the Rev. John Dunmore Lang, an episode which hardly rates a mention in Souter's work.

The constitutional and regional conservatism espoused by the *Herald* during the 1850s and early 1860s, had important repercussions for press development in adjacent colonies. While Queensland provincial papers aped Granny's denunciation of local Liberals, a member of the Fairfax family unsuccessfully attempted to extend the family dynasty to Brisbane. Unlike Melbourne, where the Symes emerged to counter the conservative Fairfax influence, Brisbane did not develop a strong tradition of family ownership centred around the *Courier*. As Rod Kirkpatrick has shown, family ownership of 19th century Queensland newspapers was a feature of provincial rather than metropolitan journalism. Even the Buzacott brothers, Charles Hardie and William Hitchcock, who eventually extended their operations from Central Queensland to the metropolis, did not acquire a lasting reputation comparable with that of the Fairfax or Syme families.
In respect of ownership, Queensland emerges as a test case for the Golden Age thesis; the optimistic assumption that the northern colony remained a haven for the small proprietor underpins most of the local press writing which has accumulated steadily over the last two decades. Neither Brisbane journalists nor Courier-Mail historians have attempted to redress this conspicuous imbalance. Under the influence of Clem Lack, the Golden Age interpretation has become another variant of the frontier myth based upon rugged individualism and pioneering values. A critical examination of 19th century ownership reveals serious flaws in the accepted pattern of Queensland press writing. In larger provincial centres, company formation merely formalized collective arrangements which had existed even in the pioneer phase of newspaper development.

The apparent discontinuity of 19th century press ownership and the resilience of a potted biographical tradition in journalism have encouraged a few researchers to attempt a collective biography of newspaper proprietors. James Manion's Paper Power in North Queensland, includes a brief but inconclusive analysis of the occupations of North Queensland pressmen. The most systematic survey along these lines is Susan Carey's study of South Australian pressmen between 1836 and 1890. Carey's emphasis on individual ownership and on J.L. Bonython's association with the South Australian Advertiser, are not inconsistent with the lingering Golden Age interpretation. She refers in passing to family ownership, but makes no mention of collective or corporate arrangements despite the fact that her study encompasses the late colonial period. This omission becomes significant when she discusses the social origins of her sample. Carey's assertion that these men shared a middle class professional background is questionable for she does not appear to have taken into account the newspaper investment of squatters and rural capitalists in joint stock enterprises.

Although Rod Kirkpatrick and James Manion have recently included details of provincial joint stock ventures in their accounts, no Australian press historian, journalist or academic, has sufficiently come to terms with the phenomenon of company ownership in the colonial period. This study attempts to remedy the deficiency by critically analysing two important limited liability newspaper companies, the Queensland Daily Guardian Company (1866-68) and the Brisbane Newspaper Company (1868-73). Despite the paucity of information concerning the political economy of the 19th century press, some attention must be devoted to joint stock ventures because of their strategic political importance and relatively high capital investment. A modern social-critical approach which emphasises political power and vertical control can provide a useful corrective to the vague rhetoric of the Golden Age interpretation. The uncritical craft tradition in which most journalists write has created a distorted picture of industrial relations, especially on the larger newspaper concerns.

Most of the institutional myths which flourished in the newspaper world of the last century were concerned with authorship rather than ownership. At a time of expanding
literacy and improved printing technology, notions like the Fourth Estate and the Free Press were widely invoked to justify the position of the press as a leading Victorian institution. Complementing the elaborate mythology of authorship was the assumption of independent and competitive ownership. Colonial Queensland has invariably been depicted as the haven of the fighting editor and the independent proprietor, either one the same or in partnership. In time, respectability overtook most provincial families and their employees but the most dramatic shifts occurred on metropolitan journals. Here the fundamental contradictions which have shaped modern journalism were all too apparent. The "Joint Stock Principle", with its connotations of organized routine and managerial direction, sat uneasily astride regular assertions of editorial independence.
Chapter 1
Press and Police: The Northern Frontier

When Arthur Sydney Lyon at the invitation of the Moreton Bay Progress Association established the first local paper in June 1846, the northern frontier was the focus of renewed vitality and interest in the wake of a mercantile slump. The infant *Courier*, unashamedly expansionist and pro-squatter, eagerly anticipated the wave of pastoral settlement which would follow exploration. In the same breath as it announced Leichhardt's inland expedition and published details from Mitchell's dispatches, the *Courier* celebrated the departure of the squatters' discredited adversary, Governor Gipps. By 1844, Gipps who clashed with his Legislative Council on the questions of land revenue and race relations, had become a political scapegoat for the colony's economic troubles and a prime target of the virulent southern press. The *Moreton Bay Courier* added its untested voice to the chorus of critics who denounced Gipps' late "disastrous, blighting policy".1 The political victory of the squatters, enshrined in the liberal provisions of the new Waste Lands Act of 1846, was heartily applauded, amid confident assertions that pastoral settlement would now proceed apace, unfettered by the administrative and moral constraints which had characterised Gipps' turbulent rule.

At the end of 1846, the *Courier* announced to its growing band of readers that newly discovered country along the Boyne River and its tributaries was rapidly being stocked with 10,000 sheep and that a further influx from the Clarence and Northern Rivers was expected. Lyon who owned and edited the *Courier* in its earlier years acknowledged:

We have often dwelt with interest and delight on the recorded toils and triumphs of early colonisation - the struggles and sufferings of those adventurous spirits who, in seeking to extend the blessings of civilisation, have enlarged the limits of British dominion and heightened the lustre of the English name.2

Such an aggressive imperialist statement was typical of Australian pioneering journals and journalists. The government decision, a few months later, to establish a colony at Port Curtis marked out the northern-most limit of the new rush into what was to become south-east Queensland. In a lyrical outburst of colonising zeal, the *Courier* premature-
The Press in Colonial Queensland

ly hailed the expedition as:
The first footmark of Civilisation on the hitherto trackless wilds - the first symptom of the victory which Sciences and the Arts were about to achieve over barbarous ignorance - the first faint rays from the beacon flame of knowledge meeting and dispelling the darkness of lower superstition. The home of the savage had become the home of civilised man..."³

For the local Aboriginal population the implications of Lyon's remarks were ominous. Editorial idealism provided the rationale for their dispossession. The Moreton Bay Courier's preoccupation with exploration and communication was inseparable from its verbal attacks on the indigenous tribes of the Brisbane and Pine Rivers. Typical in this respect was its editorial page of 21 July 1846, which featured a eulogy of Leichhardt alongside a diatribe against Aboriginal aggression. Reports of violence were frequent and usually concluded with a vigorous call for reprisals. Through the medium of the newspaper, subscriptions could be raised and sizeable rewards offered for those who apprehended Aboriginal offenders. A siege mentality fostered by the Courier heightened disquiet among the townspeople. The murder of squatter Andrew Gregor and his female servant near Caboolture, in November of the same year, was the signal for a general assault on the offending tribes, sanctioned by the Courier's disregard for more constitutional procedures:

"We know enough of the Aborigines to be aware that, as is customary among all savages, all projects of love or war or expeditions of an unusual nature are first debated by the whole adult males of the tribe. Consequently according to our law to every outrage committed upon the whites they are all accessories - a class of criminals whose punishment is often well nigh equal to that of their principals in crime."⁴

Pandering to anti-Aboriginal feeling and condoning collective acts of white violence were as much a part of the editorial mission as raising subscriptions for the local Hospital and School of Arts. By proclaiming itself the scourge of the black population, the press sought to encourage an embryonic sense of community, albeit with tragic results. In a scenario common to most Queensland pioneer papers, Lyons was quick to discard the "cumbrous panoply" of British justice for violent and indiscriminate revenge.

Lyons willingness to uphold the frontier values of pragmatism and ruthlessness may well have stemmed from his personal experiences as superintendent to Captain Living on Burrandowan station earlier in the decade. As literary champion of the squatters and founder of the district's first four papers, he was to play a decisive role in shaping racial attitudes along the troubled northern frontier. Provocative racial comment by the local editor was partially offset by the intervention of correspondents. The racial issue was sufficiently volatile and complex to create deep divisions within the white community itself. These divi-
ions were admirably exposed in press polemics between "persecutors" and "protectors". That the local racial incidents of 1847 were extensively reported and amplified in metropolitan Sydney journals suggests that they were quickly integrated into a broader debate about legal protection for Aborigines, a debate which had intensified during the Gipps period (1838-46) and culminated on the northern frontier with the celebrated case of Frederick Walker during the mid 1850's.

Before proceeding to a study of the provincial press and the racial situation on the northern frontier, it is essential to examine briefly the changing political situation in New South Wales during the mid-1840's, in order to discern how the race debate had become integrated into a bitter dispute over land. Implicit in the campaign for fixity of tenure and the pre-emptive right by the squatters and by their Pastoral Association was a basic disregard for the rights of the original occupants. Hatred of the Border Police, the white frontier force which had been established after Myall Creek, was a direct consequence of its supplementary function as Gipps' tax and rent collectors in the outside districts. Land and racial questions were thus intimately connected at this period. Like racial issues, constitutional matters were also influenced by this unprecedented land agitation. For the purpose of this work three broad debates - race, constitution and land - have been postulated as dominant preoccupations shared by colonial newspapers. For outspoken colonial papers Gipps became a symbol of imperial tyranny as Darling had been before him. Synthesizing the anti-imperial tradition of the colonial press was not the Herald nor the Australian but the Atlas, a witty periodical, more eloquent and rabid than any of its Sydney rivals. The Atlas' constitutional rhetoric reflected its ambitious legal talent. Edited by Robert Lowe, a barrister, it scoffed at the moderation of the Herald and at the liberal philanthropy of the Australian. Lowe, later to become editor of the London Times, was a prolific and gifted journalist as well as a talented orator. One regular Atlas contributor was William Forster, a literary squatter who rose in politics to become New South Wales Colonial Secretary a decade later. With Lowe, Forster helped to forge a unique species of right-wing journalism in the colonies - learned, aristocratic and satirical. James Martin, who edited the Atlas after Lowe's return to England, claimed that Forster was "disagreeable as an opponent, dangerous as a supporter, but fatal as a colleague". With the departure of Gipps and the passage of a Waste Lands Bill granting the squatters most of their demands, the broad coalition against the Executive and the Imperial Government splintered into warring factions. As a squatter and pioneer in the northern districts after 1849, Forster, the journalist, introduced strong anti-centralist attitudes into what was to become Queensland and developed the racial consequences of the anti-Gipps campaign in his harsh new provincial environment.

The Atlas frequently depicted the squatter's lot as solitary and unenviable. Forster, writing to the future New South Wales Chief-Justice James Dowling from his outback
stations, had painted the same picture of isolation and deprivation, using a species of grim humour for which the Atlas had become renowned:

> My scribblings are executed far from the voices that used to surround me at home and I am as solitary as a starved attorney... While you are feasting on venison and... learned discourse with men in long gowns and valuable wigs, I shall be listening to the jabber of blackfellows... I shall have Corroborees instead of your Theatres.¹⁰

Forster's correspondence with Dowling provides interesting insights into the mental state of educated squatters in the bush. For men like Forster and William Henry Walsh, a fellow Wide Bay settler and Oxonian, the colonial press and politics became important outlets. The absence of printed matter often spurred such men, albeit a little contemptuously, to become correspondents to provincial and town papers. In the absence of books, Walsh was believed on one occasion to have resorted to a dictionary for mental exercise.¹¹ Forster confided to Dowling that life in the bush "is by no means the most sociable nor does it as you might suppose occupy one's time sufficiently without having recourse to other amusements";¹² he later added that:

> Having exhausted my slender shelf of books long ago, the perusal of the late newspaper probably affords as much pleasure to me as a night at the theatre to a student doing practice.¹³

The squatter in exile from "civilisation" turned his attention to the press and to the question of frontier race relations, one area upon which he could claim immediate experience and authority. By contrast with the metropolitan refinements of the Atlas, the journalism practised by Forster and Walsh in the provinces was harsh and direct. It was nonetheless the logical corollary of Forster's Atlas years. Having annexed and reworked the press tradition of "Junius", the northern squatters would revive the agitation against the frontier police and centralised control throughout the 1850's.

The Wide Bay district was the first region to be occupied by white settlers following the disbanding of the Border Police and the departure of Gipps. In the years 1847-49, the first generation of settlers moved their flocks from the Clarence and MacIntyre Rivers beyond Jimbour and the Darling Downs. Encouraged by the restoration of the pre-emptive right and the liberal leasing conditions of the new Waste Lands Bill, the squatters indulged their insatiable hunger for land; the Leith-Hay brothers took up Gigoomgan Station near Gayndah, while immediately to the north, William Henry Walsh who had previously worked for the sons of Sir Charles Perrier, occupied Degilbo, a property 900 sq. km. in extent on behalf of the Sydney firm of Griffith, Fanning and Company. Among the most adventurous were William Forster and Gregory Blaxland Jnr. Travelling north-east they reached the lower Burnett River and stocked Gin Gin Station. To their west beyond the Dividing Range, Adolphus Trevethan's station at Rawbelle and J.C. Mackay's
Map 1 Pastoral expansion into the Wide Bay and Burnett districts 1850-55, showing historic stations and settlements, Native Police camps and frontier clashes.
at Dalgangal began a steady encroachment onto the Dawson. By 1850, most of the extensive stations in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts were being formed and the nucleus of a local gentry established. Despite the distances which separated them, the squatters were tightly knit in a common denomination of centralism especially as it had operated under Gipps. An important ally of Forster and Walsh was Gordon Sandeman, a wealthy Sydney merchant who had taken over Burrandowan from Henry Stuart Russell. Sandeman was the early architect of a Coolie experiment whereby Chinese shepherds were introduced into the northern stations. A rabid political spokesman for the outside districts both before and after Separation, Sandeman pushed north-west to take up large runs on the Dawson River a few years later.

Inseparable from opposition to Gipps was a growing insensitivity to the rights of Aborigines. In the absence of a substantial ticket-of-leave class and a Border Police, the far northern squatters relied on large-scale punitive expeditions against Aborigines rather than regular minor skirmishes. Meting out "wholesome lessons to the natives" became an important para-military activity, reinforcing personal and ideological ties between the white conquerors. The death of Gregory Blaxland, Forster's brother-in-law and partner at Gin Gin, precipitated one such engagement. A large party of squatters headed by the Port Curtis Commissioner of Crown Lands, Maurice O'Connell, sought out and shot down several hundreds of the Gin Gin tribe on Paddy's Island near Fairymead. Although the number of victims is difficult to ascertain exactly, the number of black casualties on this occasion may have numbered as many as 1,000. This contrasted with the figure of 28 whites who died in racial collisions on the Wide Bay - Burnett frontier prior to 1853. The policy of the settlers in so far as one could be said to exist was that of extermination. The collision at Myall Creek was a trifle by comparison with such wholesale slaughter.

For Forster and his fellow squatters, the death of men like Blaxland justified a relentless race war which brooked no interference. In this respect it is worth re-examining the record of W.H. Walsh towards the Aborigines. Walsh, a friend of Forster, joined O'Connell's party in their bloody reprisals against the Gin Gin tribe. Subsequently however he gained a reputation for his conciliatory approach to the Wakka Wakka tribe and his denunciation of cruelty meted out to Wide Bay blacks by the white labouring population. The absence of such a class in the early stages of settlement (Germans were subsequently used as station labour following the failure of the Chinese as shepherds) forced the autocratic Walsh to endorse the hard line towards the Aborigines. Certainly anecdotes about co-operation between Degilbo and the Wakka Wakka people do not square with accounts by local historians of narrow escapes in the bush. Gordon Sandeman writing in the press a decade later was more candid about the systematic exclusion of "lawless savages" on frontier stations. Replying to G.S. Lang's accusation of widespread slaughter in the north, Sandeman stated that:

All practical and experienced men with a very
few exceptions agree... that the most humane
and most judicious plan is not to permit them
upon newly formed stations.18

Unlike the squatters, the Aborigines of Wide Bay relied
on guerilla tactics in their spirited opposition to the
settlers. Intimidated Chinese shepherds were powerless to
prevent regular poaching from their herds. So effective
were these tactics that the Moreton Bay papers and their
correspondents renewed calls for the despatch of a frontier
crime to the Wide Bay district. The Moreton Bay Courier
sanctioned revenge parties like that raised by O'Connell but
considered them unsatisfactory because they exposed the
settlers "to the outrages of fire-side philanthropists and
to an indictment in the Supreme Court". The Myall Creek
massacre and the unprecedented execution of white men
following it lingered in the colonial conscience. This
episodic in which convict stockmen were successfully
prosecuted for slaughtering defenceless Aborigines on a
Gwydir River station had generated intense debate over the
issue legal protection.19 In the opinion of hard-pressed
northern settlers, the intervention of an officially sanc-
tioned punitive force like the Native Police would help to
eliminate a repetition of that event. Already Frederick
Walker and his Aboriginal troopers were operating on the
MacIntyre and Condamine Rivers where they provoked hostile
tribes to open confrontation and won four resounding victor-
ies. Walker's exploits earned him the accolades of the
colonial press and evoked an Imperial military tradition
which was fed by regular newspaper reports from India.

Several weeks prior to Blaxland's death, the Moreton
Bay Courier published a report by Frederick Walker, Comman-
dant of the Native Police on the MacIntyre River, indicating
his intention to substantially increase his small force of
fourteen men as soon as possible and to station one lieu-
tenant and twelve troopers on the border of the Burnett and
Wide Bay districts. Walker, operating his black force on a
restricted budget, remained convinced that "if properly
officered by white persons the natives of this colony would
make as good troops as the natives of India."20 However
when Lieutenant Marshall's detachment ventured north into
the Maranoa District, the discipline instilled into Walker's
corps faltered. On no fewer than four occasions,
Marshall's trigger-happy men fired on station blacks,
provoking a sharp reprimand from the Commandant. Walker,
aware that some of his men were "fond of fighting for the
fun of it" stressed regularity, obedience and cleanliness
among his men. His personal knowledge of his troops and
familiarity with their language and customs gave him an
authority over his troopers which was striking to frontier
observers. Captain Maurice O'Connell, the Port Curtis
squatter and army officer, acknowledged that Walker had
worked a change and improvement over the Aboriginals which
none of his successors was able to sustain.

Walker's insistence on recruiting Aborigines from the
Murray and Darling River areas, hundreds of miles from the
scene of their future operations, delayed the arrival of his
northern contingent and aroused the impatience of the press.
Six months later the Courier complained that "not a single
trooper of the Native Police has yet made his appearance in either of those districts"; furthermore the editor attributed the Blaxland murder directly to the "continued absence of the Native Police". When the promised detachment did arrive at the close of 1850, the Wide Bay settlers insisted that they adopt their own drastic methods. Walker in hindsight wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

Two settlers stated that the government would not allow the squatters to shoot blacks but they have sent up the Native Police to do so... many settlers have satisfied me that such were their views.

When Walker visited Gayndah stations including that of Walsh in February 1851, he pointed out that he lacked the legal power to act without warrant or identification.

Walker and his men soon found themselves tarred with the same brush as the old Border Police. William Forster of Gin Gin was particularly incensed by Lieutenant Marshall's failure, indeed refusal, to apprehend Blaxland's alleged murderer, Jemmy, for lack of evidence. Forster tried unsuccessfully to override Walker's influence on this occasion by citing a directive from the Colonial Secretary promising Native Police aid in the matter. In all probability, Jemmy had either been slaughtered on Paddy's Island with the rest of his tribe or simply did not exist. Nevertheless, the elusive Jemmy was used regularly to taunt Walker's men. A test case for the squatter's struggle for control of the force, it became a regular subject of angry directives from Forster's Wide Bay allies, W.H. Walsh and James Landsborough. The other source of friction between settlers and Police was the unwillingness of the latter to disperse large numbers of Aboriginal participants at the local Bunya festival. The symbolic occupation of the Bunya country in defiance of Gipps' earlier wishes was symptomatic of the new squatter ascendancy. Walker on the other hand came to regard the occupation of the Bunya country as an act of provocation to the Wide Bay and neighbouring tribes. Deprived of their natural food sources, pathways and customs, the Aborigines of the northern districts would have little option but to escalate their attacks on pastoral stock.

Walker's rift with the squatters was the subject of a detailed report to the Colonial Secretary. Writing to Sydney in March 1852, the Commandant set out at length "the causes of difference between me and some of the northern settlers." Walker assigned to his force a dual protective function. He insisted that the para-military group had begun as "an attempt to protect the settlers as well as (to) provide that the blacks were not oppressed." By contrast, the Wide Bay settlers he asserted, lived in a state of undeclared warfare on the surrounding tribes and evinced a ruthless determination to "keep the blacks out." As a military officer, Walker was prepared to meet the Aborigines in battle but was repelled by the prospect of their immediate extermination. His knowledge of his own troopers and their languages led him to regard the Aboriginal race with some humanity. In a veiled reference to the Blaxland
episode, Walker observed:

I cannot but look with feelings of contempt
and indignation on any person who can for any
length of time feel vindictively towards such
miserable and ignorant wretches as the
aborigines of this continent are in their
natural state. 28

Especially repugnant to Walker was the practice of hunting
the Aborigines from river and creek frontages, thereby
depriving them of food and forcing them to poach from the
squatters' herds. In his March report, Walker went so far
as to label the squatters' confrontational approach as
unsound, both economically and legally. The image of
"Filibuster Walker", entertained by popular Queensland
writers like Hector Holthouse, 26 ignores his aspirations as
an administrator. Walker's view of himself as the protect­
or of black and white alike was reflected in his insistence
that squatters produce evidence of Aboriginal depredations
and that warrants or affidavits be approved identifying the
offenders and felonies committed. He himself affirmed:

In every case depositions have been forwarded
to the Attorney-General of the proceedings of
the Native Police when a death has occurred
through their endeavours to put a stop to
hostilities; and he is the best judge of
whether I have acted legally or not. At all
events, I have always thought that I was
right, morally and legally. 27

Walker's report, written from Callandoon on 1 March 1852,
was to become one of the most contested statements on front­
ier relations in nineteenth-century eastern Australia.

When his letter appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald
three months later, 28 it raised a storm of protest. A
Burnett squatter signing himself "One of the Slandered"
attempted a point by point refutation of Walker's report in
the Herald's correspondence column, 29 citing instances of
mismanagement and challenging Walker to name those with whom
he had fallen out. The following week an open letter by
William Forster appeared in the same paper, attacking both
the Commandant and the Herald for supporting him. It was
not the first letter of complaint by Forster on the subject;
previously he had written from Walsh's station, Degilbo, to
contradict the Leith-Hays more favourable view of the Force.
In a statement reminiscent of Robert Lowe and the ironic
Atlas, Forster accused the Herald of pre-judging the issue:

Surely it would not have been unworthy of a
journal that places all its glory in moder­
ation, before it gave so decidedly a
preference to Mr. Walker's statements, to
have compared them with testimony other than
his own and enquire what credit they might
derive from his general character. 30

After listing white casualties on the Burnett, the author
insisted on the "folly. indeed wickedness" of the Walker
policy and demanded an immediate inquiry into the operations
of the Native Police.

Along with the Sydney Morning Herald and the Maitland
Mercury the Moreton Bay Courier and the Free Press publi-
The Press in Colonial Queensland

cised Walker's statements.\textsuperscript{31} The Moreton Bay Free Press, owned and edited by Arthur Sidney Lyon, had been circulating in the northern districts since July 1850. Under his influence, the Free Press was invariably favourable to the squatting interest and suspicious of anything resembling Exeter Hall. Lyon, the first Courier proprietor, had lost much of his support from the townpeople over the transportation issue and depended on financial backing from the squatters for his new venture. Nor was the Courier, now in the hands of Lyons' former employee, entirely unfavourable to the northern settlers. Despite its Langite influence and opposition to exiles, the Courier devoted considerable space to their complaints and gave them support through its own Burnett correspondent. Outraged correspondents to the two local papers condemned the Commandant for "setting us down as a lot of blackguards." Both Moreton Bay papers supported the clamour for a prompt inquiry, the Free Press on behalf of the squatters, the Courier predominantly for the sake of the officers.

The most prolific local contributor on the Native Police was W.H. Walsh. During his association with the press, Walsh frequently used pseudonyms to disconcert his political opponents. His letters were nevertheless conspicuous for their distinctive combination of long-winded erudition and sardonic humour. Dismissing the Walker report as "a mass of slander, egotism and bad grammar"\textsuperscript{32} he joined Forster in a belligerent attack on that triple alliance "the Commandant, the Colonial Government and the Sydney Morning Herald." Walsh did not hesitate to call for separation from "that iniquitous part of the continent"\textsuperscript{33} Wit was not all on Walsh's side, however; one ironic Wide Bay contributor signing himself "W.H.W." cast doubt on Walsh's motives and peculiar bias of mind, ridiculing his endemic "aversion for public officers and those of the Native Police in particular."\textsuperscript{34} The Moreton Bay Courier withheld "W.H.W."'s letter from publication until the author had communicated his real name. Oblivious to criticism from his fellow squatters, Walsh assumed a new pseudonym and in subsequent issues renewed his attacks on Walker and his "police farce".

While Walker remained at Callandoon, some distance from the frontier, Walsh continued to feud with the white police officers stationed at nearby Traylan and on the Burnett River. The legal process and the honouring of warrants were still a major bone of contention between the squatters and the Force. Jemmy, Blaxland's supposed murderer, was the subject of renewed complaints by Walsh. Reminiscent of the earlier Blaxland episode was the violent death of Adolphus Trevethan in late March (1852) while parleying with Aborigines on his Burnett station. Trevethan's record with the local tribe is ambivalent,\textsuperscript{35} but the incident was at once seized upon by Walsh and Forster to attack the Walker policy and the efficiency of the force stationed nearby. The employment of Chinese as shepherds in the area complicated the task of the Native Police who were regularly called out to discipline offenders or apprehend absconders. Walsh and Sandeman, in particular, earned a lasting reputation for their poor labour relations. In August of the same year,
Walsh reported the disappearance of two Chinese shepherds, who had absconded, and accused the Maryborough tribe of murdering them. A heated correspondence ensued with Lieutenant Marshall who refused to act on the grounds that a Maryborough investigation and post-mortem had found no proof of Aboriginal guilt.36

The squatters encouraged local officers to deviate from the Walker policy and applied pressure to new arrivals like John O'Connell Bligh. A relative of Maurice O'Connell, Bligh was to become one of Walker's Queensland successors and an ally of the settlers.37 Failure to discipline their troopers under their command was a common criticism of officers. In September, Walsh accused Lieutenant Marshall's troopers of robbing his shepherds' huts. Allegations concerning the troopers' "ability to make love with impunity to lubras in every hive they visit"38 were among the persistent charges levelled at the Native Police; Walker's own reputation for efficiency began to suffer as a result of drink. In contrast to the Walker report which acknowledged the dangers of sexual relations between station hands and Aboriginal women, Walsh and others alleged that gins consorting with the troopers kept hostile tribes informed of the detachments' whereabouts. Hence Walsh's earlier contention to Lieutenant Murray that "it is only when the Police are or just have been in this immediate neighbourhood that I am ever molested by blacks".39

The press campaign of 1852 by the squatters peaked in mid-September when a copy of Walsh's address to the Colonial Secretary on behalf of the Wide Bay settlers was published in the Sydney Morning Herald.40 The document was a more restrained refutation of the Walker report, which repeated early charges and called for complete reform of the Native Police. Walsh in his introduction claimed that the majority of Wide Bay squatters had signed the document. In all, fourteen signatures were attached - that of Forster, Walsh, and several of Walsh's neighbours including James Landsborough of Taningera and the Herberts of Ban-Ban. Clearly Walsh, rather than Forster had become the driving force behind the movement. Walsh's brand of vendetta journalism, used so effectively against Walker and other public officers like Arthur Halloran, had nothing of the literary polish of his Gin Gin associate. Yet it was his influence which came to permeate Queensland provincial journalism in the following decade. Stripped of all aesthetic pretension, it thrived on character assassination and personal innuendo.

While many of the pastoralists appeared content to use Walsh as the hammer in their quarrel with Walker, moderate settlers were inclined to regard his newspaper statements as scurrilous and self-defeating. For the aristocratic Leith-Hays, Walsh remained an upstart manager and a dangerous fellow-traveller. When the Moreton Courier's correspondent reported a robbery on the station of the Leith-Hays, the owners addressed a note of protest to both Moreton Bay papers contradicting Walsh and accusing the Courier's journalist of perpetuating "malicious falsehoods".41 The testimony of the Leith-Hays, supported by a number of unidentified writers, complicated the task of the press and
weakened the squatters' case. With Walsh at the helm, factionalism among the settlers appeared inevitable. The *Free Press* confessed that "very contradictory reports had been received on the subject", while the *Courier* cited two opposing accounts in the same issue, "both from gentlemen known to us and whose words in all the ordinary transactions of life would be considered sufficient guarantees."\(^{42}\)

In contrast with his March letter, Walker's October report was terse; he reported the punishment of Trevethan's murderers (thereby contradicting Walsh) and complained that friction between squatters and their Chinese shepherds hampered the operation of his force. Walker's response to vociferous press criticism of his March letter was largely conditioned by a longstanding official perception of the colonial press as scurrilous and contemptible. Since the Gipps period, this reputation had been reinforced in eastern Australia to the extent that a commissioned survey of New South Wales and Port Phillip papers concluded:

> There is not one of them that would refuse admission to any article, however personal or offensive it might be.\(^{43}\)

To some extent Walker's reaction paralleled that of moderate squatters like the Leith-Hays; as a government official, he was reluctant to take any further part in the newspaper debate which he had provoked, since the practice of replying to press criticism was officially discouraged. Walker remained convinced that:

> ... the persons who have always written against the Police... are a clique near Gayndah... the dislike to me personally arises from my having always uttered the same sentiments as those mentioned in my letter of 1st March.\(^{44}\)

The controversial March report had recommended to the squatters the economic wisdom of "letting the blacks in" and feeding them in times of shortage to prevent systematic poaching from their herds. Prior to his newspaper attacks on Walker, Walsh had set out to demonstrate the economic viability of "Keeping the blacks out" and strongly urged the same course upon his Wide Bay neighbours. Not all had abandoned the Walker policy, however; Robert Strathdee, influenced by the example of the MacIntyre and southern Downs settlers, depastured some 16,000 sheep on his Burnett station as early as 1852. Testifying before the Select Committee of 1856-57, he affirmed that he had employed "a great many (natives) at different times" and that all had been "pretty quiet" on his station. However, for reasons given above, settlers like Strathdee did not commit themselves as readily to print as their more aggressive neighbours. It was only after Walker had been discredited that positive statements like Strathdee's appeared in Committee evidence. By then, the squatters had already achieved their ends. From 1852, alcohol and isolation steadily completed the destruction of Walker and eroded his public standing. Whether this process had begun before 1852 and was merely accelerated after his clash with the settlers, or whether Walker's intemperance began as a direct result of their campaign is unclear. The lucidity of the March
Press and Police

report could not conceal the ambivalence of the author's racial position. For the Native Police Commandant was not simply a protector or town philanthropist but also a persecutor of the Aborigines. The knowledge of this profound contradiction, based on lengthy frontier experience, may well have been sufficient to trigger Walker's alcoholism.

The impact of the 1852 press campaign was less dramatic than the squatters had hoped. Without a vocal lobby in Sydney to support it, provincial agitation was relatively ineffectual. The influential Sydney Morning Herald, after its initial pro-Walker statement, lapsed into indifference. Neither the Sydney administration nor the metropolitan public appeared much concerned with the tensions of the northern frontier. The Herald rarely mentioned the Commandant and only occasionally devoted space to Wide Bay news. It was not until September 1854 when unmistakable evidence of Walker's inefficiency through intemperance had become available, that an inquiry was finally instituted at Moreton Bay. The local press reacted with scepticism and indignation to the announcement. The Courier, recalling the fierce debate which had raged earlier in its columns, berated the Government for the two year delay:

In this position of affairs we suggested and repeatedly advocated the appointment of a local Commission of Inquiry so that the truth might appear, and public confidence be restored or disabused as the case might be. Things were permitted however to go on in the same doubtful and unsatisfactory manner as before; and it is only now, when the measure has been absolutely forced upon the government that a proper investigation is to take place.48

In the face of Walker's constant intoxication, the Board of Inquiry, comprising Wickham and two local officials, found itself unable to proceed. In November it issued a short report to Sydney deploring the Commandant's "constant habit of intoxication." Three months after the Board had completed the report, its recommendations were still not made public.

For a variety of reasons the Moreton Bay Inquiry proved unsatisfactory and strengthened the conviction of emerging separationists that Sydney was neglecting the north. For those northern squatters like W.H. Walsh and Henry Hort Brown whose requests to give evidence were refused, the Native Police investigation of 1854-55 was the subject of brooding dissatisfaction. Walsh, in a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald after the Moreton Bay Inquiry, delivered a lengthy harangue against Sydney politicians for sheltering the Commandant from his critics. Surprisingly, there was no repetition of the lively 1852 press debate on the Native Police issue. The drawn-out Walker Affair had cemented a regional alliance against Sydney but at the expense of press independence and initiative. On the subject of racial tension and the frontier, both the Moreton Bay Courier and the Free Press were content to act primarily as vehicles for their squatter correspondents without seriously questioning or following up the conflicting accounts which they receiv-
A further example of editorial passivity on the Native Police issue was provided by the Herald which went so far as to withhold relevant letters until the outcome was known. This inertia contrasts markedly with the attitude of Sydney papers during the 1840's and with the attitude of the Brisbane press after separation. In its inconclusive leader of January 1855, the Sydney Morning Herald issued a mild rebuke to Walker before deferring to a letter by Walsh in the same issue. Written at the outset of the inquiry, Walsh's communication rebuked the Herald for its culpable indifference and, on the basis of Walker's unpublished correspondence, dubbed him "the most flagrant officer this country has ever produced".

In the years immediately prior to separation, the northern squatters gained a substantial voice in Sydney. Two of the wealthiest pioneer squatters who returned to sit in the Sydney Assembly were Gordon Sandeman and William Forster. The upshot for the Native Police was a series of Select Committees, presided over by Forster and Sandeman, in which Wide Bay opponents of Walker were called upon to voice their complaints. The composition of the 1854 Committee and its location at Moreton Bay rather than at Gayndah had been a source of lasting frustration to the pastoralists. On their behalf, Forster expressed annoyance that the Commandant's leading critics, Walsh and Henry Hort Brown, had not been allowed to give evidence at the Moreton Bay Inquiry. Alluding to the press campaign of 1852 against Walker, Forster implied that the squatters' agitation had achieved only mediocre results:

One of the faults of the old Native Police system was that all sorts of things were reported and not published except when it suited the Commandant to make them public.

In spite of their belated success, the squatters' claims against Walker remained unconvincing. Although the former Commandant's intemperance was repeatedly deplored by witnesses, no further documentary evidence was forthcoming against him. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the destruction of Walker was merely the first step in a relentless project of self-aggrandisement by his squatter critics. Native Police officers and above all the frontier Aborigines were sacrificed to political expediency and naked ambition. Forster's political star was in the ascendance but his evidence at the Select Committee of 1856-57 was a tissue of contradictions; on one hand he accused the Force of being overly mobile, on the other, of confining its operations to certain favoured stations. He criticised Walker's drunkenness yet elsewhere admitted that he had never met the man.

In their vendetta against officialdom, Sandeman and Walsh had engaged in a personal and political exercise; they appeared oblivious to the decline of the Native Police and to the deterioration of frontier relations. In the case of Walsh, a hitherto neglected figure in colonial Queensland, historians vary considerably in their assessment of the man and his influence. The writing of Walsh's entry for the Australian Dictionary of Biography revealed sharp disagreements between leading local contributors, largely on the basis of his conduct during the
Walker's treatment of Walker was hardly consistent with his later claims to liberality in dealings with the "lower races". Nicknamed the "Demon of Discord" because of his savage press attacks on Governors, politicians and public officers, Walsh was less talented but no less inhibited in politics than his New South Wales model, William Forster. Arguably the most hated man of his day, Walsh kept the rabid anti-Gipps tradition of journalism - personal innuendo, literary wit and bitter invective - alive in the volatile provincial papers of the northern colony.

Preoccupied with the financial and legal aspects of Separation the press of Moreton Bay made little contribution to the first Native Police Select Committee. By this time, however, A.S. Lyon was editing his third local paper, the *North Australian*, at Ipswich. More than any of his contemporaries Lyon devoted his attention to the frontier and articulated the needs of the squatters. Drunkenness was common among pressmen and police officers alike. Lyon, afflicted with the same complaint as Walker, had become something of a buffoon in the eyes of his landed patrons; yet he remained their useful ally and ideologue, strenuously applauding "the advance of our hardy pioneers" and supporting claims for a northern capital at Maryborough or Gladstone. The *North Australian* congratulated Sandeman on the Select Committee, and concurred with the pastoralists' recommendation that a local Native Police Commandant was preferable to any centralised form of control.

First published in January 1856, the new Ipswich paper reflected its editor's preoccupations as the *Moreton Bay Courier* had done ten years earlier. In the columns of the *North Australian*, Lyon indulged his long-standing opposition to Aborigines and repeated earlier remarks about the irrelevance of British justice in dealing with them. The monopoly exercised by Wide Bay and Port Curtis squatters like Walsh and Sandeman in the Moreton Bay press had temporarily distracted attention from racial tensions further inland. The Dawson frontier burst into the news in late 1857 with a series of guerrilla attacks, the most brutal being the destruction of the Frazer family at Hornet Bank station. While the *Moreton Bay Courier* pressed for separation on behalf of the townspeople, the *North Australian* was now advocating the same cause in the interest of the northern squatters, some of whom had urged that no fewer than two detachments (or 15 troopers) of the Native Police be sent to the Upper Dawson, where blacks were "numerous and hostile". In his final years as a journalist, Lyon became obsessed with the Dawson frontier and with the failure of the Native Police to effectively combat the guerrilla methods of the local tribes.

Lyon's reaction to the Hornet Bank murders was predictably one of outrage. In the *North Australian* he proposed to dispense with the "absurd formalities" of the law and urged that Native Police officers, accompanied by squatters, should mount a massive punitive campaign against the offending Dawson tribe. Hornet Bank dramatically revived the vexed question of frontier protection and Native Police efficiency. The *North Australian* expressed impatience with the small combats and "trifling operations" in which the
frontier Force was engaged. The press of Moreton Bay, stunned by events on the Dawson, took up the issue in earnest. The Moreton Bay Free Press strongly supporting the North Australian, acknowledged the semi-organised state of the Native Police and called for the declaration of martial law in the district. Linked with the persistent refusal of legal protection for Aborigines, was the concept of the Native Police as a body subject to the direction of the squatters. Although reorganisation of the Force was far from complete, the Select Committee of 1856-57 under Sandeman and Forster, vigorously endorsed such a role. A second Select Committee in 1858, to inquire specifically into the Dawson River murders, was testimony to the over-riding control enjoyed by the squatters in Walker's absence.

Amid rumours of a further Dawson massacre and relentless squatter retaliation, the Moreton Bay Courier plucked up courage to resist "any wholesale and blind attempt to exterminate a whole tribe or race." Its Ipswich correspondent urged that the government accept some responsibility in the crisis and deplored the irregularities which must inevitably take place. For Charles Lilley, a young law student editing the Courier, the Aborigines remained subjects of the British Crown and were consequently amenable to white laws and protection. Lilley, with the support of the Brisbane Lang immigrants, was prepared to take his distance from the squatters on this point and paraphrased Walker's earlier arguments in a strong appeal for restraint:

As we fill up the country the animals upon which the blacks subsist disappear and he is driven back upon hostile tribes. Can we wonder that the Aborigine turns upon the intruder when he is pinched with hunger and deprived by the vices which the white man introduces...?52

Lyon, editing the North Australian, labelled the Courier's pleas for clemency suicidal but loudly denied charges of inciting an all-out blood-bath. The Moreton Bay Free Press was equally adamant in defence of the white settlers and delivered a sharp rebuff to the Courier:

We have been before accused of inhuman - so called - counsel and we fully anticipate that some "Negrophilos" will spin a lengthy letter in the columns of our contemporary's next edition, expressing pious horror at our seeming want of sympathy for the "poor benighted Aborigines". Any gentleman so inclined may spare himself the trouble of accusing us of want of sympathy, for we at once confess that we have none.53

The local press, especially the North Australian, fed the biblical wrath of the indignant white community by providing it with a global interpretation of the Hornet Bank events. News of an Indian mutiny, of "diabolical outrages" and of crushing British revenge, reached the Australian colonies only weeks before the Frazer murders. In rebuffing the Courier, the North Australian and the Moreton Bay Free Press established a strong parallel between the Indian massacre and local events. In moments of open conflict,
the press stressed the necessity of instilling fear into the "lower races". Lyon's departure from the *North Australian* in January 1858 saw little change in that paper's outspoken policies. He was replaced by John Kent, an old Moreton Bay resident and a fervent advocate of the squatting interest. A ticket-of-leaver, Kent, like Lyon, had been in the employ of local pastoralists and supported their campaign against Governor Gipps. A founding member of the local Progress Association, Kent wrote several articles on the origin and progress of the Moreton Bay district. At a public dinner in late 1858, the new *North Australian* editor reminded Ipswich residents of the "importance and antiquity of the pastoral interest".

The careers of Lyon and Kent indicate the relative consensus which prevailed in the pre-separation press on the racial issue. As journalists, both proved useful allies of the squatters and were consistently hostile to humanitarian or philanthropic efforts to bring the Aborigines within the realm of British law. Yet in spite of this support, the pioneer pressman was not a highly esteemed figure in his local community, either by the townspeople or by the squatters on behalf of whom he purported to speak. A heavy drinker, Lyon eked out his final years at Drayton editing his fourth paper, the *Darling Downs Gazette*. John Kent's career after separation was no more distinguished; after his promotion to the Bench at Maryborough in 1859, he committed suicide two years later. The career of William Wilkes, the other long serving journalist of the pre-separation period, exhibits similar characteristics to those mentioned above. Described by R.B. Walker as "an inebriate journalist of the old school", Wilkes had been a ticket-of-leaver and station hand at Helidon before assuming his editorial post. In what was perhaps his most popular literary offering at Moreton Bay, "The Raid of the Aborigines," Wilkes wrote a clever and revealing burlesque of heroic classical verse in which he ironically described the reprisals taken by squatters following an Aboriginal raid. Significantly one member of the party described was Wilkes himself (the "Hotspur of the North") at the head of the other station hands (the "Rag Tag and Bobtail"). Wilkes' celebrated poem provides an apt if unrealistic image of the relationship between the squatter, the early editor and the Aborigines. Lyon's nickname, "Rag Tag", indicates the low esteem in which he was held by his patrons. For those journalists who succeeded him, men like Charles Lilley and Theophilus Pugh, the press could only begin to exercise authority and command respect once the taint of convictism and servility associated with the first generation of local pressmen had been shrugged off.

Prior to 1860 the squatters, those of Wide Bay in particular, had been an outspoken pressure group through the Moreton Bay press. With Lyon's editorial support, they had succeeded for the most part in defining the racial debate in terms of legal protection for whites rather than for blacks. Once Separation had been achieved, however, the favours of the press would shift towards outspoken town groups and the Native Police issue would assume a new moral and political emphasis. Already Frederick Walker had provided Lilley and
the Liberal press with arguments against brutal dispossession and racial injustice. The persistence of this legally anomalous and repressive body provided officials like R.B. Sheridan and town spokesmen like the Langs with a strong case against its existence.
Chapter 2

Press and Platform: Lang and the Nonconformists

Press campaigns and polemics provided emerging social and political formations like the Wide Bay squattocracy with a sense of regional identity. Provincial newspapers encouraged outside groups to define themselves in opposition to central authority. However, limited editorial support and the geographical limits of early newspaper expansion tended to discourage all but the most zealous squatters from employing this medium. In the pre-separation period, Nonconformists, under the influence of John Dunmore Lang, emerged as the only urban pressure group at Moreton Bay to seriously challenge the strident rural lobby. The task facing Lang and his supporters was formidable. Through the Moreton Bay Courier they set themselves up in opposition not only to Sydney but also to the Darling Downs landholders. Unlike their Wide Bay counterparts, the Pure Merinos of the Downs initially preferred a low press profile but were forced to adopt some of their political opponents' techniques in an attempt to offset anti-squatting propaganda. In the early 1850's when a contest between town and country developed in southern Queensland, Lang and his followers used the Courier effectively to take initiatives against a group which they rightly identified as the future rulers of a new northern colony.

Although his Sydney newspaper ventures were short-lived, J.D. Lang could rightly claim to have fathered New South Wales' early provincial papers. Pioneer proprietors, William Kerr (Port Phillip 1839) and James Swan (Moreton Bay 1846), were both Lang immigrants and supporters. Swan, a printer by trade, had worked on Lang's Sydney journal, the Colonist, before moving to Moreton Bay. For the small but vocal contingent of Nonconformists which the Doctor unceremoniously dispatched to these two territories in 1849, press and platform were essential vehicles of political organization. Lang himself was a regular correspondent to these youthful journals and acted as political analyst and commentator for the outside districts. To equate Lang's press influence with his three short-lived papers, as R.B. Walker has done, is tempting, yet quite misleading. For Lang, through his prodigious correspondence to all colonial newspapers, his constant trips in and beyond the continent, his regular appearances at public meetings and lectures, his open controversies with leading politicians, convictions and
gaol sentences, constantly usurped more newspaper space than any other public figure of his day. For weeks, indeed months at a time, J.D. Lang was "the news." The recent biography of Lang by D.W.A. Baker has served to correct Walker's somewhat narrow viewpoint. The newspaper research undertaken here suggests that the moral guardian role generally assigned to the Protestant sects must be reassessed to include their considerable political and cultural achievement.

The retrospective tendency to review clergymen as invariably closed and austere figures should not be allowed to obscure nineteenth-century notions of a "Reverend Agitator". One interesting contradiction of the mid-nineteenth-century is that, while their moral guardian role appeared to be declining, the activity of Nonconformist and Presbyterian editors and owners was intensifying. Malcolm Prentis makes the point that men like J.D. Lang and the Symes of Melbourne Age fame belong to a new generation of newspaper proprietors who were intent on raising the status of colonial journalism.

Described by the London Atlas as "a redhot Presbyterian of the colonial species", John Dunmore Lang was perhaps the most remarkable but by no means the only local example of this nineteenth-century species. Nor was the "Reverend Agitator" solely a colonial phenomenon. It thrived in northern England and Scotland, the bastions of Dissent. Lang's most consistent press contact during his visits to the United Kingdom was Scottish Congregationalist Minister and journalist, the Rev. John Campbell. Lang and Campbell were kindred spirits, each aggressive, well-educated and prolific with the pen. Five years after John Bright had founded the Nonconformist (1844), Campbell issued the British Banner, an outspoken and occasionally libellous publication which proved a great financial success. The Dissenters had become an important force in British journalism and politics by building up a social and newspaper network to which Lang gained ready access. During his visit of 1846-49, Lang contributed long letters to the British Banner on immigration prospects to Moreton Bay and Port Phillip. Just as Lang had used Kerr and Swan in the colonies, so he relied on Campbell's Banner in England to answer critics of his proposed new migration schemes.

Much of the controversy surrounding Lang's 1846-49 U.K. visit derived from his novel interpretation of land and immigration requirements. Since the advent of Edward Gibbon Wakefield's colonisation scheme, immigration and land matters had become closely integrated. Essentially, the author of Cooksland wished to implement an arrangement whereby "emigrants of the industrious classes should receive an equivalent in land for whatever amount they should individually pay towards the costs of their passages out". Lang's new land order proposal posed a direct challenge to the monopoly enjoyed by the powerful colonial squattocracy at the expense of agriculture. He was highly critical of the effects of the prevailing bounty scheme and the preemptive right by which squatters alone could receive land for importing labour, usually from the impoverished Irish sector. The passengers of the Fortitude and Chaseley, his first ships to Moreton Bay, were a mixture of small capital-
ists, clergymen and low-income families drawn from the British Banner subscribers. They were not, as was later inferred, Scottish Presbyterians but predominantly British Dissenters from a variety of creeds. In return for £20 per adult passenger, Lang issued land orders to the extent of 16 acres. In the case of family immigration, the prevailing feature of the scheme, land orders usually totalled £100 (or 80 acres); at Lang's own request, capital in excess of that amount was generally withheld until fulfilment of the land orders on arrival.

There were many problems associated with his latest immigration venture. Allegations of sharp practice were hardly new in such circumstances but Lang's position made him particularly vulnerable on this account. The boycott of his proposals by London merchants, interested primarily in cheap and coloured labour projects, forced him into a situation of high risk. The riskiness and unprofitability of Lang's arrangements were matched only by his unpopularity in elevated British and colonial circles. The question of the fulfilment of these unofficial immigration contracts became a running sore between Lang and subsequent administrations in Sydney and in London. When the Fortitude-Chaseley settlers did not receive their land grants as promised, Lang was accused of perpetrating a deliberate fraud upon his recruits. The Moreton Bay immigration affair of 1850-51 was fuelled by this potentially bitter quarrel about which party - Lang, the local administration or the Colonial Office - was dishonoured by the breach of land order contracts. Most recently Lang has been taken to task by his biographer, D.W. A. Baker, for dishonesty and cavalier business methods. The despatch of his six ships to Moreton Bay and to Port Phillip can be seen as much as a monumental act of colonial defiance as a financial blunder or sharp speculation - the culmination of five years of anti-Imperial agitation on land and constitutional matters.

Contemporary reaction to Lang's efforts varied widely. Under its two long serving editors, Rev. Ralph Mansfield (1840-54) and Rev. John West (1854-73), the Herald emerged as a vocal opponent of Lang and his ambitious projects. While Lang's powerful Sydney critics berated him mercilessly for his ill-concocted arrangements and clumsy attempts to evade his creditors, the local response remained strikingly different. In contrast to Baker, Queensland historians like William Coote have been singularly reluctant to condemn what they considered an invaluable impetus to local settlement. To what extent the Fortitude and Chaseley people had been informed through the British Banner of the substantial risks tending their commitment remains unclear. Nevertheless, the great majority of them, having quickly achieved prosperity and influence in their new surroundings, were loathe in retrospect to condemn their former patron out of hand. Their relationship with Lang can only be fully understood in the light of the separation movement which followed and the political leadership which Lang alone appeared capable of providing. It was largely upon the favourable testimony of his early immigrants - Doctor William Hobbs, William Pettigrew and the Cribbs - that
Lang's land order system of immigration was promptly adopted by the new Queensland government a decade later.10

From the first, northern inhabitants appeared willing to excuse Lang for the flaws in his scheme. Immediately after the arrival of the Fortitude in February 1849, disappointed newcomers addressed letters to the Courier seeking to exonerate Lang from "any intentional deception as to the immediate possession of land".11 Normally, colonists were kept well-informed by the local press concerning the movements of their immigration agents or advocates in the United Kingdom. However, in the months prior to the Fortitude's arrival, the Moreton Bay Courier had only been able to glean disjointed extracts from the British Banner and had received no direct word from Lang himself. This omission on Lang's part is all the more inexplicable given his close connection with pressmen at Moreton Bay and Port Phillip. James Swan's position as the new Courier owner, exposed him to adverse comment during the episode. The reasons for Lang's silence were largely political; he wished to confront the Australian authorities with the immigrants in person. At the ports of arrival of his six ships, criticism was tempered with admiration; the Courier reproached the doctor his "unaccountable neglect of common businesslike precautions" yet freely admitted that "men of less energy than himself would have abandoned the undertaking in despair".12

If Lang's strategic press contacts at Moreton Bay and Port Phillip tended to shield him from harsh local criticism no such respect was accorded him in Sydney. After the arrival of the Fortitude, the Herald's editor, Rev. Mansfield, recorded the inconvenience suffered by the immigrants and added his own insinuations to the Courier's remarks. Regular outbursts and contradictory statements by the Herald encouraged the Moreton Bay residents to close ranks in defence of Doctor Lang. Reverend John Stewart, the Presbyterian cleric who had been granted a free passage on the Fortitude, wrote promptly to the Herald deploring the allegations of profiteering to the extent of £3000 and appealing to the paper to sink its past differences with "a genuine philanthropist".13 The Herald published Stewart's letter along with its own predictable rejoinder. On one hand, it deplored the "principle of religious exclusiveness" on which the immigration scheme was based; on the other, it labelled Lang's projects "an unholy alliance between cotton and a mongrel mixture of every species of heterogeneous Protestantism".14 Without disputing Lang's belligerent opposition to large-scale Catholic immigration, the Courier pointed out that he had acted no differently from clergy of other denominations in appealing to his own flock. Above all, it added, he had demonstrated the complete feasibility of a new scheme of colonial immigration.15 Swan, now the proprietor of the local newspaper, knew Lang personally; he had worked and worshipped with him in Sydney before moving north in 1846 at Lang's own prompting. A staunch Baptist, he was nevertheless alert to the Doctor's shortcomings and more tolerant than either Lang or Kerr at Port Phillip. Throughout 1849, the Herald continued to regard Lang's immigration efforts with the deepest suspicion. A series of official revelations in the middle of that year kept the
affair brewing. On behalf of the people of Australia, the Herald solemnly disassociated itself from his "untoward transactions" and "ill-concocted schemes of colonisation". Lang's failure to secure land for his newly-arrived Chaseley immigrants and his continuing ability to establish a viable immigration company exposed him to fresh insinuations from the Sydney Morning Herald. The Sydney paper poured scorn on "that first rate philosopher and man of business, John Dunmore Lang" describing his new venture as "an admirable arrangement... pregnant with magnificent bargains". The bitterness and intensity of Lang's long-standing quarrel with the Sydney Morning Herald have been consistently understated by historians of that paper, Gavin Souter among them. The only daily paper in Sydney at that time, the Herald was already engaged in a concerted two-year campaign to banish Lang from New South Wales political life.

The Herald's campaign was very nearly successful. When Lang was elected to the Legislative Council in the following year, he faced an immediate motion of censure over his immigration conduct. One of his strongest critics in the Council was the eminent barrister, W.C. Wentworth, who demonstrated his willingness to assist the Herald and the squatters in having Lang excluded from the House. A detailed report of the four day debate featured prominently in the Herald's editorial column. However, the same paper omitted to report that only a bare quorum had been present on the 22 August when the abbreviated censure motion was carried. This official rebuff was among the most deeply felt of Lang's many political setbacks and was comparable with the drama surrounding the imprisonment of his son five years later. However, it did not prevent Lang from winning successive Sydney elections in 1850 and 1851 and may even have strengthened popular opinion in his favour. The Moreton Bay Courier, reporting the events at a distance, voiced its irritation with Wentworth and the Council and evinced cautious support for Lang.

Throughout the furore of 1850, Lang maintained contact with the Moreton Bay population. Alert to political changes in his favour, he wrote to the Courier, proudly announcing the incorporation of a separation clause in the new British Act on colonial Government and attributing its inclusion solely to his previous efforts abroad. Section 36 of a Bill for the Better Government of the Australian Colonies empowered the Home government to constitute a territory north of the 30th parallel "on petition of the resident householders". While his Moreton Bay immigration venture never ceased to provoke criticism of his tactics and business methods, Lang derived long-standing satisfaction from this new development and rated it as one of his most substantial achievements on behalf of the north.

The capacity of the Fortitude and Chaseley people to organize and establish themselves in their new surroundings gave some meaning to the fiasco of the previous year. The Nonconformists, many of whom were British Dissenters rather than Scottish Presbyterian, provided the solid basis for a Town Liberal movement. Competition between free and convict labour precipitated an immediate campaign by the Lang arrivals, not against Catholics but against squatters who
preferred ticket-of-leavers for obvious economic and political reasons. Local protest adhered closely to the pattern set by Lang himself, operating through a combination of public meetings, petitions and newspaper articles. Early anti-transportation meetings at Moreton Bay were dominated by Fortitude immigrants, including J.S. Langridge and the Cribbs.\(^2\) The Cribb brothers, Robert and Benjamin, were to remain Lang's closest associates in the north; each represented Moreton Bay in the New South Wales Assembly prior to Separation. Respectability was given to subsequent gatherings by the presence of clergymen like the Revs. Stewart and Moore and by Dr. Hobbs, the Fortitude surgeon.\(^2\) Press and platform were inseparable vehicles for agitation by Valley residents. It was not uncommon for public speakers against transportation to cite the Courier in a variety of contexts. If Lang himself was unable to attend, James Swan, the Courier proprietor, provided useful cohesion and publicity by serving on relevant town committees. Swan had emigrated from Glasgow to Sydney in 1836 and worked on Lang's Colonist before moving north at his employer's advice. After a short period as pioneer printer for the Moreton Bay Courier in 1846-47, Swan became owner of the paper. A staunch Nonconformist and Liberal, he was well-placed to propagate Langite views.

The anti-transportation stance of Swan's Courier was sufficiently strong to attract adverse comment from local squatters. An Ipswich gathering of 35 Moreton and Darling Downs pastoralists, convened by Walter Gray on the 10 January 1850, complained that the Courier's editorial policies did not coincide with the views nor "meet the expectations of its country subscribers", and thought it "high time that another journal should be started".\(^2\) In an interesting reflection on the economics of the nineteenth-century newspaper, Patrick Leslie, a leading political spokesman for the local transportationist lobby, indicated his preference "for a newspaper that would not pander to persons who paid for advertisements". Although a conclusive assessment is difficult, one might be led to infer from Leslie's remark that, while a direct link existed between the politics of the colonial paper and advertisers, such a link did not necessarily favour the squatters, even at the earliest stages of newspaper growth. The upshot of the Ipswich meeting was the formation on 1 August 1850 of a rival Moreton Bay Free Press, under the somewhat erratic direction of Arthur Sydney Lyon. Lyon, who had departed the Courier following a disagreement over transportation with James Swan, had appeared at several Moreton Bay public meetings as an isolated advocate of the squatters. The publication after 1850 of two local papers was an indication of mounting political tensions between town and country. J.D. Lang in his statistical review of 1852 noted that there were only five provincial papers in all of New South Wales; two of those were printed at Moreton Bay.\(^2\) The squatters raised their own cry of "Separation with Exiles" and established at Ipswich a Moreton Bay and Northern Districts Separation Association in opposition to Lang. Its membership included such well-known pioneers as the Leslie brothers, Arthur Hodgson, Henry Stuart Russell
Lang and Nonconformists

and Robert Ramsay. Shortly after the Lang visit of 1851, Patrick Leslie found time off from discussing questions of labour and scab to address the Herald on the subject of the Brisbane separation petition. There would be, stated the writer, no separation for the squatters without exiles. On the verge of his departure for England, Lang reminded Leslie and Hodgson that the Legislative Councils of all the southern colonies had pronounced against convicts and repeated his own determination to prevent their despatch to the north "in a regular and constitutional way".

The surprising absence of an Ipswich paper at this time hindered attempts by the Moreton Bay and Northern Districts Separation Association to effectively counter the propaganda of Lang and the Courier. Unlike their Wide Bay associates, the Darling Downs squatters appeared reluctant to mount a vigorous assault on public opinion. Not till 1855 did the first newspaper (the North Australian) appear at Ipswich, by which time the township had virtually forfeited its claim to be chosen as the future northern capital. Until that time, Leslie, Hodgson and other Association members were obliged to subsidise the Moreton Bay Free Press, a costly undertaking since the editor-proprietor, Lyon, was often in debt. The preference of Leslie and his fellows for the columns of the Sydney Morning Herald reflected the continued prestige of the Sydney daily in landed circles. Despite its anti-transportation opinions, the Herald had also become a consistent medium of anti-Lang views. In his Genesis of Queensland, Henry Stuart Russell, Hodgson's cousin, referred constantly to "our honest Sydney journal, the Herald" and with less enthusiasm to the Moreton Bay Free Press. Indeed Russell's chapters on the divergent separation movement rely heavily on anti-Lang material emanating from these two journals. Any assessment of the Free Press' performance during these years is hindered by the disappearance of its early files. Undoubtedly, it imitated the Herald by casting aspersions on the title of "Cooksland" and sporadically resurrecting the Herald's claims against Lang's immigration projects. In December 1851, Lang had written to the Moreton Bay Courier specifically to answer the Free Press claim that Lang was an unsuitable northern representative abroad. The Courier consistently supported its correspondent, however, and retorted that the majority of the district's inhabitants were happy to accept his zealous aid.

Lang's eight month visit of 1852-53 to the U.K. was less eventful or productive than the previous journey, largely because he did not undertake to send out further immigrants on his own behalf. His precarious financial position and poor standing with the Colonial Office were major obstacles to any such undertaking. Nevertheless, the Moreton Bay separation petition was duly presented and immigration lectures conducted as the occasion arose. On his return, the restless Lang was once again drawn into politics. Would he choose to stand for the under-represented metropolis or contest a more obscure northern borough in the Legislative Council? At Moreton Bay, an enthusiastic committee nominated him for the Stanley Borough (Moreton Bay) on the resignation of John Richardson. Lang's acceptance was governed largely by the poor showing
of the northern contingent in the Council. With the repeal of transportation, the northern squatters were an isolated, if vocal minority, in the Legislative Council. Attendance by squatter representatives had been sporadic and fallen off badly in the previous session, to the point where none of the four northern members appeared regularly in the House. The last minute arrival in Brisbane of Downs squatter, Arthur Hodgson, to oppose Lang, aroused unexpected excitement and paved the way for an unusually long and hard fought contest. The Hodgsons, who had themselves made several trips to England to recruit labour and lobby the Colonial Office, were well acquainted with Lang's strident brand of politics. Indeed, the arrival of Lang's three immigrant ships at Moreton Bay had jeopardised moves for cheap labour by Downs landholders and contributed substantially to the demise of their ticket-of-leave schemes.

J.D. Lang, for his part, had crossed swords with the Hodgsons five years earlier in his publication, *Cooksland*. Pemberton Hodgson, a relative of Arthur and fellow squatter, had written a book of pioneer reminiscences on his return from England, a work to which Lang took exception on a number of counts. Hodgson's description of the Downs squatters as a colonial aristocracy victimized by merchants, tradesmen and labour was diametrically opposed to the vision of *Cooksland*. Lang went on to dispute the professed philanthropy of the Pure Merinos towards the Aboriginal inhabitants, a subject to which Pemberton Hodgson had alluded at length, and implied that white settlers had exacted bloody revenge for losses to stock and life. The Stanley Borough election of 1854, incorporating the populations of Brisbane, Ipswich and part of the Downs, could thus be seen as the culmination of five years of developing rivalry between the pioneer squattocracy and the Town Liberal movement.

Lang's absence at the first poll drew criticism from his opponent. By manifesting ill-feeling towards the squatters, Hodgson contended, the Reverend Doctor could only light "embers of discord amongst a happy and united people". The result of the first Stanley ballot was a tie but allegations of polling irregularities at Drayton were upheld and the election declared invalid. The voting population, comprising Brisbane, Ipswich and Drayton, was kept in a constant state of agitation as campaigning continued throughout most of 1854. With the news that Lang intended to canvass the electors personally, the *Moreton Bay Courier* galvanised vigorous support for his candidature. The editor continued to view Hodgson's election promises with strong suspicion and countered the squatter's claim to the local affection with his own assessment that Doctor Lang of Sydney had done more for the district than all of the men of the north put together. Despite the land order debacle, Lang had inspired strong loyalties among his former immigrants. One correspondent, signing himself "An Elector", expressed his adhesion to "our old friend Doctor Lang who had impoverished himself for the benefit of his adopted country and who, notwithstanding his many failings, will again step forward to advocate their cause".

In July, Lang himself wrote long letters to the *Courier*
and published the prospectus of his Moreton Bay Land and Immigration Company. Adopting his usual forceful approach, the old campaigner warned town voters against the Three C's (convicts, Coolies, Chinamen) and against legislative dominance by "a particular class of men". Newspaper involvement in the campaign reached a climax in early August with the publication of a long series of charges by Edward Alcock, the Free Press printer. Alcock, who had been associated a decade earlier with Lang's second Sydney paper, the Colonial Observer, alleged that the proprietor had broken faith with him during the libel suit which closed their paper and had exposed him to pecuniary loss and imprisonment. Accompanying Alcock's personal complaints were strident attacks on Lang's "tarnished character" and "faithless recklessness in public engagements". In a reply to the Courier, Lang referred at length to the Colonial Observer case, but maintained that the fine money had been taken from public subscription and from his own pocket. The bitterness between the two men was understandable given the discrimination against printers which existed under the nineteenth-century newspaper libel laws. Alcock resented his brief prison term, while Lang deplored the motives of his former partner in seeking to gratify his "present unscrupulous employers".

With the publication of Alcock's letter, the Stanley contest assumed a more vindictive character, Lang's supporters rallied and meetings became more noisy. At the final electoral appearance, Robert Cribb accused the Free Press of circulating "a number of abominable lies respecting Doctor Lang". The Sydney Morning Herald's correspondent described the contest as a rather heated affair and condemned the frantic excitement exhibited by many of Lang's town supporters. The same writer favourably reviewed Alcock's charges and repeated inferences of disloyalty brought by Hodgson. In the following week, Lang was declared elected by one vote but some time would elapse before the intense community feeling subsided. Lang, addressing his constituents, expressed the opinion that the Free Press campaign against him had backfired and brought him unexpected support from swinging Ipswich voters. Lang's reluctance to prosecute conservative papers like the Free Press and the Herald may have fed the suspicions of his enemies; yet, it could also substantially enhance his electoral performances.

The first action in the Council by the new Stanley member was to move for the separation of the northern districts, including the Richmond and Clarence rivers. The 30th parallel at Cape Grafton had long been his choice as the Cooksland boundary in preference to the 26th (or Point Danger) proposal. The vision in Cooksland of several new colonies to be established in northern New South Wales sustained Lang's faith in the 30th parallel as the future boundary; his optimism on this point had been fed by the liberal provision of an 1850 Imperial Act. The separation debate in the Legislative Council revealed the antagonism which persisted between the northern squatters and the Stanley representative, Patrick Leslie and his fellow pastoralists went so far as to oppose the separation motion, thereby increasing Lang's local popularity at their own
expense. The outspoken newcomer attacked the state of serfdom imposed by the Drayton squatters on their labourers and ridiculed their pretension for the port of Cleveland.

Complementing the boundary agitation was Lang's firm support for the claims of Moreton Bay (Brisbane) as the future northern capital. In correspondence to his family, Lang invariably praised Brisbane's noble river and its pleasing aspect during his regular visits. If he had achieved little else as the member for Stanley he had succeeded in weakening the standing of the northern squatters in the eyes of their electors. Commenting on Lang's stand in the Council, the Moreton Bay Courier acknowledged "the industry, ability and zeal" of its honourable member and kept up a running critique of Hodgson and his squatter associates. By 1855, collaboration between Lang and the northern press was directed almost exclusively towards the incorporation of the Richmond and Clarence River districts into a northern colony. In this spirit, he wrote many letters to the Courier both before and after separation commenting frankly on electoral candidates and examining their positions on the unresolved boundary question.

At Sydney and at Moreton Bay, Lang's conduct continued to polarise the press. The vigorous defence of his son George, prosecuted for embezzlement in Victoria, distracted Lang from northern causes. In his third and longest gaol term of the decade, Lang was sentenced to six months imprisonment for criminal libel. The Free Press and its printer Edward Alcock could denounce the doctor's predicament as further evidence of his recklessness and breaches of faith. However such criticism was more than offset by the demonstrations of support emanating from the Moreton Bay populace. A gathering of 400 convened by Cribb and Eldridge condemned the severity of Lang's prison sentence and declined to receive his resignation. Headed by the Fortitude and Chaseley contingent, Nonconformists used press and platform to organize against the squatters and promote the town viewpoint. Under the stable ownership of James Swan, the Moreton Bay Courier remained a consistent medium of Lang influence, even if its writers were not inclined to imitate Lang's provocative style. When the unrepentant Doctor visited the north in January 1856 to renew the separation agitation, Swan was again active in drawing up and seconding a local petition. The Doctor's propensity for unfinished projects was one of the most common complaints brought against him, while his prolonged absence from the legislature exposed him to the same criticism as he had levelled against previous Moreton Bay representatives.

January 1856 marked a significant date in the history of the Moreton Bay Courier. With separation in sight, its long-serving editor, William Wilkes announced his departure from the district. Farewell addresses by colonial editors were seldom modest; Wilkes, for example, assured his readers:

He would be most unjust to himself, were he not to claim the merit of advocating the best interests of the Northern Districts and of Australia generally on all occasions and with perfect independence and judgement.
For more than a decade, Wilkes had been a colourful if erratic figure at Moreton Bay. Endowed with a keen wit and lively style, Wilkes epitomised the bohemian aspects of the working journalist, in contrast to the solid Protestant virtues of his proprietor. Predictable eulogies of the *Courier* and its early newspaper men fail to conceal the fact that Wilkes, like his predecessor Lyon, was invariably short of money and notoriously fond of the bottle. R.B. Walker, commenting on his Sydney years, describes him as "a somewhat inebriate journalist of the old school". After his death in 1873, various anecdotes circulated about Wilkes in the Sydney *Bulletin*. One story concerning the wayward editor and his brushes with the management of the *Town and Country Journal* would be sufficient to elucidate his Moreton Bay career. The anxious proprietor of the Sydney weekly, Samuel Bennett, was alleged to have sought out Wilkes in a public house; on this occasion, Wilkes had secured his pay in advance and drunk his cheque leaving the owner ("Sam the Surly") to meet the production deadline as best he could. Swan, a trained printer and compositor had undoubtedly encountered the same situation locally. The survival of early newspaper enterprises like the *Moreton Bay Courier* depended heavily on the managerial capacity of the proprietor and his ability in some instances to improvise editorials at short notice. Wilkes' popularity suggests that local Nonconformists had yet to make a substantial impact on their community. Press initiatives against intemperance and desecration of the sabbath were seriously compromised by an absence of commitment on the part of the journalistic rank-and-file.

The Wilkes-Swan association on the *Courier* and the Alcock-Lang dispute of 1854 raise general questions about the relations between nineteenth-century newspaper staff and their management. Such questions have been largely obscured by a sizeable but uncritical body of journalistic reminiscences. Sylvia Lawson's recent study of the *Bulletin* provides one of the few sustained portraits of the late nineteenth-century bohemian editor in the person of J. F. Archibald. The irreverence of men like Wilkes and Archibald provided a striking counterpoint to the moral fervour of clerics like J.D. Lang. The contrast between the free-thinking editor and the upright proprietor is an important manifestation of the dichotomy between authorship and ownership in the 19th century newspaper world. Lawson's entertaining approach is appropriate to the iconoclasm of the *Bulletin* but leaves little space for an assessment of Nonconformist press involvement during the mid-19th century. To what extent the Dissenters were able to enlist the active cooperation of a dissolute rank and file in campaigns on social and political issues becomes a teasing question. One example of such cooperation, apart from the Wilkes-Swan partnership, was the close contact between Wilkes and J.D. Lang during the Moreton Bay separation campaign. In the statistical battles with Sydney over population and revenue, collaboration between Lang and the *Courier* editor was essential. The two men appeared moral and social opposites, Wilkes belonged to a ticket-of-leave class which Lang had campaigned hard to remove from the
colonial press. Yet despite the longstanding differences, certain temperamental similarities remained. Fearless and satiric, Lang and Wilkes shared a hearty dislike of the establishment church, of the squattocracy and of W.C. Wentworth's constitutional conservatism.48 In the Courier's editorial column, Wilkes consistently supported Lang's campaign for responsible democratic institutions in New South Wales. The exigencies of the separation campaign, coupled with Swan's tact as go-between, had kept the unlikely Lang-Wilkes relationship functioning through the fifties. However, once the new colony was erected, the two men became rivals for the coveted title - "The True Champion of Separation" and their personal differences became public.

Strengthening Wilkes' claim to the local affection was the undisputed superiority which he had demonstrated over rival journalists on the Moreton Bay Free Press during his country years. Whatever may be said of the erratic Wilkes, he remained at his Courier post for the commendable period of "three hundred and seventy-eight consecutive weeks". Throughout the 1850's, the separation campaign and the liberal policies of the Courier attracted public support at the expense of the Free Press. The pro-squatter journal failed to win subscribers from the more established Courier and required regular subsidies to survive.49 Its financial difficulties were reflected by a high turn-over of literary personnel. In marked contrast with the Courier, the Free Press employed no fewer than four editors in its first two years.50 A belated change in Free Press policy under Theophilus Pugh after October 1855 could not close the gap between the local papers nor overcome the political handicaps associated with its previous squatter management. As separation approached, the Courier denigrated the old Free Press as "the mouthpiece of a few moneyed dictators"51 and reminded readers that it alone had been active in promoting the great cause. To a large extent, Wilkes had laid the basis for Courier dominance. With a circulation exceeding 1,000 copies by 1857, the Courier (3 w.) was the only newspaper in the northern districts to appear more than once a week and claimed a circulation greater than that of its three rivals combined. After almost a decade of local rivalry with the Courier, the Moreton Bay Free Press succumbed and ceased publication in early 1859.

Throughout his protracted period as printer and owner of the Moreton Bay Courier, James Swan demonstrated considerable tact and restraint. One of his more notable achievements as Courier proprietor was to maintain support for Lang without antagonising local opinion. If the Courier without Wilkes lacked its former political initiative, Swan was careful to promote religious tolerance among his readers. On the eve of separation, Swan decided to sell his paper and visit his native Scotland. His prime concern in parting with the Courier was to ensure its continuing adherence to Liberal Protestant views. Swan's eventual successor as proprietor was fellow Baptist and manufacturer, Thomas Blackett Stephens. A clergyman's son who had served with Swan on committees to erect the first Baptist Church in 1858, Stephens allegedly purchased the Brisbane paper "from
a desire to have in his hands the most potent agent not only on politics but on moral and social progress."

As prominent public benefactors, both Swan and Stephens bequeathed substantial sums to charity and to the Church. In politics, each was to become a staunch Liberal in the Queensland legislature. The paradox of their Nonconformity was recognised by contemporary politician and squatter, R.R. McKenzie. After an interview with the new proprietor, the aristocratic McKenzie observed that:

He had never met with a more respectable man in his life, nor one who had so mightily convinced and surprised him as did the earnest broad-tongue Chartist sort of individual he had encountered.

The Courier sale of late 1859 promised strong continuity in policy with one recognisable difference. Despite his solid Nonconformist background, Stephens was not a Lang immigrant nor had he been closely aligned with the Lang press during the 1850's. In journalistic matters he deferred to his printer and editor Theophilus Pugh. Pugh had inherited some of the Lang influence through his father-in-law Charles Trundle and the German families of Nundah, but co-operation between Lang and the Courier was never to be as close as it had been during the pre-separation years.

In conclusion, the findings of Chapters One and Two are not compatible with a simplistic interpretation of the Moreton Bay separation movement. Beneath the rhetoric of anti-centralism lay deep divisions between town and country groups. Historically, it is possible to break down the years 1846-1859 into short periods of agitation and quiescence. The first, 1846 to the end of the decade, was relatively quiet until 1849. The struggle for control of the separation movement climaxed in the years 1850-55 when both town and country factions lobbied the press vigorously on a range of issues. By 1856, the local press had lapsed once again into stagnation. Apart from predictable editorials on separation, the press increased its coverage of overseas and colonial news in order to revive the flagging interest of its readers. Responsible government and the prospect of separation in the near future encouraged a sharp decline in local political activity. The Hornet Bank massacre of 1857 failed to revive the vigorous racial debate of previous years while the discussion of separation itself was largely confined to the boundary question. The conspicuous failure of the press to arrive at a constitutional blueprint for the new colony at this time was due to a number of factors, among them the mediocrity of William Wilkes' editorial successors on the Courier. Lang himself, after perceptive contributions to the New South Wales political scene, was also surprisingly reticent on the democratic machinery necessary for the colony he had laboured to create. The unevenness of press performance in this regard favoured conservatives especially the Darling Downs squatters, self-made Scots for the most part and enemies of Lang. The uneasy truce which prevailed among separationists in the press allowed Hodgson and his influential supporters to continue the debate behind closed doors and to negotiate a settlement which would favour the landed interest.
Chapter 3

Press, Parliament and Bar: The Politics of Separation

The advent of responsible government in the Australian colonies encouraged Liberal claims about the emergence of a Fourth Estate and marked the unabashed appropriation of a long Whig tradition from the Motherland. It is important to note that this rhetoric was most persistent during the period 1850 to 1870 and that it emanated, not from the Sydney Morning Herald, but from less-established competitors like the Empire and the Courier. J.D. Lang, in his widely read History of New South Wales, summed up the dissatisfaction with which Liberals viewed Granny's pervasive influence:

It is much to be regretted that the Sydney Morning Herald, the principal commercial paper of the colony and the most extensively circulated of the colonial journals should for many years past have been conducted on the most exceptionable principles and been used most systematically for the most questionable purposes. The present proprietors of that paper a Messrs Kemp and Fairfax (are) both uneducated and thoroughly mercenary men who have no idea beyond that of gain and who have uniformly been opposed to everything like popular freedom and the rights of men.¹

For Liberal idealists like Lang, the "pounds, shillings and pence" approach of the Herald was a travesty of the press' true vocation. At the heart of self-conscious claims by the Fourth Estate was the belief by its members that they were making a significant contribution to the practice of effective responsible government - firstly, by maintaining an informed commentary on parliamentary and legal procedures, secondly by providing aspiring and talented professionals with a useful apprenticeship for higher office. Contemplating the establishment of a new Sydney daily to advance the claims of diverse town interests, Lang stressed the failure of the Sydney Morning Herald in this respect:

At present it cannot be said that the colony has any organ of public opinion in the form of a Daily Press... Look at the commanding position the Press has procured for itself during these stirring times in Europe. Why
almost all the eminent men who have ruled the
destiny of France as Ministers of State have
risen exclusively to that commanding position
as writers for the Press. But who is there
who takes his political opinions indeed his
opinions upon any subject from the Daily
Press of this colony? For who is there who
would recommend the actual managers of that
organ on the grounds of their influence in
the community for the lowest offices of
state?²

For Liberals like J.D. Lang and Henry Parkes, one sign
that the colonial press had come of age was the emergence of
a new brand of statesman, hitherto exceptional in the col­
onies, the journalist-lawyer-politician. The constitution­
al debates which flourished in New South Wales throughout
the 1850's provided fertile soil for the germination of this
concept. The refinement of the Liberal press mythology
represented in part a nostalgia for the Liberal Wentworth
rather than the conservative figure who had spent his last
years in the colony promoting a "bunyip aristocracy" and a
restrictive two-thirds clause for constitutional amendments.
At a more general level, the same rhetoric reflected the
regular interaction of press parliament and Bar, and new
professional developments in the world of journalism. With
the advent of responsible government, the focus of colonial
press reports shifted from Imperial to colonial legislat­
ures. The growing emphasis on colonial news necessitated
the recruitment of local staffs of specially-trained jour­
nalists. A percentage of these men were young lawyers for
whom such work was recommended to develop succinctness and
power of recall. The combined skills of listening, record­
ing and summarising, under pressure of time and space, were
regarded as useful training by the legal profession. Very
often, because of its professional preparatory role, parlia­
mentary reporting became interchangeable with legal report­
ing, two activities upon which nineteenth-century newspapers
were heavily dependent.

Implicit in Lang's prescription for a Fourth Estate
were assumptions of social and professional mobility.
Shorthand reporters, after serving their apprenticeship in
metropolitan journalism, would rise to high legal and
political eminence and thereby enhance the reputation of the
newspapers concerned. The prominent example of one
journalist-lawyer-politician, Alfred Peter Lutwyche, forms
the main subject of this chapter. Although the study
confines itself predominantly to his Queensland years, it is
useful to review Lutwyche's earlier association with the
London press. Lutwyche himself attributed much of his suc­
cess to his sound apprenticeship in London journalism. Of
these formative years, he later wrote:

I look back with no slight satisfaction on
the twenty years I spent in connection with
the press in England as the best twenty years
of my life. I know the scrupulous regard to
accuracy and truth which was paid day by day,
and hour by hour by the co-partners of the
journal on which I was engaged.³
In the limited introductions to Lutwyche which exist, passing reference is sometimes made to his newspaper association with Charles Dickens, a fellow parliamentary reporter on the London True Sun. The association with Dickens epitomized political and professional pretensions enshrined in the Fourth Estate mythology. Dickens' unprecedented popularity in the British-speaking newspaper world was closely associated with the rise of a Liberal press. As proprietor of the Daily News, he was to play a prominent role in successful agitation for the removal of government advertising and paper duties on newspapers.

Lutwyche entered both the legal and newspaper professions at the top. While completing his Master of Arts at Oxford, he was employed as a parliamentary reporter for the Morning Chronicle. After serving on the Morning Chronicle, Lutwyche worked as a law reporter on the Times, an assignment which later enhanced his reputation at the colonial Bar. Alfred Stephen, Chief Justice of New South Wales and a fellow Councillor of Lutwyche in the Upper House, stated before a judicial inquiry of 1858 that law reporters in Britain received a salary of £1,000 or more per annum - comparable with that of a colonial Judge - and conceded that such employment demanded a great knowledge and understanding of the law.

Lutwyche was one of a new wave of energetic lawyers, many of Liberal persuasion, who restocked the depleted colonial Bar during the 1850's and 1860's. The majority of these men were attracted to Eastern Australia, especially to Victoria where wealth and opportunities appeared greatest. While advancing their legal careers, the new arrivals contributed to colonial journalism in a number of ways. Those who were yet to establish themselves found editorial or parliamentary work with metropolitan newspapers. The flexible format of the nineteenth-century press offered ample opportunity for the inclusion of literary sketches or political commentaries. Lutwyche, who reached Sydney in 1853, continued his association with journalism by acting as colonial correspondent for the Morning Chronicle in London. His best known contribution in this capacity was the Narrative of the Wreck of the "Meridian", an account of his eventful sea voyage to Australia which was published in the Morning Chronicle and printed as a monograph in Sydney after his arrival in 1852.

A majority of the new professionals arriving in the colonies were involved in literary work rather than in newspaper business. A few established their own journals but with far less success than their American counterparts who, in some cases, amassed sizeable fortunes. In the Australian colonies, newspaper ownership was still a risky enterprise, especially for those untrained in practical printing. The financial problems of the new Liberal press, dependent on sponsorship from lower and middle income groups, were dramatically demonstrated in 1857 when Parkes' Empire was declared insolvent. Lutwyche was one of the trustees of the second Empire, a Liberal successor of Parkes' journal, devoted to constitutional reform on a range of issues. In New South Wales, which had yet to legislate for universal suffrage or Upper House reform, the Sydney Morning Herald
and its Tory supporters were preparing a vigorous counter-offensive to the proposals of successive Liberal administrations. In this charged political atmosphere, Lutwyche emerged as a prominent participant and a bellicose reformer.

As popular pressure increased out of doors, Lutwyche used his prestigious position as Attorney-General and Liberal leader in the Council to begin an assault on Upper House privilege. During a speech which affronted many of his fellow Councillors, Lutwyche denied the existence of a colonial aristocracy ("men distinguished by illustrious or hereditary wealth") and rejected any local parallel with the House of Lords. The only available recourse, he argued, was to democratic institutions, and to an elective Upper House in line with the Assembly. In his successful political rise as legal advisor to Cowper, Lutwyche made powerful enemies. The *Herald* deplored Lutwyche's Upper House appointment as "one of the deepest stains upon responsible government" and never tired of disputing his iconoclastic views. Parkes' *Empire*, struggling to compete with the *Herald*, published an open letter by J.D. Lang endorsing Lutwyche's views. Lang, who had not forgotten the Council's censure vote of 1850 against himself, proclaimed the nominee Upper House an anachronism and "a miserable travesty of the House of Peers". Lang's more radical proposal to abolish the Upper House and to increase Lower House numbers was based on his previous clashes with the Council. More experienced and cynical of its role than Lutwyche, he had foreseen its rapid degeneration into a reactionary body steadfastly opposed to reform. As a new arrival accustomed to Whig influence in the British Lords, Lutwyche had yet to encounter the full wrath of a hostile Upper Chamber.

The *Herald*, monitoring Lutwyche's political rise, was quick to point out the contradictions of his political advancement, firstly as a nominee to the Council and secondly as Attorney-General to Charles Cowper in 1858. One dramatic episode which aroused considerable controversy during Lutwyche's brief term as Attorney-General was the "Shoalhaven Incubus" case of early 1859. Berry began the dispute by refusing to allow J.D. Lang to preach in the church on his Shoalhaven estate. Lang, in the *Illawarra Mercury*, published a stinging attack on Berry, accusing him of reducing "whole generations of Shoalhaven serfs to miserable vassalage" and condemning him roundly as "the exact type of those anti-diluvian oppressors of their fellow men for whose enormous wickedness and oppression God was pleased not only to shorten the duration of human life but to bring in a flood of water to destroy the world of the ungodly." For his biblical onslaught upon Berry, Lang and the provincial newspaper publishers concerned faced a series of actions for criminal libel. However, Lutwyche, as the newly appointed Attorney-General, refused to allow Berry private counsel to conduct the prosecution and placed the case in the hands of the Crown Law Officers. The acquittal of Lang, amid widespread demonstrations of public support, outraged Berry and other influential conservatives. No fewer than five trials were conducted around the case. When Lang read out the libellous letter before a sympathetic
gathering, he was again prosecuted but without effect. Although successful actions were undertaken against the newspaper publishers, the damages were met by a large subscription fund promoted by Lang himself.

Lang's attack on Berry was linked to the Liberal assault on the Legislative Council. As its oldest serving nominee member, Berry epitomised the reactionary elements which held sway in the Upper House. During his long years of service, Berry had distinguished himself mainly by his occasional outbursts against democracy and his support for the renewal of transportation. Convinced that the Cowper government was conspiring to deprive him of his lands, the "Laird of Shoalhaven" galvanised parliamentary conservatives into an unprecedented protest against the Liberals. Lutwyche faced harsh allegations of political bias in the execution of his duty. Within the legislature, Berry's supporters assailed Lutwyche in unprecedented fashion over his action and introduced a Libel Amendment Bill in protest. With satisfaction, the *Herald* reported a tumultuous Council sitting of the 3 February 1859 in which Lutwyche was repeatedly badgered by his angry colleagues. The Attorney-General's heated comments in his own defence were ruled out of order by the President; when his motion for adjournment was lost, Lutwyche stalked out of the House. In his absence, the Council carried a motion of Breach of Privilege against Lutwyche, an action heartily endorsed by the *Herald* in the following issues. The acquittal of Lang was, stormed the *Herald*, a "triumph over law in the temple of the law itself". Along with vague insinuations against his moral character, the editor voiced grave fears about the powers and partisanship of its leading Law Officer. When Lutwyche promptly accepted the post as Moreton Bay Judge on 22 February 1859, the *Herald*, in an extraordinary outburst, celebrated his imminent departure:

> The conduct of Mr. Lutwyche as the leader of his party in the Legislative Council was a disgrace to public life. His demeanour was offensive, his management fraught with ridiculous blunders, his attacks upon the privileges of the Legislature such as to draw upon him the severest censure ever pronounced by the House... he initiated no measure - he announced no principles of Government - he was continually defeated in the Chamber he professed to lead - his departure from it was considered a relief.

Lutwyche's Moreton Bay appointment was the subject of further controversy in parliament and legal circles. In the wake of the Berry episode, James Martin and J.H. Plunkett dismissed the former Attorney-General as "a mere parliamentary reporter" and a legal upstart, unqualified in matters of civil procedure. Alfred Stephen, the New South Wales Chief Justice and former Councillor with Lutwyche, was more perceptive; in a private note to Premier Cowper, he conceded that, despite his radicalism, Lutwyche "would make a good Judge ... he is conscientious and can be patient and painstaking." Unlike his colleague, Stephen was a firm advocate of nomineeism and a limited franchise. More than
any other family, the Stephens upheld the traditions of an influential legal caste in the colonies. The fixed views of the Chief Justice on the need for a colonial aristocracy were diametrically opposed to the social and political mobility implicit in the rhetoric of a Fourth Estate. While Lutwyche was a prestigious product of the British press, Alfred Stephen had been a longstanding enemy of colonial journalism. A product of patronage, he had served as Governor Arthur's assiduous Attorney-General during the celebrated campaign against the *Hobart Town Gazette*.14

Sharp differences between the Chief Justice and the new Moreton Bay Judge were to become apparent in a legal wrangle over the constitution proposed for the colony of Queensland. As the legal architect of Separation, Stephen was largely responsible for the imposition of an outdated franchise on the northern colony.15 In early 1859, Lutwyche's appointment to Moreton Bay was more a source of embarrassment to Stephen than cause for alarm. To ingratiate himself with Sydney conservatives, Stephen spread a scandalous rumour about Lutwyche and his wife.16 Accusations of moral blot, ill-founded or otherwise, were used by the *Sydney Morning Herald* in an ongoing campaign to vilify the Judge and eradicate his influence in early Queensland.

Removed from the furore of Sydney politics, Lutwyche demonstrated unsuspected qualities of social affability and hospitality in the small Moreton Bay community. He entertained regularly, was on good terms with the press of the colony and sponsored cultural bodies like the School of Arts. In the relative calm of his new environment, Lutwyche adopted the lifestyle of a country squire, regularly appearing at agricultural functions and participating actively in the foundation of the Anglican church in the suburb which bears his name. Although the *Sydney Morning Herald* sarcastically dubbed him "Farmer Lutwyche", his Kedron-based activities did serve to confirm the popular perception of the Judge as "a local man". The succinctness and clarity with which he delivered his judgments favorably impressed early Queenslanders.17 In Court, Lutwyche's hooked nose, craggy features and deep black eyes which he was in the habit of rolling when excited, more than compensated for his short stature. At forty-six years, he had not mellowed his style nor eschewed his intense convictions.

On the eve of separation, Lutwyche requested a copy of the Order-in-Council of the 6 June 1859 which elaborated the constitutional procedures for the new colony and regulated the conditions of his new appointment.18 The contradictions and looseness of the document which he received appalled him. Had Separation been determined by an Act of parliament, the clerical blunders involved in the drafting of the proclamation may have been rectified. As it was, the Order-in-Council remained a patchwork of drafts, undertaken at different times and in changing political circumstances. While Section 20 of the Order-in-Council stipulated that Queensland should enjoy the advantage of recent New South Wales legislation (namely the Electoral Act of 1858), Section 8 of the same document followed (the Constitution Act of 1855) and imposed an outdated franchise on northern electors. In an attempt to resolve its serious
contradictions, the Order-in-Council was referred to New South Wales Chief Justice, Alfred Stephen, who upheld a limited franchise under Section 8.19

In January 1860, Lutwyche addressed several polite letters to the Queensland Governor, George Bowen, suggesting that immediate action be taken to remedy its glaring defects. He disputed Stephen's interpretation and cited the first section of the Order-in-Council which recommended "the establishment of a Legislature in the new Colony in a manner as nearly resembling the form of Legislation established in New South Wales as the circumstances of such Colony would allow".20 However, Bowen reasoned that Imperial intervention would create greater confusion by necessitating a dissolution of the impending first parliament. In his dispatches of February to the Secretary of State, the Queensland Governor played down the prospect of agitation against Stephen's ruling and maintained that "the colonists are far more inclined to laugh than to sulk at the clerical blunder".21 As a newcomer, Bowen could plead ignorance of the recent political battles fought in New South Wales over the franchise. Neither he nor Colonial Secretary R.G.W. Herbert could yet have known that Lutwyche had been a leading member of the Sydney Electoral Reform League and that, by waiving the advice of their legal officer, they threatened to undermine reforms which Lutwyche as Cowper's Attorney-General had helped to achieve.

Although the Courier suspected that the Order-in-Council had become the object of political machinations in Sydney,22 few of the town candidates to the first parliament were prepared to make the franchise a prominent election issue. One exception was Brisbane merchant and newspaper proprietor, Thomas Blackett Stephens.23 Unlike other Liberal candidates, Stephens chose to contest the Darling Downs seat of Drayton and Toowoomba, a district in which the effects of the limited franchise would be most felt. Almost one thousand shepherds, stockmen and labourers on the Downs were now ineligible to vote. In the long address which appeared in his own paper, the Courier, Stephens pledged himself to the immediate restoration of manhood suffrage and the elimination of nomineeism. Stephens reiterated his strong views on the franchise question at the Toowoomba election meeting but, in the absence of working class representation, was soundly defeated. If Liberal reformers like Stephens made little impact outside Brisbane, working class candidates like Gaffer Grey, who had campaigned through the Courier, were no more effective in the metropolis.

During 1860, constitutional debate in Queensland tended to be sporadic and more centred around its newly-appointed Legislative Council than devoted to the problematic franchise. For pragmatic political reasons, electoral candidates to the first parliament appeared more willing to address the issues of nomineeism and life appointments than to grapple with the legal technicalities of the contradictory Order-in-Council. The lively Fortitude Valley election, in which Charles Lilley narrowly defeated Daniel Foley Roberts, was fought predominantly over the future role and importance of the Legislative Council. Lilley's opposition
to a nominee chamber was consistent with populist views espoused by the *Courier*, a paper which he had edited in the previous years. The new *Courier* editor, Theophilus Pugh, anticipating the reactionary policies of the Crown nominees, adopted an irreverent posture towards the Council from the outset. The substantial publicity surrounding the Shoalhaven trials, and the censure motion passed on Lutwyche for his efforts in thwarting a private prosecution, played an important part in keeping the issues of nomineeism and life appointments before the public. The sensitivity of the Queensland Council to press criticism was such that it seriously debated a Libel Bill in the first year of its existence. 

During 1860-61, the constitutional debate around the Upper House in New South Wales and Victoria was becoming closely integrated into political battles over free selection. In late 1860, the New South Wales Council took the dramatic step of refusing to endorse vital clauses in the Robertson Selection Acts. The arrival in Queensland of men like Charles Nicholson and Alfred Lutwyche ensured that the political tensions surrounding the New South Wales Legislative Council would spill over into northern affairs. The *Courier* editor, Theophilus Pugh, began canvassing written contributions, critical of the Assembly and of the squatters. One such letter, lucid and articulate, proclaimed the urgent necessity of reform and contemplated the possibility of a concerted press campaign to this end. This notable contribution, which coincided with Lutwyche's return from Circuit Court sittings in Toowoomba, depicted Bowen as an opponent of the popular will. The author, almost certainly Lutwyche, asserted that the colony was lapsing into patriarchal government, and would soon be transformed into a macrocosmic Shoalhaven in which a limited franchise and a nominee Chamber perpetuated "the deadly incubus".

One important consequence of the 1860 elections was to consolidate the position of the conservative judiciary at the expense of the Liberals. Among the successful candidates was Ratcliffe Pring, a hotheaded Ipswich lawyer of thirty-four, who was appointed Queensland's first Attorney-General. As the franchise debate intensified, Pring threw his legal expertise on the side of Bowen and Alfred Stephen. The *Courier* suspected Pring from the first and viewed him as a willing tool of the Governor and the squatters. Relations between the Judge and the Attorney-General soured in mid-1860 when Pring clashed openly with Lutwyche in Court and introduced a Supreme Court Bill into Parliament to cancel Lutwyche's existing commission and to uphold the reduction in his salary. In his opposition to Lutwyche, Pring found timely support from Charles Blakeney, a Catholic barrister who in that year defeated G.D. Lang for the seat of North Brisbane. Once in parliament, Blakeney played a leading role on a Supreme Court Committee of Inquiry to review, among other matters, "the necessity of increasing the number of Judges of the Supreme Court by the appointment of a Chief Justice". In his recommendation to parliament, he urged that the number of Judges be increased to three and delivered a pointed snub to Lutwyche by advocating that the Chief Justice be selected from the British Bar.
The *Courier* discerned a conspiracy to degrade Lutwyche during his absence on the provincial court circuit and undertook a spirited defence of the Judge.

By 1861, the task of opposing Lutwyche had passed to R. G.W. Herbert, the Queensland Colonial Secretary. Stunned by Lutwyche's allegation, based on his reading of the Order-in-Council, that "the Legislature itself is not legally constituted", Bowen recommended his protégé to the Judge as a sympathetic administrator of sound legal training. Herbert had completed a law degree at Oxford not long before his arrival in the colony and, with fellow Oxonian John Bramston, had recently been accepted as a barrister to the Queensland Bar. As an influential member of the Bar and government leader in the Assembly, Herbert was well placed to resist the emerging Lutwyche party. Demonstrating talents which were administrative rather than judicial, the Colonial Secretary swung his support behind Lutwyche's conservative colleagues who, with encouragement from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, accused the Judge of exploiting the franchise issue to advance his material and professional position.

Throughout 1860 and early 1861, Lutwyche's efforts to publicise his stand were inhibited by Herbert's dominant influence in the Lower House and by restrictions on the publication of his official correspondence. In previous contests involving the colonial Bar, Liberal lawyers had taken the provocative step of putting their case through the press. A famous precedent was the Stephen-Gellibrand dispute in Van Diemen's Land during the convict administration of Governor Arthur. Just as Gellibrand had found timely support in Robert Lathrop Murray and Bent's *Hobart Town Gazette*, so Lutwyche was to ally himself with Theophilus Pugh and the *Courier* during 1861. Long standing opposition to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and close literary contacts with the *Empire* made T.B. Stephens' *Courier* receptive to Lutwyche's influence. Stephens had expressed his opposition to the limited franchise during the abortive 1860 Toowoomba election but the driving force behind the *Courier*'s new campaign was its editor, Theophilus Pugh. His decision to publish the Lutwyche-Herbert correspondence in early February 1861 was something of a scoop, to use the modern term. Economically, the decision to support Lutwyche against the Executive bore fruit, for the *Courier* strengthened its following at the expense of the infant *Guardian*. Before the middle of 1861, Pugh's paper had earned for itself the distinction of becoming Brisbane's first daily publication.

The abrupt transition from provincial tri-weekly to metropolitan daily encouraged the *Courier* to set itself up in opposition to the *Herald* as a true representative of the Fourth Estate. With Lutwyche, the *Courier* was preparing a two-pronged assault, the first on the Governor and his nominee Council, the second, on the strident anti-Whig views of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Ideologically, the *Courier* of 1861 was closely aligned with the *Sydney Empire*. The advent of Separation encouraged a process of regular migration by journalists between the two papers. This process began in 1856 when William Wilkes, the first *Courier* editor,
moved to Sydney and found employment editing the *Empire*. Wilkes continued to take an interest in Queensland affairs and contributed a regular Sydney column to the *Courier* after Separation. Conversely, both Theophilus Pugh and G.D. Lang worked as *Empire* correspondents in Brisbane before taking on local assignments. In addition to an exchange of personnel, the *Courier* regularly reproduced *Empire* extracts on political and constitutional reform throughout 1860-61. The freedom of the press was one common cause upheld by both Liberal papers. In October 1860 when the *Empire* was brought to trial for the publication of sensitive military correspondence, the *Courier* denounced the abortive prosecution as "worthy of the dark old days of Captain Logan".

The advent of Separation had immediate political implications for Stephens' newspaper. With the creation of a local legislature, the *Courier's* staff was reorganised and augmented to provide regular parliamentary reports for its Brisbane readers; rivalry between press and parliament was accentuated by the absence of any official record of the debates. The newspaper monopoly on parliamentary affairs encouraged journalists to adopt a more critical view of their subjects. A most noticeable change in press parliament relations during the session of 1861 was the growing rift between the *Courier* and the Colonial Secretary following the unexpected February publication of his official correspondence with Lutwyche. The Judge's decision to give "the widest possible publicity" to their dispute over his eligibility to the position of Chief Justice was deplored by Herbert as "unprecedented" and "calculated to lessen the confidence placed in all persons holding a Commission from the Crown". The Herbert-Lutwyche letters depicted the Judge's stand in somewhat narrow terms. The earlier Bowen-Lutwyche correspondence, still unpublished at that time, would reveal that far more than the Judge's salary and position were at stake, for these documents alluded specifically to the franchise restriction. A hint of these confidential exchanges came in March 1861 with news that the Imperial Government, on the basis of a petition from Judge Lutwyche to the Queen, was introducing an Act to restore the validity of local legislation. This announcement by the *Home News* was a revelation to Queensland colonists who still knew nothing of the petition or of its contents. Renewed interest in the Judge's private stand prompted Pugh and the *Courier* to fresh enquiries.

While Charles Lilley and Arthur Macalister questioned Herbert in the Assembly about the existence of undisclosed correspondence between the Judge and the Executive, Pugh set out, in an editorial of 30 May, to further investigate the matter. He strongly suspected that Lutwyche's petition to the Queen had been preceded by a series of communications to the government, calling into question the validity of the 1859 Order-in-Council, but that these objections had been ignored by Bowen. After consulting his own files and making enquiries from "a reliable authority" (probably Lutwyche himself), the editor was in a position to state that the Judge had "discharged his duty in his usual promptness and fearlessness" by unsuccessfully alerting Bowen only days after the appearance of the faulty Order-in-
Theophilus Pugh, first government printer and third Courier editor. (Courtesy OML, Neg. 40960)
Politics of Separation

Council. Some confusion still existed about the precise wording of the letter of January 1860 but the allegations were sufficiently accurate to force a reply from Herbert. On 12 June, the Colonial Secretary tabled Lutwyche's letter to Bowen on the franchise and accused the Courier of misrepresenting its scope and contents. A fortnight later, the Courier published it as a parliamentary paper and took issue with Herbert's charge of inaccuracy. Pugh printed the Lutwyche letter alongside his own May editorial, maintaining with vigour that the letter and his own allegations were substantially the same.33

Herbert, at odds with Pugh and the gallery over the Lutwyche correspondence and a Native Police Inquiry, brought matters to a head in early July when he hastily drafted a Parliamentary Privileges Bill with penalties of up to two years imprisonment for "the publication of any false, scandalous or derogatory libel of any member touching his conduct as a member".34 On the same day as Herbert's Bill was introduced, an advertisement appeared in the Courier calling for a public meeting to protest against those portions of the legislation "which threaten to curtail the liberty of the subject and to infringe upon the prerogatives of the Crown".35 In previous weeks, the Town Liberals had called a series of public gatherings in support of Lutwyche and presented a petition to both Houses of Parliament, commending the Judge for the prompt discharge of his duties. At the July protest meeting, Pugh was publicly acclaimed for his speech in defence of press freedom. Like his editorials, Pugh's carefully address appealed to the old Whig tradition of William Blackstone and Lord Brougham rather than to the philosophical radicalism of Bentham or Mill. Alluding to the British Libel Acts of 1819 rather than to past struggles in the southern colonies, Pugh described the Parliamentary Privilege Bill as "nothing less than an attempt to go back forty years".36 Another journalist to address the gathering was William Coote, a recent arrival from Victoria. More erudite and enigmatic than Pugh, Coote epitomised the restless talent of the colonial journalist.37 As co-editor of the Tasmanian Athenaeum (1853-54), he had made powerful enemies and spent fifteen months in prison for insolvency. Coote was better able to place the Queensland press debate in its colonial perspective, but the main point of appeal remained the British tradition where the Fourth Estate was firmly established. Other participants included James Garrick, Charles Lilley's new legal partner, Garrick subsequently attracted unfavourable comment from his professional superiors for his strenuous extra-parliamentary support of the judge.

Press and platform had become the vehicles for Liberal opposition to Herbert and the Executive. Nor was the agitation raised by Lutwyche and the Courier confined to Brisbane. Three hundred Ipswich residents signed a petition commending Lutwyche for his stand and deploring efforts to deprive the colony of his services. The Judge's regular visits to Circuit Courts in provincial centres had the effect of encouraging demonstrations in his favour. The rapid expansion of the country press fostered debate and helped to publicise the Town Liberal position. At Mary-
borough, Charles Hardie Buzacott published letters favourable to Lutwyche and supported the Courier against the Burnett Argus at Gayndah.38 In July 1861, only two weeks after the first number of Thomas White's Argus appeared at Gayndah, two more provincial newspapers, the Toowoomba Chronicle and the Rockhampton Bulletin began publication. The Toowoomba Chronicle lent its support to a local meeting organised by Dr. Otto Sachse on Lutwyche's behalf and referred to the Judge as "a persecuted individual entitled to our warmest sympathy".39 When the Darling Downs Gazette, which had recently shifted its operations from neighbouring Drayton, reaffirmed its opposition to the Town Liberal movement, the rival Chronicle came out strongly in favour of "that very able paper, the Courier".

In drafting the Parliamentary Privileges Bill, Herbert and Pring did not intend to tackle the Courier head-on but, as one squatting member of the Assembly put it, "to hold the power in terrorem over the press".40 Reactionary elements in the Council viewed the issue differently. In the previous session, Herbert had been able to restrain the ultras in the Council and sent back a Libel Bill emanating from the Upper House. Now Western Wood and Dr. Hobbs, two of the newly-appointed nominees, were seeking to extend the punitive scope of Herbert's Bill. Acting on Nicholson's advice, the Council had already rejected a Brisbane petition on behalf of Lutwyche. Before the new "Gagging Act", as it was popularly called, could become law, the Council embarked on its own confrontational course with the Judge and precipitated the first state trial in Queensland.

The Council charges of political partisanship and profligacy were heavily influenced by the Herald's ongoing campaign against Lutwyche. During the debate, one Queensland Councillor went so far as to cite the Herald as his reliable authority.41 The decision by both Queensland Houses to restore Lutwyche's full salary while deploiring his partisanship inspired the Herald to fresh diatribes against Lutwyche. As part of its offensive against Cowper and the Liberals, the Herald undertook a scathing review of Lutwyche's career:

The nomination of judges from factions in the ascendant without regard to their professional character, social habits or personal character renders appointments for life only another form of danger. Mr. Lutwyche, for instance, who very rarely held a brief, was picked by Mr. Cowper as a necessity and by rapid strides got possession of the Legislature of Queensland... A political judge is only less mischievous to a community than a profligate one.42

The Courier, goaded by the tactics of the Council, the Herald and its newspaper allies, set out in a sharply-worded leader of 30 July to refute the substance of the censure motion. It strenuously upheld Lutwyche's conduct in the face of his parliamentary critics and sought to rebuff the charge of political partisanship by referring to "the vehement and systematic" political involvement in the opposite camp of legal men like Alfred Stephen. The editorial,
berating the Councillors for their shabby treatment of Lutwyche, was deemed libellous and the Attorney-General was instructed to institute prosecution proceedings against the paper. With the state trial set for late August, the Courier declared itself "in no way disturbed" and republished the libellous article in full a week before the court proceedings.43

The strength of Lutwyche's connection with the Courier was such that Herbert, on the basis of information contained in the editorial, accused Lutwyche of penning the libellous article himself. In the Upper House and in a private letter to Macarthur, Charles Nicholson repeated Herbert's accusation:

Not content with the excellent place he had secured - he [Lutwyche] has ever since the establishment of the government - set himself up in fierce antagonism to the Executive. He began by impugning the legality of all the Acts of the Legislature on the grounds of the basis of election to the Assembly not be fixed on manhood suffrage. He connected himself with a violent radical newspaper and is without question the author of one libel which he himself had to try only a few days ago."44

The contentious question of authorship remains unsolved but it is interesting to note the strong suspicions of Lutwyche's opponents. Written with erudition and authority, the editorial in question epitomized the spirit of Junius, the anonymous British correspondent and constitutional reformer. The clandestine character of nineteenth-century journalism heightened speculation about the authorship of offending material. Official opponents of the colonial press not infrequently confused editor, printer, owner and correspondent in their haste to prosecute. The fact that the Courier article concerned was published as an editorial and not as a letter strongly suggests that Pugh rather than Lutwyche was immediately responsible. Although the article repeated some of the themes of Lutwyche's early speeches, one should not underestimate the literary capacity and reputation of Pugh himself. He was far more than a printer, as his subsequent elevation to the Magistracy suggests. Like many editors of his day, Pugh was well-educated and able to draw freely on British constitutional and theoretical sources to back up his arguments.

In seeking to refute the charge that the Judge had acted purely from personal gain, the Courier writer of 30 July rested his case on the Lutwyche letters of 1860, some of which had not yet appeared in print. The situation was shortly to be rectified for, within the week, the Bowen-Lutwyche correspondence was published in its columns and strengthened the editor's claims against the Council. With the disclosure of this earlier correspondence, the Courier transferred much of the original blame from Herbert to the Governor. One Courier writer, signing himself "Droit", openly accused the Governor of conspiring to disenfranchise Queensland colonists by failing to act upon or publicise the faulty Order-in-Council.45 The Queensland Guardian sought
to exonerate Bowen and defended the Council against the charge of seeking to destroy the liberty of the press. In Sydney, the *Empire*, after close scrutiny of the Bowen-Lutwyche letters, upheld the argument of the latest Courier writer against the *Herald-Guardian* axis. In addition to its scathing review of Bowen's conduct, the *Empire* was incensed at the action of the Queensland nominee chamber in seeking to prosecute "a newspaper which must be presumed to represent the opinion of a very large section of the community". The competitive law of the free market would, argued the editor, ensure that the *Courier* rather than the Council was a faithful reflection of public opinion.

With the local community highly polarised, the trial took place at the Brisbane Supreme Court on 23 August. The case lasted five hours and was punctuated with applause for the defendant. Pugh's defence had been entrusted to the firm of Lilley and Garrick. They argued that the *Courier* had done no more than its duty in seeking to refute the Council motion and Fullerton's repetition of the *Herald*'s insinuations against Lutwyche. The trial developed into a legal battle between Attorney-General, Ratcliffe Pring, and the Judge. Lutwyche used the publicity afforded by the trial to hit back at his critics, casting doubts on Pring's competence in Court and at the same time implying that the Legislative Council was not part of government. The Judge, in his long address to the jury, stated frankly that Pring had bungled his case by claiming a seditious rather than merely a defamatory libel. His Honour went on to state that the 1819 British Libel Act dealing with sedition was not merely a dead letter but inoperative for all but the Imperial legislature. Lutwyche's verdict relied heavily on William Blackstone, the author of the *Commentaries*, just as Francis Forbes' judgement had done during the dispute over the Darling Libel Acts. The jury, in accordance with Lutwyche's advice, quickly found for the *Courier*. Pugh, the hero of the hour, was chaired to the Sovereign Hotel and a public meeting called immediately to defray the *Courier*'s expenses.

That the Council action had failed to sever the connection between the Judge and the press was demonstrated a few days after the trial when the *Courier* published Lutwyche's confidential petition to the Queen. In the struggle to restore universal suffrage, the clash with the Council had been something of a diversion. The latest leaks confirmed that Governor Bowen, and not the Council, had been at the centre of the franchise affair. The *Queensland Guardian* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, defending Bowen, denounced the new development as undignified and highly insulting to the government. Despite attempts by Herbert to isolate the *Courier* in his despatches, local newspaper opinion was running with Lutwyche and Pugh. The strongest press opposition to Lutwyche emanated not from Queensland but from Sydney where the *Sydney Morning Herald* seized any opportunity to renew its vendetta against him. The *Herald* expressed its astonishment at the Judge's recent ruling and lamented the presence of a "political partisan" in elevated legal circles:
When in a small community the Legislature the Bar and the Press are divided between the Judge's friends and the Judge's enemies, we do not know how such a state of things can be terminated but by following a course full of public danger.50

In their lengthy official reports of the trial to the Secretary of State, Bowen and Herbert drew heavily on the Herald and Guardian accounts in an attempt to discredit Lutwyche. Bowen repeated the Council's slur against the Judge by endorsing the views of the Sydney Morning Herald and praising its editor as "the ablest political writer in New South Wales".51 For the time being, public support was sufficiently strong to postpone further moves against Lutwyche. In the following session, Herbert proposed significant concessions governing Upper House appointments, including elective members and annual retirement of one-quarter of the House. However, universal suffrage was still thwarted by the introduction of an educational test for Queensland electors. The Lutwyche Affair simmered throughout 1862 and flared again briefly in 1863 when the Judge published an electoral advertisement in the Courier, attacking Herbert and his Ministers as "agents of despotism cloaked in the guise of responsible government".52 Bowen considered the address to be nothing better than a political manifesto and was not averse to withdrawing the Judge's Commission. With the arrival of a Chief Justice from England, the Herald jeered its old enemy off the political stage. Encouraged by the deference of the Queensland Legislative Council, the Herald prided itself as an authority on Lutwyche. So effective had the Herald's long-standing opposition to Lutwyche been, that Governor Bowen cited the same editorial in his dispatch as representing "the general opinion of thinking men here".53

With the arrival and inauguration of James Cockle as Queensland's first Chief Justice in 1863, the Executive appeared to have settled accounts with its troublesome Judge. The Lutwyche Affair accelerated decisions in other areas. It was not coincidental that the first moves for an official Hansard came in 1861. One parliamentary shorthand appointment was gazetted but proved insufficient;54 it was not until 1864 that two more writers were employed, both from Melbourne. Although it was argued that the Courier lacked properly trained staff to cover parliament, there is evidence to contradict this assertion. At least one member of the Courier gallery, D.F.T. Jones, was an experienced parliamentary hand, trained in the offices of Gurney and Son.55 In the case of Queensland, the first colony to introduce a Hansard staff, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the introduction of official debates arose directly from dissatisfaction with the politics of the Courier.

One year after the state trial, Pugh left the Courier and ventured briefly into literary journalism with George Hall. Stephens' paper had lost its printing contract and Pugh had been passed over for the position of first government printer. Herbert continued to clash with Pugh over the inclusion in his Queensland Almanac of a revised sketch
of the colony touching on the problematic Order-in-Council and the limited franchise. In 1863, Pugh having temporarily eschewed journalism, stood for the Assembly seat of North Brisbane and narrowly defeated the Colonial Secretary. Herbert was forced to stand again for the constituency of West Moreton.

The 1863 elections confirmed the importance of the Courier as a vehicle for Brisbane Liberals intending to enter parliament. At the same time as Pugh, aided by the unexpected newspaper appeal of Lutwyche, won in North Brisbane, T.B. Stephens, the Courier proprietor, and Charles Lilley were returned for South Brisbane and Fortitude Valley respectively. The myth of the Fourth Estate, as exemplified by Lutwyche, extolled strong Liberal leadership. Pugh and Stephens, despite solid parliamentary service, could not provide these qualities as legislators. Two candidates, Charles Lilley and Arthur Macalister, emerged as possible ideological successors to Lutwyche. Both had taken part in the constitutional agitation of 1861. However Macalister's unscrupulous tactics, fits of pique and courting of the Executive soon left Lilley as sole heir to the enlightened Liberal tradition. Already a barrister in 1861, Lilley maintained ties with the Courier when he rose to positions of legal and political prominence later in the decade. This alliance was more defensive than offensive. In retrospect, editorial initiative had played some part in the events of 1861. After Pugh's departure, Stephens, the Courier proprietor, tried a series of editorial replacements but never obtained a writer of Pugh's calibre.

In Queensland, the limitations of the Bar and the failure of the Courier to expand on the scale of the southern metropolitan counterparts made the Liberal press concept increasingly problematic by the mid 1860's. After a promising start, the Town Liberal movement languished. Perhaps, the greatest obstacle to its development was the inability of town Liberals to secure a working majority in the Lower House. Without this power base, the Brisbane Liberals could exert little sustained pressure on the Council or on the Executive. Failure to restore universal suffrage deprived progressive politicians of much needed electoral support. More than J.D. Lang and other contemporaries, Lutwyche had identified the "deadly incubus" and risked his reputation combating it, but its effects were to be felt in Queensland for at least another decade.
Chapter 4

"Wilful Murder!": Native Police Operations in the Settled Districts 1860–63

The findings of Chapter One, devoted to the first decade of Native Police operations, suggest that by the mid 1850's, newspaper debate over legal protection for Aborigines had been overshadowed by the northern settlers' concern with the efficacy of the Native Police. Reorganization of the Force under Walker's successors was not without problems but the squatters had gained a greater say in its management and deployment. That the massacre of whites at Hornet Bank in 1857 did not immediately stimulate further newspaper controversy over its operations was due as much to the geography of the frontier as to the squatters' political ascendancy. Press coverage of racial disturbances varied according to an erratic law of newspaper expansion. The relative slowness with which provincial papers were established at Wide Bay and central Queensland contributed to public ignorance of the circumstances surrounding the Hornet Bank and Cullin-la-Ringo murders, at the same time obscuring the true scale of white reprisals. Indeed the belated appearance of journals like the Maryborough Chronicle (1860), the Burnett Argus (1861) and the Rockhampton Bulletin (1861) may well have been a direct result of prolonged racial tension in the districts concerned, since reports of casualties tended to discourage an influx of white labour.

For the press historian, systematic explanation of racial conflict is further inhibited by the fact that, with the advent of Separation, the Queensland press became increasingly parochial, preoccupied for the most part with town affairs rather than with disturbing developments on the vast frontier. Accordingly, this study of Native Police operations confines itself to an analysis of newspaper reports in the settled districts and explores the pattern of anonymous authorship outlined in Chapter One. It should not be forgotten that the parochial perspective of the colonial press could work to its advantage by providing a sharper focus and clearer definition of topical issues. If post-Separation papers failed to report the northern frontier as consistently as their predecessors, they were nevertheless able to formulate a more damaging critique of the Native Police than had previously appeared and helped precipitate what was to be the most intensive newspaper campaign of its kind in nineteenth-century Queensland.
Consistent with a more critical assessment of frontier methods was a renewed interest in the longstanding issue of legal protection for Aborigines. In reviving this topic, the town press was not only exhibiting defiance for the squatters but also responding to a series of fundamental administrative changes within the colony. A new wave of magisterial appointments, an imported British Executive and a Supreme Court, all fostered a greater awareness of legal process and sharper scrutiny of police methods. Nor is it coincidental that renewed press debate over the Force reached a climax in the same parliamentary session as the Lutwyche Affair, examined in the previous Chapter; it will be argued that the post-Separation critique of the Native Police constituted an integral part of the Town Liberal challenge to Executive and squattocracy alike.

The role of the leading metropolitan paper, the Brisbane Courier, was crucial in co-ordinating and articulating the Liberal offensive. What began as a series of separate provincial incidents—the Maryborough police raid of February 1860, the Fanny Briggs murder of November 1860, and the Fassifern and Manumbar shootings of December 1860 and March 1861—developed into a cohesive journalistic exercise to provide a measure of protection and security for the substantial numbers of Queensland Aborigines dwelling in or around the larger white settlements. A feature of press activity during 1860-61 was the unexpected co-operation between provincial and metropolitan journals (Maryborough Chronicle/Brisbane Courier), the ability of the Courier's country correspondents (Ipswich, Wide Bay) to contribute timely information on local developments and the consistent attempts of editors to exploit rather than simply record divisions within the squattocracy over Native Police management.

With the majority of the 120 strong Mounted Police Force concentrated in the Leichhardt and Maranoa districts by the close of the 1850's, the operations of the remaining Native Police detachments in and around the older settlements were most vulnerable to press scrutiny. The volatile Maryborough community (population 500 in 1860) was destined to provide the impetus for a fresh campaign over the Native Police. Along with a history of racial tension, the settlement gained a reputation in Brisbane and Ipswich papers for bitter internal feuds and quarrels involving public officers. In addition to growing dissatisfaction over the performance of its Police Magistrate and Lands Commissioner, Arthur Halloran, the high profile of the Native Police at Maryborough became the subject of considerable controversy during 1860. The proximity to the township of the Second Mounted Division, under Lieutenant John O'Connell Bligh, encouraged the continuation of a pattern of intervention and dispersal in and around Maryborough. On 3 Feb. 1860, after a spate of robberies around the township, Bligh led his detachment of six black troopers and two white officers on an early morning raid against blacks camped in the streets of Maryborough. Although the Lieutenant carried only two arrest warrants, the raid quickly developed into a full-scale assault as the troopers fired an estimated 40 to 50 shots at the fleeing blacks. This punitive operation,
Map 2 Maryborough District and Township, showing trajectory of Native Police raid of 3 February 1860.
witnessed by a large crowd of townspeople adhered closely to the pattern of retribution outlined by previous observers. After numbers of escaping Aborigines were driven into the Mary River, Bligh and several other participants gave pursuit in a boat. Drawing his pistol, the officer fired four or five shots at the swimming figures before finding his mark. With the cowed native population sheltering under the wharves or behind the stores, the Native Police withdrew leaving several dead or wounded.

The February incident and its aftermath were the subject of comment in Maryborough's first newspaper, the Wide Bay and Burnett Times, published by Thomas White on 6 March 1860. A correspondent signing himself "Maryborough Man" denounced the shooting in strong terms. The short-lived Wide Bay and Burnett Times did little more to draw attention to Native Police methods. However, with the news of a public meeting to congratulate Bligh and canvass subscriptions for a "suitable and useful present", the Empire's correspondent expressed disgust and outrage at the resolution and ironically congratulated Bligh and his troopers for shooting an unarmed runaway in the back. Among those suspected of penning this sharp attack was George Lang, a resident Brisbane journalist. Lang's regular correspondence of 1860 to his father places the question of authorship beyond doubt. In a letter dated 6 March, only three days after the Empire's critical article appeared, George Lang confirmed that he was writing the regular Brisbane column for the Empire and added that "the Empires are greatly devoured here and the people look out for my letters which already have some effect".

More influential than G.D. Lang and equally outspoken on racial matters was Richard Bingham Sheridan, Maryborough's newly-appointed Customs Officer and Water Police Magistrate. Sheridan was cast in the mould of W.A. Duncan at Moreton Bay - diligent, educated and liberal. Indeed, as a member of the Moreton Bay Customs Department, Sheridan had rubbed shoulders with Duncan and served with him on an Education Committee which expressed concern for the plight and protection of the Aborigines. During his seven years at Moreton Bay, Sheridan distinguished himself by his firm but humane treatment of the Ningy Ningy tribe, a war-like people who inhabited the coast from Sandgate to Bribie Island. When he arrived at Maryborough in 1860 Sheridan took the trouble to meet Aborigines employed on the wharves, in the larger stores and at the boiling-down establishment. For newcomers like R.B. Sheridan, the Native Police presence in the township was brutal and offensive. Sheridan considered that the zealous Bligh had exceeded his duty and, in his judicial capacity as Water Police Magistrate, urged an Inquiry into the incident. His colleagues on the Bench, however took a different view and came to the officer's defence. A public meeting, convened three days after the shooting, upheld Bligh's methods and voiced its determination to resort to vigilante methods if necessary in defence of private property. Unable to carry out a local inquiry, Sheridan referred the matter to Brisbane for further investigation. As a pioneer in northern Victoria and a former pastoral superintendent, Sheridan could claim first-hand
frontier experience comparable with that of the squatters. When called to testify before the Select Committee of 1861, Sheridan claimed that he had never been assaulted by an Aborigine and described the dark race in complimentary terms as "nature's gentlemen".9

Sheridan's early attempts to improve Maryborough race relations aroused suspicion that he had written to the press condemning the Native Police. The vehicle for these anonymous accusations was the newly established Maryborough Chronicle which appeared in November 1860. After town merchants withdrew their financial backing for Thomas White's Wide Bay and Burnett Times, Charles Hardie Buzacott arrived from Sydney and pledged somewhat nervously to print all correspondence on important local matters. The removal of Halloran to Warwick, a month later, brought only temporary relief to the divided community. Buzacott was obliged to publicize the bitter disputes which broke out between his readers and confessed, in his reminiscences, that he had printed dozens of letters in the Chronicle which would normally have been suppressed.10 This volatile literary activity during the post-Separation years was to confirm Maryborough's quarrelsome reputation in the south and to invest the Chronicle with notoriety in official circles. When a flurry of anonymous letters appeared in the Chronicle's early issues censuring the Native Police, Bligh accused Sheridan and other leading residents of penning these contributions. Like his other family members,11 Sheridan was no stranger to journalism and appeared willing to avail himself of the press in his capacity as an official.12 Other suspected authors were William Henry Walsh and Arthur Melville. Walsh's press opposition to Frederick Walker and the Native Police was well known. Melville, with Robert Travis, operated the largest store in Maryborough and was a respected employer of local Aborigines, one of whom had been killed in the Bligh raid. According to Buzacott, the Chronicle editor, Travis was also "a very smart manager of the blacks... he treated the blacks well and could do anything with them".13

For storekeepers like Melville and Travis, who benefited from Aboriginal labour, the presence of Native Police in the township was provocative and damaging to their own interests. The other important influence in the settlement were the publicans, most of whom took the side of Police Magistrate Halloran and the Native Police against the storekeepers. A willingness on the part of officers to condone illicit liquor trading around the settlement may help to account for the sympathies of Maryborough publicans. One feature of the Force mentioned during an 1860 Police Inquiry was the tendency of officers and troopers to over indulge in alcohol and cause trouble when stationed near the towns.14 Certainly, the publicans appeared on better terms with Bligh and his men than the more respectable merchants. Among the most vociferous opponents of the Aborigines was George ("Cocky") Howard. Howard, who belonged to an important pioneering family, attacked philanthropic "croakers" who sheltered town blacks.15 At the public meeting in favour of Bligh, Howard had proposed that subscription be raised to provide the Lieutenant with a "suitable and useful present".
The handsome gift for Bligh was a sword, decorated with embossed flowers and bearing an inscription which commended the officer for "his services in suppressing the outrages of the blacks". When Bligh was called to Rockhampton by the Commandant in anticipation of promotion, his sword remained on display in the Maryborough township and became the subject of acrimonious press comment. A cousin of Maurice O'Connell and general favourite among the squatters, Bligh was emerging as the probable successor to the retiring Commandant E.V. Morisset. His leadership claim as the longest-serving officer in the Force would be further strengthened by the unexpected tribute of the Maryborough populace.

The insertion of an advertisement in the Chronicle of early 1861 inviting the public to inspect the sword for John O'Connell Bligh brought a series of sharp rejoinders. Storekeepers funding the Chronicle had directed the editor, Buzacott, to publish communications critical of the Force. The new editor had not witnessed the Police raid of the previous February but several of his contributors made pointed reference to the methods employed by Bligh and his troopers on that occasion. "Red Indian" ironically acclaimed Bligh as "a very good killer of the blacks" and blamed the officers, Bligh, Murray and Phibbs for ignoring all doctrines of conciliation in their dealings with the local tribes. Bligh, in his new Rockhampton post, was goaded into replying to his Maryborough critics; he attacked "Red Indian"'s letter as "worthy of a savage" and promised to use the sword on him should they perchance meet. In his defence, Bligh acknowledged he had fired on Aborigines during the raid on the township but only after he had used every exertion to apprehend them. Bligh wrote again to the Chronicle thanking Howard and his supporters for their gift and challenging his anonymous accusers to confront him openly.

The most damning of these critics was undoubtedly "Sword of Damocles" who had compiled a long list of documented charges against the officer and urged him not to accept the sword until he had satisfactorily exonerated himself. "Sword of Damocles" was able to name the town Aborigine killed by Bligh and claimed that an old man had been marched out of town and shot. The precision of his letter bore the mark of a magistrate and cast a cloud over the officer's career. Bligh's belligerent reply was not sufficient to diffuse the matter. Intermingled with the charges of Native Police brutality were allegations of mistreating Aboriginal women, firstly against the troopers and secondly against their officers. "Sword of Damocles" alleged that officers, when intoxicated, molested the "gins" of their troopers. In the press, the issue of promiscuity, everpresent in race relations of the period, was initially subservient to the question of dispersal, perhaps because of the regularity with which police and townspeople alike visited the fringe camps for sexual gratification.

Abuse of Aboriginal women by members of the Force created far less concern than abuse of white women. The Maryborough episode had confirmed the low social standing of the Native Police; the rape and murder of white Rockhampton
woman Fanny Briggs, at the same period served to generalise and increase opposition to the Mounted Police presence. Well-known in Rockhampton, Fanny Briggs had been lured into the scrub and sexually assaulted by her murderers. Significantly, the informants in this case were local Aboriginal women who themselves complained of having been molested by the troopers. Only weeks before the Rockhampton murder, a Police Committee had scotched complaints of lax behaviour around the towns; it found the Force "very efficient" and reaffirmed a preference for black troopers in favour of white. The presence of a Native Police detachment on the south bank of the Fitzroy River, in close proximity to Rockhampton, was justified on the basis that the coastal scrub afforded the Aborigines protection in their harrassment of the white population.

Aggravated by Hornet Bank, racial tensions at Rockhampton (pop. 700-800 in 1860) were comparable with the troubled contemporary situation at Maryborough. In the absence of an impartial magistracy or any local journal, Native Police and squatters carried out a bloody campaign of extermination in and around the town. If the Maryborough populace oscillated between hostility to officers and troopers, Rockhamptonites adopted a more racist position and blamed Aborigines in or out of uniform, for the latest crime. The Maryborough Chronicle, reporting the "Dreadful Outrage" and "Murder at Rockhampton", confirmed that "the late atrocity has embittered the at no time friendly feeling of the white population for the blacks of the district". J.T.S. Bird, the Rockhampton journalist and author of the town's early history, combined a denunciation of the local tribes with criticism of the black troopers stationed nearby. An acquaintance of the local Native Police Lieutenant, Bird nevertheless acknowledged that:

The troopers undoubtedly took a fiendish delight in shooting the hapless Aborigines ... From one point of view, it is horrible to think of the helpless blacks flying from the ruthless avenger, who indiscriminately killed young and old and, at times, women and children though this is often denied.

In the absence of a Rockhampton journal, southern papers like the Maryborough Chronicle and the Brisbane Courier gave ample publicity to the Fanny Briggs murder. Had the Rockhampton Bulletin, brought out a few months later by Buzacott's brother appeared any earlier, it may well have taken a similar line to the Chronicle. From the growing dissatisfaction with the Native Police and with the 1860 Police Inquiry, two distinct remedies emerged. While provincial detractors favoured replacement of the black police by a more disciplined white force, some metropolitan critics, based around the Brisbane Courier, were advocating a more radical solution. Publishing official correspondence relating to the pursuit of the suspected Rockhampton murderers, the Courier taxed Morisset and his fellow officers with gross inefficiency and called for the abolition of the frontier force:

The Commandant is evidently anxious to shield the force from the opprobrium now so general-
ly and so justly cast upon it but we can find nothing in his letter which would induce us to retract the opinion we have already expressed as to the necessity of disbanding the force.23

Calls for the abolition of the Native Police were part of a wider strategy undertaken by Nonconformist editors and clergy during 1860 to ameliorate the conditions of Aborigines in south-east Queensland. Of the first three Courier editors, only Charles Lilley had put a case for the Aborigines. Pugh, who was Stephens' editor in 1860, had been inclined to uphold the claims of the squatters before Separation. Stephens, as the high-minded proprietor of the Brisbane paper, must be given some credit for impressing his Liberal racial views upon the paper. In mid 1860, a long series of letters addressed to Sir George Bowen appeared in the Courier, urging that official action be taken on behalf of "Our Aborigines".24 The author "Philanthropist" claimed considerable knowledge of the local Aborigines and expressed his conviction that, without timely government support, moves for a Queensland mission would founder. The same author proposed that with a small official grant, a settlement could be established outside one of the larger towns with a view to providing Aborigines with moral training and basic agricultural skills.

Apart from the press, which they used to revive interest in the condition of Aborigines, town philanthropists like the Langs were able to gain a series of personal interviews with Governor Bowen during 1860, at which they were free to raise issues like education, immigration and missionary work. The limited knowledge of Bowen and Herbert concerning the Aborigines was at once an obstacle and a source of inspiration to the Langs. As new arrivals, the rulers of the colony had not yet adopted the strong racial prejudices harboured by many of the older colonists. Bowen, who expressed some interest in this subject, had undoubtedly read the relevant chapters of J.D. Lang's Cook­land. How far the press had gone in convincing the Governor of the needs of the colony's black population is uncertain. J.C.H. Gill, in his article on Bowen and the Aborigines, describes the first Governor as "one of the few pleaders for a more enlightened policy" but provides little evidence of concerted action in this direction.25

If Bowen's despatches exhibited "a glimmer of social conscience" towards the dispossessed race, R.G.W. Herbert's writings on the same subject were remarkable for their indifference and ruthless expediency.26 During the first parliamentary session, the young Colonial Secretary made no effort to legislate for or to vote money on the Aborigines behalf. Indeed, by 1861, Herbert had developed strong political and pecuniary ties with the squatters which helped confirm his support for a Native Police and estranged him from the outspoken Nonconformist press. When the main camp of the Brisbane blacks, situated on the river at New Farm was attacked and burnt by white police in November 1860, Herbert was one of a number of influential North Brisbane landholders suspected of ordering the raid.27 Press militancy over the Native Police during 1861 was partly a
response to a series of racial incidents near the towns (the Brisbane raid, the Maryborough incidents and the Rockhampton murder) and partly a rejection of Herbert's style of closed government whereby Native Police officers were held responsible solely to the Colonial Secretary's department for their actions. Moreover, Herbert was slow to acknowledge the growing importance of the town press. When it became clear that neither the Colonial Secretary nor the squatter-dominated legislature would make any concessions to extra-parliamentary demands for an Aboriginal institution, the Nonconformists used their monopoly of the press to precipitate a lively debate over police violence and dubious legal procedures.

In direct contrast with parliament's refusal to fund a missionary initiative was the 1861 Assembly vote of £14,000 for Native Police equipment, barracks, and wages. Although the 120 black troopers who made up the bulk of the force were poorly paid at 5d per day, the white officers were well remunerated. First Lieutenants (3) received £300 p.a., Second Lieutenants (8) £200 p.a. and Camp Sergeants (9) £100 p.a.28 Linked with financial objections to the Force was the fact that, unlike the Cape Rifles and the New Zealand mounted detachments, the Queensland Native Police were not funded by the Imperial authorities. That no legislation had been passed in Queensland recognising the Native Police as an official wing of the police force exposed it to the charge of acting as a legally anomalous and sinister paramilitary body. Amid growing speculation about the retirement of the Commandant, E.V. Morriset, the Maryborough Chronicle printed a rumour that the Native Police were shortly to be reorganised and its officers reclassified as chief constables subject to the magistracy. Such an arrangement would at least have had the salutary effect of bringing Native Police officers in settled districts under the closer scrutiny of the courts. Thus a prompt magisterial inquiry, following the Maryborough raid, may well have proved more satisfactory than the guarded response emanating from the Commandant and Colonial Secretary. Herbert, on the basis of a petition by 84 of Bligh's Maryborough supporters, expressed his satisfaction that the officer had "evinced the confidence and respect of the people of the district".29 Nevertheless, at a time when Supreme Court Judge Alfred Lutwyche had discerned serious contradictions in the Queensland constitution, the arbitrary violence of the Native Police was a weak point in the colony's infant administration. The Native Police campaign of 1861 may be seen with the Lutwyche affair as part of the politics of reorganising and centralising the judiciary, parliament and bureaucracy of a new colony. With the noted exception of the Courier, which galvanised militant opposition to Herbert on both the above issues, Lutwyche and his metropolitan supporters like Lilley made little direct contribution to the race debate. Rather, it was a combination of Nonconformist press and provincial judiciary which kept this longstanding issue to the fore.

In addition to complaints by high-minded townspeople, the Native Police caused some dissatisfaction in military and squatting circles. Since the Indian Mutiny of 1857,
there had been considerable reluctance in military and landed circles throughout the Empire to arm and train indigenous peoples. Imperial propaganda helped to create a situation in which Queensland's uniformed blacks were regarded with as much or more distrust than wild blacks. Among the local exponents of the argument against "Sepoys" were W.H. Walsh and Maurice O'Connell, a distinguished relative of Lieutenant Bligh and future President of the Queensland Legislative Council. Governor Bowen, who remained lamentably ignorant of Native Police methods during his early years in the colony, was another who favoured increasing white personnel in the police force. In the Wide Bay and Maranoa districts, feeling against the black police had intensified among squatters after the disbanding of Frederick Walker's private detachment of Aboriginal troopers. Hired by pastoralists to punish the perpetrators of Hornet Bank, these recruits were believed to have mingled with local tribes and other troopers, creating disaffection and organising attacks on pastoral properties. The Fanny Briggs incident of 1860 revived suspicion in the press concerning the trustworthiness of the remaining black troopers. In following months, the Rockhampton Bulletin was more inclined to attribute serious aggression against the white northern population to Native Police defectors than to local tribes. A series of letters published in the Moreton Bay Courier under the title, "One Who has seen too much of the Native Police" were identifiable as the work of a Port Curtis squatter; the correspondent claimed a precise knowledge of Native Police personnel and their movements. Indignant at the Fanny Briggs murder, he equated the troopers with "the mutineers and wretches of India" and expressed the firm conviction that with "half the number of white troopers commanded by decent officers will do the work ten times better and with half the bloodshed". In keeping with the British military outlook, ill-disciplined troopers reflected on their officers. The Courier's squatter contributor taxed the Commandant and Lieutenant Powell with neglect of duty; Powell had not initially been aware that his own men had committed the murder. The officer was held responsible in the first instance, for failing to accompany his men in search of the murderers and secondly, for ineffective attempts to apprehend his own troopers once their guilt had been established.

The Courier correspondent's claim that the Native Police had become the subject of intense dissatisfaction in the northern districts, was challenged by Phillip F. Sellheim, a close friend and future relative of the Commandant. On behalf of his fellow pastoralists, Sellheim affected indifference to press criticism emanating from the settled districts and dismissed Morriset's latest critic as "a theorist far beyond his depth". During the 1850's, prominent Leichhardt squatters like the Archers and Leith-Hays had consistently supported the Force against its Wide Bay critics. The Courier editor was now able to cast some doubt on their unanimity by pointing out to Sellheim that the correspondent concerned was himself a resident of the northern squatting districts. Over a period of several months, a polemic between Sellheim and squatters opposing
the force took place in the Courier’s correspondence column, with the latter maintaining that "a European force could be established of a far more reliable and effective character than the one now cherished".34 The participation of squatters in the Native Police controversy gave added weight to the campaign of the Liberal press for the reform. At Maryborough, C.H. Buzacott renewed the call for a well-disciplined efficient force of white police. Well before an inquiry was announced, the Chronicle concluded:

The question as to the efficiency of the Native Police has been settled most decisively in the negative; in truth it is not organised at all. Leaving out of the account the demoralizing influence which the trade of a butcher of human beings has upon the mind, it is well known that the European officers have not the slightest control over their troopers. The Native Police has been tried and it has failed; what can be done but to try something else?35

The diverse contribution of squatter correspondents, Nonconformist editors and town magistrates to the Native Police debate was exemplified during the Fassifern Affair. In early 1861, the Courier printed a series of complaints against mounted detachments patrolling West Moreton and south Wide Bay. The alleged shootings coincided with the Bunya season, an important traditional summer feast which the tribes of south-east Queensland were struggling to preserve. The first incident, involving Lieutenant Wheeler’s Moreton Bay detachment, took place on the property of John Hardie and Edward Wienholt on Christmas Day of 1860. Wheeler,36 who had been patrolling the districts immediately north of Brisbane (Bald Hills, Sandgate), had switched his operations to the south coast and West Moreton over the Bunya season. Three Aborigines, two of them old men, were found dead on Fassifern and became the subject of a coroner’s report and magisterial inquiry instigated by Dr. Henry Challinor. A staunch Congregationalist and Lang Liberal, Challinor conducted a thorough investigation which traced the incident unmistakedly to Lieutenant Wheeler and his men. However, when he urged Ipswich lawyer and Attorney-General, Ratcliffe Pring, to prefer charges against the officer, Pring refused on the grounds that he lacked evidence "of a direct character". Shortly afterwards, Challinor sent a copy of his letter to Pring and the full magisterial proceedings to papers at Ipswich and Brisbane, in order "to inform the public that I was no party to the non-further prosecution of the case".37 During the furore which ensued, the press took much of the credit for enlightening the public in the matter. The North Australian published the documents without comment but the Courier’s Ipswich correspondent went so far as to leak the contents of Pring’s reply, gleaned in private conversation with Challinor.

The Courier correspondent responsible for publicising the Fassifern case was Charles F. Chubb, a lawyer and colleague of Challinor on the Ipswich Bench. Chubb’s disparaging comments about "the pet protective force" of the
Map 3 Moreton and Wide Bay pastoral districts 1860–61, showing Native Police camps and operations, settlements and pastoral stations.
Colonial Secretary and his refusal to distinguish between "the wanton murder of a black and that of a white" revived the press debate over legal protection and sharpened the Courier's quarrel with the Executive. The Queensland Guardian, a new Brisbane journal edited by Governor Bowen's private doctor, William Hobbs, undertook a laboured defence of the Attorney-General and the Native Police. A social Darwinist and staunch supporter of the Herbert Ministry, Dr. Hobbs devoted a series of long editorials to the Aborigines in an attempt to establish their inferiority before the law. In effect, the Courier's rival was not arguing for Wheeler's innocence but simply articulating a view, popular among Queensland squatters, that no white man who shot an Aborigine, in self-defence or in sport, should be exposed to trial or sentence. With the Guardian warning against any repetition of the Myall Creek executions, C.H. Buzacott of the Maryborough Chronicle set out to expose Hobbs' theorizing. A notable feature of the 1861 press debate in Queensland was the clarity with which conflicting interpretations of British law pertaining to Aborigines were set out. Along with T.B. Stephens' Courier, the Maryborough Chronicle refused to rule out a possible repetition of the Myall Creek trials in Queensland.

A fortnight after press debate over the Fassifern shootings, the Courier claimed to have uncovered further evidence of "wilful murder" by Native Police in the Wide Bay district. The incident, involving a detachment under the jurisdiction of Lieutenant John Murray, had also taken place at the time of the Bunya festival. In this instance, however, the complaint emanated not from a town magistrate but from an established squatter family, the Mortimers, who had occupied south Wide Bay runs since 1848. A long advertisement bearing their names appeared in a Courier of mid-March, addressed "to the Officer in command of the party of Native Police who shot and wounded some blacks on the station of Manumbar on Sunday 10th instant". The practice of printing ex-parte statements as advertisements represented an important, if controversial, contribution by the mid-century press. Although the Courier's editorial estimate of the victims was exaggerated, its allegations proved to be substantially correct and bore a striking similarity to the previous incident involving Lieutenant Wheeler. The authors alluded ironically to a sporting excursion by the troopers during which several of their station blacks had been wounded and a number of others killed, mostly "feeble old men some of them apparently not less than eighty years of age". The Mortimer's advertisement was reproduced in the Maryborough Chronicle of the same month and aroused further ill-feeling between the journal and Bligh's successor, Lieutenant Murray. Murray had not been the officer present at the Manumbar shootings, although he had placed the detachment concerned under the charge of Second Lieutenant Rudolph Morriset, a newly-commissioned officer and brother of the Commandant. Herbert, sceptical about the allegations, wrote to the Mortimers to confirm particulars. Their reply indicated the officer responsible was indeed Lieutenant Morriset. An inquiry into the Force now appeared probable but its scope and membership
remained unclear until mid-May, when a Parliamentary Committee was announced, composed of Darling Downs squatters overwhelmingly favourable to the Ministry and to the methods of the existing system.

Those newspapers which had entertained a brief moment of optimism and hope for reform gave vent to disappointment and anger at the Committee membership. The *Courier*, claimed that the nine out of ten townspeople who supported its editorial statements had no say whatever in the Committee's deliberations. Even the *North Australian*, a moderate Catholic paper which had done little to further the cause of reform, considered the body unrepresentative of public opinion and suggested that the government add at least three more members holding views directly opposed to those of the squatting majority.44 One town representative eager to participate was Henry Challinor. Challinor who had resigned his post as Ipswich coroner in order to enter the Assembly was not chosen. Instead, he was ordered to appear before the Committee as a witness. The *Courier* deplored the exclusion of Challinor and roundly accused the government of stacking the Committee. Its outspoken editorials on the subject provoked a strong response in parliament. Along with fellow Committee members, Watts and Ferrett, McKenzie supported moves to put "a stop to the violent articles which too often appear in some of the public journals".45 In the opinion of the Chairman and his colleagues the function of the colonial newspaper should remain what it had been prior to Separation - that of reporting Aboriginal depredations. The emergent town press with its moral and legal objections to the Native Police force, its outspoken editorials, its publication of sensitive official correspondence and letters regularly attacking the Force's operations, was seen as scurrilous and sensationalist by the majority of the landed class. P.F. Sellheim summed up the contemptuous reaction of the squatter establishment to anonymous newspaper critics when he wrote:

> To become personal and insulting under the secure cover of an anonymous signature and thereby depriving his antagonist of awarding him desserts is deemed among honourable men, mean and cowardly.46

The investigation proved to be an inquisitorial and onesided affair. The Committee was at pains to establish that recent newspaper reports of atrocities, particularly the *Courier* accounts, were exaggerated and uninformed. When confronted with evidence to the contrary, it stressed the geographical limitations and narrow knowledge of the witnesses. This technique was used to discredit the testimony of townspeople like Challinor but it was used equally against squatter critics like John Mortimer when the latter contended, contrary to Committee conviction, that Wide Bay tribes were no more troublesome during the Bunya season than at other times.47

The involvement of squatters on both sides of the Native Police question meant that the racial debate of 1861 was never simply a contest between town and country. Yet the failure of renegade squatters like William Henry Walsh and Alfred Brown to substantiate their charges at the Native
Police Inquiry was a setback to the cause of the Liberal press and the town movement. In a report which contradicted a considerable portion of the evidence, the Chairman, Robert Ramsay McKenzie upheld the use of native troopers and blamed abuses on individual officers rather than on the system itself. As a large landholder in the Burnett and Leichhardt districts, he used his influence on the Native Police Committee to protect his personal investments. Lieutenants Wheeler and Murray received no more than a mild rebuke over the Fassifern shootings, while Lieutenant Bligh was actually commended despite the Maryborough episode. It must be emphasized that those involved were senior officers of Native Police and leading contenders for the vacant post of Commandant. In the light of their subsequent promotion through the Force and into the ranks of the provincial magistracy, it is difficult not to conclude that the spate of shootings in the settled districts during 1860-61 were part of a competition between officers to prove themselves in the field and to gain promotion. For their part, the squatter Committee and the Executive appeared determined to shield the officers from the courts, regardless of the accuracy of the serious charges brought against them.

Historians generally agree that the 1861 Select Committee was an important one for Queensland's race relations but rarely indicate the part played by the press in bringing on the inquiry. Charles Rowley's conclusion in The Destruction of Aboriginal Society that the Committee was a squatter victory does not alter the fact that the colony's leading newspaper kept the issue before the public and strenuously opposed its findings. The momentum of the press campaign, the interplay of editorial and correspondence, of provincial reporting and metropolitan commentary are invariably neglected. In part, this neglect stems from a narrow view of the press as a passive receptacle of information rather than an active reforming agent. Even the most competent historians of race appear reluctant to acknowledge that a press campaign had preceded the Native Police Committee. Gordon Reid, despite some excellent writing on the frontier, understates the "Sword of Damocles" incident at Maryborough and confuses Maryborough and Rockhampton developments. Similarly, Rowley, mentions Challinor and the case for legal protection of blacks without making any reference to the Fassifern leak or the press polemic over the Attorney-General. At variance with this traditional neglect of the press is a hegemonic view which attributes to newspapers an active part in shaping opinion, yet one which invariably bolsters the process of dispossession. Acting on this assumption, R.V. Hall, in his article "Racism and the Press", attempts to establish an historical parallel between the virulent Sydney Morning Herald campaign against the Myall Creek sentences and the Courier performance of 1861. Hall's analysis proves clumsy and misleading for, while the issues raised in the two campaigns may be similar, the solutions offered are strikingly different.

In contrast with pre-Separation developments analysed in Chapter One, this study confirms a sharp shift away from ruling values in the Queensland press of 1860-61. Nor is the close correspondence which Hall attempts to establish
between ideology and newspaper status entirely predictable. In the case of the Courier's 1861 offensive, we are confronted with a situation in which a leading newspaper (unlike the Herald of 1838) contests rather than supports a reigning ideology. The second Queensland parliament saw the Courier engaging the Legislative Council over its ill-treatment of Lutwyche and the Assembly over the Native Police. This lively contest between press and government may be regarded as the climax of a premature Town Liberal challenge to the growing alliance of Executive and squattocracy. The radical interlude following Separation invites speculation about the power of the press and helps to clarify the limits of editorial influence in the mid 19th century. For while the colony's leading journal was able to precipitate a Select Committee over the Native Police and a state trial over the Lutwyche Affair, it proved incapable, in the face of a reactionary legislature and an entrenched Executive, of bringing about significant constitutional or racial reform.

For most historians, the role of the press during the Native Police Committee has been overshadowed by the public outcry over the Cullin-la-Ringo Murders of November 1861, a dramatic sequel to Hornet Bank in which the Wills family, squatting on the Nogoa River, were murdered by central Queensland blacks. The Wills tragedy did not influence the Native Police Committee since the report had been submitted to parliament several months previously. It did however accelerate the Committee's decision to move detachments closer to the frontier and away from the towns. Bligh, now in the position of Commandant, took a major part in punitive operations against central Queensland tribes. In a repetition of the Hornet Bank aftermath, squatters and black police launched a massive retaliatory drive against Aborigines from Peak Downs to Rockhampton. One northern detachment was reported to have slaughtered 70 to 80 blacks in a single operation, relenting only when their ammunition ran out.\textsuperscript{92} Irrespective of town opinion, smaller punitive raids were to continue on the outskirts of Rockhampton for the rest of the decade.

The racial hatred precipitated by Cullin-la-Ringo forced the Liberal press into a more defensive posture concerning the Aborigines. Earlier in that year, the Queensland Guardian had formulated the pragmatic principle that Native Police officers were above the law in their dealings with the blacks. Now the Darling Downs Gazette, a paper formerly edited by pioneer pressman A.S. Lyon, issued a staunch defence of Native Police methods and accused the Courier of seeking to place Aborigines in a position of legal superiority:

\begin{quote}
The Native Police is a sham; they never do anything with the blacks but shoot them. What on earth else were they intended for? ... It is a crime for a black man to shoot a black man; but for a black man to shoot a white man is justifiable homicide in repelling invasion. That's about the doctrine of the Courier.\textsuperscript{93}
\end{quote}

In the face of renewed attacks by conservative local
journals, the *Courier* reaffirmed its opposition to "blind revenge and spurious Christianity". If Ipswich and Toowoomba papers were consistently hostile to Aborigines even after Separation, Brisbane and Maryborough journals had shown a more conciliatory spirit. Amid reports that Bligh and his troopers were "doing their work", the *Maryborough Chronicle* commented ruefully:

> There is no satisfaction, no extra security, no restriction in such a proceeding, and in all sincerity we raise the question once again. Is it the best - is it the only course?54

The existence of an established press in Queensland by 1861 suggests that the Cullin-la-Ringo tragedy might have provoked more intensive newspaper discussion than Hornet Bank. Unlike the outcry of 1857, however, press debate no longer merely revolved around matters of police organisation and strategy. Exonerated by the squatter Committee, the Native Police were now better organised and more highly motivated than the demoralised force which had attempted to quell the Dawson blacks. At the same time, complaints of Native Police aggression from stations to the south-east of Cullin-la-Ringo continued to appear in the correspondence columns of the *Courier, Maryborough Chronicle* and *Rockhampton Bulletin*. One important correspondent who had not appeared before the Committee was the former Commandant, Frederick Walker. Walker and his associates, the Duttons, one of whom had offered evidence to the Committee and been refused, continued to campaign publicly against Bligh and denounced "an infernal system which has already cast a deep stain upon the honour of this colony".55 The resistance offered by the Duttons, in particular, has been broached by Gordon Reid56 and closely documented in Judith Wright's *Cry for the Dead*.57 Adopting the methods of Herbert's political adversaries, Walsh and Lutwyche, Walker published an open letter to the Colonial Secretary denouncing the Native Police system as a "practical denial of God's justice on earth".58 and threatened to send documented proof of atrocities to the London *Times*. Letters of protest bearing his signature continued to appear in the Queensland press; without further editorial initiatives and support, however, there was little hope of stemming the war of extinction.

In the light of G.S. Lang's claim about the racism prevalent among Queensland journalists, the growing abdication by clergymen and townspeople on the Native Police issue demands some explanation. McKenzie's 1861 committee had not merely reserved for the squatters the right to formulate frontier policy, it had also dismissed the proposal for Aboriginal missions near the townships. The failure of the Town Liberals to revive this project in defiance of the squatters exposed them to the criticism of using the Native Police issue for personal and political purposes. Only a small contingent of Nonconformists (T.B. Stephens, Henry Challinor) continued to raise the question of police brutality in parliament after 1863. Most of those who protested in the press against the ill-treatment of Queensland blacks and the abuses of the plantation system were either southern squatter-politicians (G.S. Lang, Charles Cowper) or clergy-
men based in Sydney (John West) and in London (the Aborigines Protection Society). The arrival of respectable newspaper proprietors like Stephens and the Buzacotts had sparked a short period of revulsion for the ways of the "Deep North". In very few cases, however, was this moral indignation sustained. C.H. Buzacott who moved from Maryborough to Peak Downs, in close proximity to the scene of Cullin-la-Ringo, was one of several central Queensland pioneer proprietors to harden his attitude towards the Aboriginal tribes of the region. As proprietor of the Peak Downs Telegram from 1864, Buzacott, an instigator of the 1861 campaign, no longer made any real effort to shelter the blacks from persecution.59

One exception was the Rev. George Wight, a Scottish missionary and journalist who arrived in Brisbane on the eve of Separation. In 1863, the Queensland Daily Guardian, owned and edited by Wight, denounced the practice of keeping the blacks out as contrary to every principle of justice and humanity.60 The occasion of this unexpected outburst against the squatters was a new Police Act which recognised the black police as an official wing of the Queensland police force and replaced them in the settled districts with a white constabulary. In effect, the legislation simply carried out the recommendations of the 1861 Select Committee, for the Native Police had already been moved away from the larger townships and beyond the scrutiny of the press. During parliamentary discussion of the legislation, James Taylor, the member for Western Downs, made the callous suggestion that outside squatters dissatisfied with the Native Police employ their own men to hunt blacks off their runs. There is evidence that the employment of private bounty hunters had for some time been deemed acceptable practice on some northern stations.61 The Guardian censured Taylor for "coolly advocating murder on a wholesale scale" and drew a motion for breach of privilege against itself.62 In its rejoinder to Taylor, the new Brisbane daily documented the devastating impact of arsenic and rifle on the Moreton Bay tribes. The blacks of north and south Brisbane were, the editor noted, all but extinct and local corroborees which drew as many as 1500 participants 6 years previously now attracted fewer than 500 Aborigines, most of whom spoke a Wide Bay dialect.

In addition to the disturbing revelations which surfaced during this exchange, the incident can be seen as marking the close of the Native Police debate in south-east Queensland. By mid 1863, agitation had become sporadic and ineffective with the town press using the relentless aggression of the pastoralists as an excuse for its own inactivity. The motion of censure on the Guardian, unlike that of the Courier two years earlier, was no longer given serious attention in the Assembly.63 Instead, the Colonial Secretary and his Ministers ruled, in the manner of the 1861 Committee, that editorial outbursts and accusations were a private matter between the press and the individuals concerned, rather than an indictment of the system itself.
Chapter 5

Company Formation: The Queensland Daily Guardian and the Land Question 1866–68

The 1860's coincided with an important new development in the Queensland newspaper industry—the formation of Joint Stock Companies. In the previous decade British newspaper owners had by a series of Company Acts been encouraged to enter into collective business arrangements. The prompt adoption by the Queensland parliament of a Companies Act (1863) reflected the optimism of local investors prior to 1866. In September 1865, the first newspaper company, the North Australian Limited Liability Company, was registered under the Act with nominal capital of £15,000. Formerly a conservative predecessor of the Queensland Times at Ipswich, the North Australian was purchased in 1861 by Roman Catholic Bishop, Quinn, and moved to Brisbane where it languished. An ambitious arrangement undertaken by men of limited means, the pioneering North Australian Company demonstrated the democratic potential of joint stock enterprises whereby a large number of shares (3,000) were offered at a low price (£5 each). In this respect, it anticipated the more successful Brisbane Telegraph Company (5,000 £1 shares) floated by Brisbane tradesmen in 1872. However, inadequate capital and financial inexperience precipitated the North Australian's early demise. By the end of August 1866, the plant and type of the North Australian Company were in the hands of the Bank of Queensland and its shareholders faced debts of £1600.

The first metropolitan newspaper company remained a tentative experiment. Perusal of the North Australian Company File in the Queensland State Archives reveals that the majority of shareholders purchased one or two £5 shares each, with paid-up capital amounting to no more than £630. Catholic publicans from Brisbane and Ipswich dominated the long shareholding list while other contributors were of still more humble occupation. The failure of the North Australian demonstrates the limitations of working-class involvement in the colonial newspaper industry. For reasons more economic than political, Brisbane did not develop a radical press comparable with that of Sydney two decades earlier. As Raymond Williams has indicated, the obstacle to the establishment of a nineteenth-century radical press was not the illiteracy of the workers; even the minority of men and women who could not read or write were able to glean information and ideas from newspapers read aloud in hotels.
or at public gatherings. Rather it was the failure to generate the steady flow of capital necessary to maintain newspaper production which stifled working-class aspiration at this critical time. During and after the unrest of 1866, the outlook of the Brisbane press remained unashamedly Protestant and middle class.

In the unstable economic climate of the late 1860's, company speculation in the newspaper industry became the preserve of the wealthy town and rural capitalist. Both the Queensland Daily Guardian Company (1866-68) and the Brisbane (Courier) Newspaper Company (1868-73), discussed in this and the following Chapters, exhibited an exclusive pattern of ownership. A significant feature of these two companies was the active part played by squatters in their formation and management. Prior to 1866, squatter participation in the metropolitan press had been extremely limited. Collective squatter participation in the metropolitan Guardian Company can be seen as an extension of the pattern of provincial investment and as part of a search for public anonymity by landed proprietors. Ownership of 19th century newspapers by individual pastoralists was and continued to be exceptional. The Guardian proprietary of August 1866, extremely cautious about divulging its identity, hastened to reassure its Brisbane readers that the new shareholders were "all gentlemen of this city".

After a series of ownership changes during its six year existence, the Guardian had steadily matured from a staid parochial publication to become an outspoken popular organ and a rival of the established Brisbane Courier. George Wight's active promotion of the People's Land League during 1866 had enabled the Guardian to win a substantial metropolitan following. With the suspension of payment by the Bank of Queensland in late July, Wight placed the equipment and property of the paper in the hands of his creditors. After struggling on for a further three weeks, Wight relinquished control to a collective proprietary and the Queensland Daily Guardian Company was established. No complete list of Guardian shareholders survives but the minutes of an 1867 Company meeting confirm that the enterprise was a relatively exclusive affair, involving a loose alliance of rural and urban capital. The names appearing on the Company minutes included those of three squatters (W.H. Walsh, John Watts, F.J.C. Wildash), three conservative Brisbane merchants (George Raff, William Pettigrew, John Petrie) and a Legislative Councillor (William Hobbs). Of the shareholders recorded above, only three remained active in Queensland politics. As conservative parliamentarians, Walsh, Watts and Raff had taken part in the recent land debate against Macalister. Influential and unpopular, George Raff was responsible for the controversial upset price amendment which sealed the fate of the Crown Lands Sales Bill and helped to overthrow the Liberal Ministry. Raff and Watts served in the Caretaker administration appointed by Bowen after Macalister's resignation. In all probability, they colluded with Walsh in transforming an outspoken popular paper into a predictable squatter organ. Under its new political colours, the Guardian immediately rushed to Bowen's defence and published a refutation of Macalister's
Table 1
List of "Guardian" Shareholders present at Company Meeting of 29 March 1867

(showing occupation and parliamentary office held during the Company's existence.)

(Original source: QSA, Companies File, A/221277)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation and Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George RAFF</td>
<td>Brisbane merchant and planter (Caboolture). MLA Brisbane 1865-1867. Minister without portfolio July-Nov. 1866.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Henry WALSH</td>
<td>Wide Bay squatter. MLA Maryborough 1865-1867.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William HOBBS</td>
<td>Brisbane doctor. MLC 1861-1880.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.J.C. WILDASH</td>
<td>Darling Downs squatter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick BIGGE</td>
<td>West Moreton squatter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.E. MURPHY</td>
<td>Brisbane solicitor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

legal tender notes scheme. It joined with the Queensland Times in denouncing the Brisbane agitation against the Governor and ridiculed the petition for his recall. At metropolitan public meetings, members of the People's Land League were quick to contrast the progressive views enunciated by Wight and the old Guardian with the hostile utterances emanating from the new company publication.

The new Guardian Company inherited a troubled industrial situation. Growing apprehension among Wight's employees had precipitated a strike in protest at substantial arrears in the payment of wages. Wight's inability to meet their demands was the final blow to his newspaper career. In his ensuing struggle against insolvency, Wight was assisted by periods of government service in the printery and as Immigration Officer overseas. Details of the arrears in Guardian wages were eventually disclosed in 1885 when Wight called an historic meeting to reimburse his former employees. At an Elizabeth Street gathering of thirteen ex-Guardian journalists, £314, comprising several weeks wages, were paid out to those present or forwarded in cheques to staff elsewhere in the colony. Among those
reimbursed were George Hall (sub-editor), Robert Mills (overseer), and Septimus Price (publisher). In retrospect, Wight emerged as a more benevolent employer than his successors. According to immigration writer and journalist, Ebenezer Thorne, the situation of the Guardian went from bad to worse under company control. In his *Queen of the Colonies* (1876), Thorne revealed that he had been engaged on Wight's Guardian "at the very modest salary of 3/- per week" prior to the bank crash. The writer went on to state that:

> He (then) had to make room for an actor who agreed to fill his position for 1/- per week and also carry on his engagement at the theatre. His knowledge of agriculture or editorial duties was nil but the 2/- per week would be saved and that was an object to the Company in those hard times.

This figure contrasts starkly with the 10/- per week which G.D. Lang earned on the Guardian only a few years earlier. Gone were the heady days when Brisbane editors like George Loyau received £4 to £4.10s per week. William Mellefont, a Guardian printer who came to Queensland in 1865, recorded further disputes on the journal after the Company takeover. Like Ebenezer Thorne, Mellefont was to pioneer a number of Queensland provincial papers during the 1870's. According to Mellefont, he was "turned out with the men after brief service during a Guardian strike against a proposed reduction in the rates of pay." In the difficult circumstances which prevailed, even the best paid members of staff were liable to wage reductions of 100% (less than £2 per week).

Although discontented journalists eventually left the Guardian to try their chances on provincial papers, most of Wight's staff were initially retained by the new management. William Belbridge, the Guardian printer since its inception, continued to supervise the mechanical department and Wight himself was given written assurance that he would retain responsibility for "the general supervision and business management of the concern". Ten days later, that promise was overturned and a new general manager, a Mr. Hutton, brought in to replace him. In a letter to the Courier, dated 20 August, Wight stated that he had only learnt of the Company's decision in the Guardian issue of that morning and complained of the "summary treatment" which he had received at its hands. The abrupt dismissal of George Wight, a strenuous campaigner for the People's Land League, was consistent with a rapid shift in Guardian policy from agriculture and liberal selection towards an entrenched squatting position. Further evidence of a shakeup was provided by Ebenezer Thorne, a former land order immigrant and agricultural reporter under Wight. Thorne's assignment to the Nashville goldfields and his replacement by an actor with no knowledge of agriculture was a further move calculated to stifle the Guardian's agrarian rhetoric. Consistent with these staff changes was the abrupt disappearance of the agrarian issue from the Guardian's editorial columns.

The Guardian takeover permitted members of the new
management to voice sharp disapproval of metropolitan journalists and agrarian reformers. In both the Queensland Daily Guardian Company and its immediate successor, the Brisbane Newspaper Company, William Henry Walsh, Wide Bay squatter and politician, was the self-appointed policeman of the press and the loudest advocate of the "hire and fire" principle. Denounced as a renegade by southern squatters, Walsh nevertheless revealed considerable business and political acumen by diversifying his investments in mining and urban enterprises at a time of severe economic difficulty to pastoralists. This shrewd decision was backed by a vigorous determination to protect his investments. Walsh's high press profile had begun as early as 1852 with his attacks on Frederick Walker (Chapter One) and was confirmed during the furore of 1860 over Arthur Halloran and John O'Connell Bligh (Chapter Four). After his entry into parliamentary politics in 1863, Walsh was a frequent correspondent to Maryborough and Brisbane papers; he also owned a significant stake in the Maryborough Chronicle and exerted considerable sway over its editorials. A domineering personality, Walsh conducted a personal war against Brisbane journalists throughout the late 1860's. As a result of his provincial experience, he had come to equate ownership with direct forms of control and was invariably loath to accept the advice of a manager or editor.

Unlike most squatter investors, Walsh was able to monitor his Brisbane enterprise at first hand. By 1867, he had sold most of his extensive pastoral holdings (with the exception of Monduran station) and moved to Brisbane to further his political prospects. One instance of his lasting unpopularity among Guardian journalists was the case of Ebenezer Thorne. Thorne, who migrated to Queensland in 1864, had held a variety of jobs before serving as a Guardian reporter. He was subsequently active in Queensland provincial journalism and became the proprietor of several Brisbane papers. In 1870, Thorne began the Wide Bay and Burnett News, a Maryborough rival of the Chronicle, with the specific purpose of ousting "that renegade squatter", W.H. Walsh from parliamentary office. Had Thorne's dismissal as a Guardian journalist, been engineered by the autocratic Walsh? Whatever the case, industrial relations deteriorated under company ownership.

The immediate editorial objective of the Guardian, during 1866-67, was to provide opposition to the Macalister-Bell administration. Their first period of office had been a time of unprecedented land agitation with Leagues in Brisbane and Rockhampton putting the case for the small farmer and pastoralist respectively. The Ministry of 1869, treading an uneasy path between controlled selection and the preservation of established Darling Downs interests, proposed to implement a Leasing Bill which offered agriculturalists eight year leases at 2/6 per acre (6/- per ha), with option to purchase. The question of land prices had been a highly contentious one but the pressing need since the economic crisis to keep the Treasury solvent postponed fresh attempts to force a drastic reduction along the lines advocated by the Rockhampton Land League. In keeping with the Land Acts of 1860, the Macalister administration upheld
leasehold in preference to freehold and wholesale alienation. By upholding the leasehold principle and encouraging the creation of grazing farms, Macalister's October bill anticipated the comprehensive legislation of 1868 and established the direction of Queensland's future land policy. Yet, in the short term, it did little to win back dwindling support. Agrarian Liberals were quick to point out that neither of their major proposals (removal of the auction system and reduction in the size of blocks) had been taken up. At the same time, northern squatters and the provincial press continued to advocate freehold title as the panacea for the colony's economic ills.

Confronted with strident opposition from northern squatters and growing criticism from Brisbane Liberals, the Macalister Ministry clung grimly to office at the close of the annual parliamentary session. The press could muster little enthusiasm for the new measure. Even the Courier, which had consistently promoted agriculture, and the leasehold principle, did no more than provide details of the leasing conditions. At Ipswich, the Queensland Times, traditionally a supporter of the Pure Merinos, lashed out at what it described as "essentially time-serving, unprincipled and dishonest government". At Rockhampton, the Northern Argus, with the approval of the Walshite Maryborough Chronicle, remained sceptical of the Ministry's "organized incompetence" and stated its frank opinion that the Leasing Bill would satisfy no-one. When a list of pre-emptive purchases was tabled in parliament showing that southern squatters like Watts and McLean had used their right of pre-emption to buy up large tracts on or around the advancing Southern and Western railway line, the Argus joined with the Queensland Times in hurling accusations of selfishness and corruption against the Ministry. According to the editor, William Robison, a few Downs "millionaires" had carried out a "deeply-laid and boldly executed plot" to snap up the most valuable lands of the colony regardless of the high upset price. The only salvation for the north, concluded the Argus, lay in ousting the Macalister regime and achieving Separation.

On the Downs, Macalister and Bell faced the prospect of declining support over the delay in declaring proposed new Agricultural reserves. These areas, 2-6,000 ha in extent and situated close to farming settlements, were becoming no less controversial than the railway speculation deplored by the Northern Argus. Conservative Downs squatters, who had used the pre-emptive right to buttress their land monopoly, were alarmed at the prospect of sizeable resumptions for the purposes of agriculture. During Macalister's second period of office, the Downs pastoralists were increasingly divided among themselves; there were those who seemed prepared to make some concessions to local agriculture, but also a substantial number who steadfastly maintained that the Downs "would not grow a cabbage".

The Queensland Daily Guardian was quick to exploit growing divisions within the dominant Darling Downs faction to the disadvantage of the Ministry. In May 1867 the Guardian repeated allegations of malpractice brought against leading members of the government over the gazetting of the
The original source of these allegations was Henry Bates Fitz, a reactionary opponent of Macalister in the Upper House. Fitz, the long-serving manager of Pikedale and owner since 1865 of several Downs properties, declared in the Council that a portion of the Dalby run belonging to Bell's brother-in-law, Thomas de Lacy Moffatt, had been deliberately withheld from inclusion in the Cumkillenbar Reserve in order to allow the owner a belated privilege of pre-emptive purchase. Fitz took every opportunity to harass the government from the Upper Chamber declaring that the choice of the reserve was a political decision calculated to punish and disadvantage opponents of the present administration. The Guardian printed these bitter attacks on Bell, not once but twice, and questioned Macalister's role in the transaction.

The Guardian report of 13 May 1867 prompted a lengthy debate in the Assembly. A.C. Gregory, the Surveyor-General, and Walter Hill, the official appointed to select the Agricultural Reserves, were called to the bar of the Assembly to clarify details of the Cumkillenbar decision. Their explicit testimony upheld the validity of the pre-emptive purchase on Moffatt's station and exonerated Bell and the Lands Department from the strenuous accusations of Fitz. The Guardian, dissatisfied with the outcome, intimated that further information would be forthcoming on the matter, while the Brisbane Courier warmly defended the Ministry and sharply admonished its competitor for wilful inaccuracies:

Day after day the organ (Guardian) which is the property and under the control of the party, now endeavouring to avenge itself for the vigorous inauguration of the Minister's land policy, had vomited forth its abuse of the Government and in letters and leading articles has betrayed the personal dislike felt by some at least of those who are shareholders in the concern towards the present Premier.

The Courier's heated accusation was exaggerated yet the allegation that Fitz was a Guardian shareholder needs to be taken seriously. While the limited information available tends to discredit the Courier's speculation about Fitz's involvement with the Guardian, it is clear that squatter shareholders like John Watts and F.J.C. Wildash would have supported Fitz against Bell. The Cumkillenbar allegations may well have been printed to boost the Guardian's limited metropolitan sales; however, without a more constructive land platform, the Guardian could not survive long in competition with the more established Courier. In its editorial crusade on behalf of squatterdom, the Guardian was fortunate in recruiting talented writers, not from the ranks of the Pure Merinos, nor indeed from among disaffected Brisbane Liberals, but from the tightly-knit and ideologically cohesive northern pastoral faction. The Guardian takeover came to symbolize not just the economic superiority of squatting over selection but also the unexpected ascendancy of north over south.

By contrast with the Downs squattocracy, the central
Queensland squatters were emerging as the self-appointed saviours of the struggling colony. The groundwork for this shift in influence within the landed class had been laid in the mid 1860's by a combination of private correspondence and Northern Land League publicity. The election to the Legislative Assembly of Archibald Archer (Rockhampton) and Arthur Hunter Palmer (Port Curtis) in 1867 encouraged northern squatters to shift their attention from Rockhampton journalism to the Brisbane press. Such a move suggested a loss of confidence on their part in the popular rhetoric of the burgeoning central Queensland separation movement and a growing faith in their ability to win over southern opinion. In May 1867, A.H. Palmer wrote to William Archer to inform him of his brother Archibald's successful political debut in the Queensland parliament. Palmer was pleased to report that many town members had been favourably impressed by the eloquent new member for Rockhampton. In the same letter Palmer alluded to the all important land question and indicated his strong support for the League's view that "only a liberal land law with a very low upset price can save the country".

Although the Northern Land League had been officially disbanded in the previous year, its doctrines of class cooperation and mutual self-interest heavily influenced the columns of the *Queensland Daily Guardian*. Throughout 1867-68, the Guardian's editor was Robert Atkin, formerly a central Queensland pastoralist and acquaintance of the Archers. Atkin, a gifted political writer, remained active in the metropolitan press for some years and successfully contested the seat of Clermont in 1868. In addition to Atkin, Archibald Archer contributed to the Guardian on the land question and may well have written a number of its editorials. Throughout 1865-66, he had played a leading role as Land League correspondent to the Sydney and Rockhampton press. A third active publicist for northern views on the land question was Thomas Henry Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald had been acquainted with Archibald Archer when employed as Government Surveyor at Rockhampton. Before successfully contesting Kennedy in 1867, Fitzgerald had served briefly as member for Rockhampton before being narrowly beaten by Archer himself. In spite of this keen rivalry, the two men continued to collaborate closely, especially where northern interests were concerned. Their mutual ability to inspire confidence as men of mature years, forceful intellect and administrative capacity was such that Brisbane colonists subsequently dubbed them the "Damon and Pythias" of Queensland politics.

In assessing the performance of the Guardian throughout the land debate, it becomes necessary to distinguish between its collective proprietary and the small band of ideologues responsible for its literary production. Even a cursory reading of the Guardian reveals that its editorial support for northern interests does not square with its predominantly southern-based ownership. This contradiction appears all the more striking in a period of fierce regionalism and separatism. For the first time since Separation, a Brisbane paper consistently opened its columns to northern correspondents and promoted the interests of colonists in
outside districts. Although the *Guardian* takeover of August 1866 marked a potentially important step towards political control of Brisbane journalists, the advent of collective ownership did not immediately resolve the long-standing dichotomy between press authorship and ownership. One possible explanation for the ascendancy which northern squatters enjoyed in the press lay in the managerial influence of William Henry Walsh. A renowned anti-centralist, Walsh corresponded with the Archers through the 1860's and was known to share their views on land reform. In a letter to William Archer dated the 5 March 1866, Walsh appealed for unity in northern ranks and speculated that "it will be easier for me to fight the south than the north".

One point of agreement between the idiosyncratic Walsh and his more restrained northern neighbours was a willingness to enlist the aid of the press for political ends. Just as Raff had been the squatters' Brisbane intermediary during the economic crisis, so Walsh was to become their valuable ally in the press, indulging his capacity for personal vendetta to promote the interests of his class. When Palmer formed a stable Ministry in 1870, Walsh was rewarded with the portfolio for Public Works.

For the rest of the decade, the land question was to become the dominant preoccupation of parliament. The Macalister-Bell administration, which fell from power in mid 1867, had not been able to legislate effectively for the settled or outside districts of the colony. The formation of the McKenzie-Palmer Ministry (August 1867 to November 1868) saw the introduction of comprehensive land legislation into parliament. The Crown Lands Alienation Act remained the most important single achievement of the new government. However, prolonged debate over this Bill meant that a Pastoral Leases Bill designed to relieve outside squatters was temporarily shelved. The McKenzie-Palmer administration has been dubbed a "Pure Merino Ministry" by some historians; certainly it was dominated by pastoralists. Unlike its predecessors, however, this Ministry relied increasingly on northern support both in parliament and in the press. While Robert Ramsey McKenzie, a Downs squatter of impeccable family connections remained its nominal head, Arthur Hunter Palmer, the member for Port Curtis, was undoubtedly the "coming man" of this particular political combination and was entrusted with the key portfolios of Land and Works. "A strange admixture of bluffness, tenderness and almost coarseness", Palmer cultivated a different political style from the aristocratic McKenzie and lent credibility to the claims of the northern press that its representatives were "a different breed" from their southern counterparts.

In keeping with this popular image was the widely repeated anecdote that Palmer had worked as a bullock driver in central Queensland. On this point, parliamentary historian Charles Bernays ventured to remark that "such experience may have accounted for his great command of language - of a sort". Bernays added that "he (Palmer) was not a highly educated man but one of sound common horse sense".

The bullock driver anecdote about Palmer was of doubt-
Table 2  

<table>
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<th>QUEENSLAND MINISTRIES, 1866-1868</th>
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**MACALISTER MINISTRY 7.8.1866-15.8.1867**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. Macalister</td>
<td>Colonial Secretary</td>
<td>7. 8.1866-15. 8.1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch. Lilley</td>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>7. 8.1866-15. 8.1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.D. McLean</td>
<td>Colonial Treasurer</td>
<td>7. 8.1866-16.12.1866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Douglas</td>
<td>Colonial Treasurer</td>
<td>19.12.1866-21. 5.1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary for Public Works</td>
<td>21. 5.1867-15. 8.1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.B. Stephens</td>
<td>Colonial Treasurer</td>
<td>21. 5.1867-15. 8.1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.P. Bell</td>
<td>Secretary for Public Lands</td>
<td>7. 8.1866-15. 8.1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Watts</td>
<td>Secretary for Public Works</td>
<td>7. 8.1866-3. 5.1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Raff</td>
<td>Without portfolio</td>
<td>7. 8.1866-16.11.1866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representative of Government in Legislative Council</td>
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</table>

**MACKENZIE MINISTRY 15.8.1867-25.11.1868**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R.R. Mackenzie</td>
<td>Colonial Treasurer</td>
<td>15. 8.1867-25.11.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.H. Palmer</td>
<td>Colonial Secretary</td>
<td>15. 8.1867-25.11.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary for Public Works</td>
<td>15. 8.1867-10. 9.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary for Public Lands</td>
<td>10. 9.1868-25.11.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Pring</td>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>15. 8.1867-25.11.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Hodgson</td>
<td>Secretary for Public Works</td>
<td>10. 9.1868-25.11.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.W. Lamb</td>
<td>Secretary for Public Lands</td>
<td>15. 8.1867-10. 9.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.L. Murray-Prior</td>
<td>Postmaster-General</td>
<td>15. 8.1867-25.11.1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representative of Government in Legislative Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ful veracity, yet it reflected a growing belief that northern squatters were, not infrequently, men of lower social standing who, in the course of their rise to the managerial class, had acquired a personal knowledge of the rigours of bush life. The military background and Irish Protestant ancestry of the Palmer family suggests that the Port Curtis member was something above this.47 Prior to his arrival in Queensland in 1861, Palmer served for 23 years as general overseer to Henry Dangar and family. Although he was refused the hand of one of Dangar's daughters in marriage, Palmer eventually gained the confidence of his employers; the diplomacy which he displayed in conducting delicate negotiations between members of the Dangar family is not unrelated to his success as a Queensland administrator.48 Little more than competent as a parliamentary adversary or debater, he preferred personal lobbying to speeches in the House. According to journalist-historian, William Coote:

He (Palmer) did not take any conspicuous part in debate at this time or speak more than he could apparently help but continued to increase his reputation and gain something of the personal popularity to which I before alluded.49

Palmer's talent for political organisation complemented those of the more intellectually gifted Archibald Archer. Both men appear to have involved themselves in the Queensland Daily Guardian in different capacities, Archer as a writer and Palmer as a financier. Palmer's funding of the Guardian company to the tune of several hundred pounds does not show up on the early shareholding list and may have only begun after his elevation to office. Nevertheless, the northern literary influence was well established by mid 1867. In its extracts and editorials, the Guardian cautioned its town readers against "the prevalent idea that life among squatters is something so delightful that they can never pay too high a privilege for such pleasant employment".50 Archer, in his contributions, cast doubt on Liberal assumptions that the colony possessed inexhaustible tracts of first class agricultural land. Fundamental to the Guardian's political strategy of 1867 was the doctrine of class harmony and mutual self-interest. While the Lower House devoted prolonged discussion to the 118 clauses of the Crown lands Alienation Bill, the Guardian editor reported the progress of the measure through its various stages and reserved his sharpest barbs for those town members who dared to criticize the legislation on the grounds that it would further entrench squatting interests to the detriment of agriculturalists. When Arthur Morley Francis, member for the farming electorate of East Moreton, entered a strong defence of the Wakefield system and attempted to force a division on the first reading, he was censured by a majority of squatting members and taken to task by the Guardian for "fostering class antagonism".51 The northern squatters - Palmer, Archer and Fitzgerald - were the most persistent parliamentary advocates of this line of argument. Archer's prominent part in drafting, defending and eventually amending the legislation was such that he was obliged to scotch
persistent rumours that he would soon replace the less competent Lamb as Lands Minister. At pains to discred
the popular image of "the cormorant squatter", Archer was
applauded in the Assembly when he repudiated notions of
class interest and antagonism.

He thought it was time they began to legis­
late for the community and not for one class
or another. It was time they left off
speaking of squatters as wealthy men.52

Most historians of the land question, Sir Stephen
Roberts53 and Beverley Kingston54 included, accept Archibald
Archer's interpretation of the Crown Lands Alienation Act as
a working compromise between pastoralists and intending
agriculturalists. More specifically, the provision for
grazing farms on different categories of pastoral land
(80-2,560 acres or 32-1,037 hectares for first class pas­
toral, 80-7,680 acres or 32-3,110 ha for second class
pastoral) was an innovative experiment designed to foster
the growth of an intermediary group of land holders between
the squatter and selector classes. Yet even the Guardian,
which faithfully upheld the comfortable rhetoric of class
equality and harmony, was forced to acknowledge that the
provision for grazing farms would seriously restrict the
progress of selection on the Darling Downs.88 Like the
clauses pertaining to coffee and sugar cultivation, the
creation of grazing farms was primarily designed to attract
immigrants with some capital, either from British tropical
dependencies or from the southern Australian colonies.

In contesting the validity of the "via media" thesis,
it is important to add that contemporary response to the
Crown Lands Alienation Act was by no means entirely favour­
able. While the Guardian and the Darling Downs Gazette
voiced their predictable approval, the Courier and the
Warwick Argus were inclined to mistrust the squatters' intentions and even ridicule the liberal pretensions of
Palmer and Archer. In keeping with its earlier criticism
of the northern squatting lobby, the prestigious Sydney
Morning Herald expressed misgivings about the Queensland
experiment. During the 1866 agitation, the Herald had
stoutly defended Wakefieldian orthodoxy against the icono­
clasm of squatter correspondents. Reviewing the Queensland
situation in 1867, the same paper stressed the benefits
which would accrue to "large pastoral occupiers" under the
new Land Bill.56 Its implication that the act implemented
a piece of class legislation contradicted the more favour­
able opinion of local journals like the Guardian.
The only remaining check on the aggregation of large estates in
Queensland, claimed the Herald, was a land tax. Despite
press calls for the replacement of the increased ad-valorem
duties by significant land taxation, no such measure was
introduced or even mooted by the parliament. Squatter
Ministries like that of McKenzie and Palmer were inclined to
view a land tax in Queensland as "a mild form of robbery".57

While it is apparent that regional squatting factions
were beginning to coalesce over the land question, it is
useful to discern the separate spheres of influence in which
different factions operated. The northern ascendancy
during 1867 was most evident in the Lower House and in the
press, while the interests of the Darling Downs squatters were sustained by a combination of Legislative Council veto and administrative monopoly. Under Gregory, land administration became inseparable from regional power politics. In her unpublished doctoral thesis on the land question, Beverley Kingston opts for a moderate interpretation by suggesting that A.C. Gregory's administrative failings were more the result of inadequate staff and haphazard methods than the result of his political prejudices. Kingston's sympathetic portrait of Gregory is consistent with her emphasis on consensus as the moving force behind Archer's local land legislation. In the final chapters of this study an attempt will be made to uphold Duncan Waterson's more critical judgement that members of this family showed themselves to be close allies of the southern squatterocracy. In his influential position as Darling Downs Lands Commissioner, A.C. Gregory's brother, Frank, was an intimate social acquaintance of the Pure Merinos and evinced a willingness to interpret the new land regulations in their favour. Political patronage and social connections dictated a policy of "masterly inactivity" which discriminated against northern squatter and southern selector alike.

From the takeover of August 1866 until its demise in June 1868, the Queensland Daily Guardian Company accurately reflected political shifts over the land issue. Most importantly, its brief existence corresponded with the rise and decline of the northern ideological influence. By June 1868, Robert Atkin, the Guardian editor, had become disillusioned with the administration of the new Land Bill on the Darling Downs where pastoralists were manipulating the regulations in order to secure water frontage and fertile tracts against selectors. The specific complaint to which the Guardian editor alluded was typical of allegations which abounded in the press in the wake of the Act. According to Atkin, Robert Tooth, an absentee capitalist from Sydney, had received favourable consideration in the belated exercise of his pre-emptive right. The Guardian editor alleged that land on the resumed portion of Tooth's Clifton run which had been surveyed and declared open to selection, had been abruptly withdrawn on the advice of a leading Lands Department official. In his scathing leader of the 1 June, Atkin maintained that "honestly and impartially administered, (the Land Bill) would prove a great benefit to the colony"; however, this aim could never be achieved, he explained, while Lamb, the Minister for Lands, and Gregory, the Darling Downs Lands Commissioner, demonstrated "such notorious partiality" in favour of the larger landholders and consistently worked to prevent bona fide cultivators from occupying all but the "very worst portions". Atkin was to join a disenchanted group of former Guardian employees (Thorne, Mellefont, Belbridge) who subsequently owned or edited anti-squatter papers in the colony. Commenting on his defection, the Brisbane Courier emphasized the serious repercussions for the McKenzie-Palmer Ministry. Atkin, it argued, had been far more than a government scribe; he had been "an active member of their party... a sort of ex officio leader of the friends and defenders of the Ministry outside the House".
As a leading newspaper spokesman and parliamentary organizer for the Liberals after 1868, Atkin was well-placed to expose manoeuvring by Walsh and his squatter associates. Atkin's second Brisbane paper, the Queensland Express, which appeared on 5 August 1868, printed strong allegations of vindictiveness by Guardian proprietors, Walsh and Palmer, in the winding up of the Company. Relations between staff and management had been tense throughout the Guardian's two year existence. In order to maintain its readership and to compete with the more established Courier, the Guardian reduced its price from the standard 6d. to 4d. However, its ideological views remained unacceptable to most Brisbane readers. One informed press observer estimated that the Company lost almost £10,000 throughout its two years of operation. This meant that the paper paid for itself only on the production level and that the owners were obliged to subsidise full wages to the tune of £100 per week. Arthur Hunter Palmer, a leading financier of the Company, for obvious political reasons, lamented that he had sunk hundreds of pounds into the Guardian venture without any hope of return.

To aggravate matters, the Guardian, in the months prior to its collapse, was caught up in a protracted and potentially expensive libel action in the courts. The prospect of substantial damages against it encouraged the proprietary to seek a settlement out of court and pay the offended party £100. In the joint statement of apology accompanying the settlement, the Guardian owners formally censured Atkin's editorial conduct over the incident and issued an unprecedented invitation to offending parties to seek satisfaction against individual journalists:

> It was impossible for the shareholders or any of their number to take upon themselves the responsibility of seeing that there was no departure from the course that they wished to pursue - this they had to place upon others; and it is their misfortune - not their fault - if in more than one instance those in whom they trusted have not proved true. They desire now to state that if anyone, who considered himself wronged by any communication counted libellous, requested the name of the author to be given up to him, those representing the shareholders would immediately have taken steps for enforcing compliance with such a request.

The advent of company ownership had important implications for libel laws and for the distinctive nineteenth century pattern of authorship. Previously, the editor and occasional contributor had enjoyed a degree of immunity from legal reprisals. The technical difficulties in proceeding against a collective proprietary, coupled with the political aspects of company control, combined to shift responsibility from proprietor to editor and could be used by employers to enforce greater compliance.

Along with Atkin, William Belbridge, the Guardian printer, became the scapegoat for the journal's demise. In April 1867, Belbridge had been entrusted with the management
of the Company's problematic finances with "authority to draw sums of money not exceeding £200 and to make deposits into other members' accounts". During his previous ten years on the Brisbane press, Belbridge had established a high reputation for himself and served part of that period as Government Printer. He had already acquired considerable managerial experience with the Melbourne press prior to his arrival in Queensland. When the Guardian was wound up, however, the Company liquidators Walsh, Raff and Petrie, unsuccessfully initiated legal proceedings against him on five counts of petty larceny. These charges were dismissed, but not before the seriousness of the breakdown between Company shareholders and their overworked manager had become evident. Belbridge, indignant at this attempt to saddle him with the faults of his predecessors and at the systematic neglect practised by the proprietors, contemplated retaliatory action in the Supreme Court to restore his reputation. In the final analysis, there appears to be little reason to question Belbridge's integrity throughout the affair. In addition to his high standing in Brisbane journalism, Belbridge served prominently on the Empire and Sydney Morning Herald staffs in later years. Poor wages and tense industrial relations under company control encouraged talented Brisbane journalists to move south in search of more satisfactory employment.

The economic problems of the Guardian Company were inseparable from its politics. The Warwick Argus, in a detailed review of the company's misfortune, attributed the Guardian's failure directly to its pro-squatting reputation and to its support for the Crown Lands Alienation Act. Certainly, the owners had lost heavily on the paper at a time when most pastoralists could ill afford it. Amid the defection of its employees and the criticism of its rivals, the Guardian proprietary consoled itself with the assertion that the journal had helped to dislodge the Macalister-Bell government and to bring about legislation favourable to the landed class. Nor did the squatters desist from their efforts to intervene in metropolitan journalism. With active encouragement from W.H. Walsh, they were now negotiating a merger with the Brisbane Courier, traditionally the champion of town interests and enemy of the squattocracy. From the pastoralists' point of view, the Guardian debacle emerged, in retrospect, as a useful preliminary to the politics of the Brisbane (Courier) Newspaper Company.
Chapter 6

"Gagging the Press": The First Brisbane (Courier) Newspaper Company 1868–73

To broach the issue of collective ownership of the nineteenth-century Australian press is to quickly become aware that the history of most colonial newspaper companies remains to be written. In spite of the wealth of biographical information about individual Brisbane journalists during the 1860's,¹ little attempt has been made to situate this material in the political context of company formation and industrial relations. The *Queensland Daily Guardian* Company, discussed in the previous chapter, is a case in point. The failure of the *Guardian* to spawn a direct twentieth-century successor may be one reason for its omission from the accounts of local newspaper historians. In the instance of the first Brisbane Newspaper Company, however, no such grounds for neglect can exist. Arguably the most important single enterprise of its day, the *Courier* Company has been largely ignored by Queensland journalists and historians.

Although the *Courier's* running losses had not matched those of the rival *Guardian*, it was also experiencing financial problems in the wake of the Bank crash.² The unlikely merger of the *Queensland Daily Guardian* and T.B. Stephens' *Courier* appears to have been motivated primarily by economic difficulties. Stephens lacked the capital to upgrade his paper and decided to convert it into a corporate enterprise by offering shares in the new company to interested parties. His decision eventually prompted negotiations with several leading *Guardian* shareholders for a coalition of the two struggling dailies. On the 23 July 1868, the Brisbane Newspaper Company, comprising the daily *Courier* and weekly *Queenslander*, was registered in the Supreme Court with capital of £7,200. When compared with the £100,000 invested in the paper two decades later, this represented a modest sum; yet at the time it remained the largest working enterprise of its kind in the colony. The exclusive nature of the arrangement was apparent in the size of individual shares – £600. Concentration of ownership was still more evident when it is noted that T.B. Stephens, formerly the sole proprietor, held 5 of the 12 shares offered.³ The remaining seven were taken up by squatters, Brisbane merchants and professionals. Three former *Guardian* owners—George Raff, W.H. Walsh and A.H. Palmer, bought one £600 share each.
Table 3  Brisbane Newspaper Company Shareholders, 1868-1873
(including occupation and place of residence)

A. Original Shareholding List, 23 July 1868
(Source: QSA, Companies File, A/21276)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation and Place</th>
<th>Shares</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T.B. STEPHENS</td>
<td>Woolbroker, Brisbane</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George RAFF</td>
<td>Merchant and planter, Brisbane</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.H. WALSH</td>
<td>Squatter, Brisbane</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.I.C. BROWNE</td>
<td>Solicitor, Brisbane</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. BAYNES</td>
<td>Butcher, Brisbane</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.H. PALMER</td>
<td>Squatter, Brisbane</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. THORNTON</td>
<td>Collector of Customs, Brisbane</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert RAMSAY</td>
<td>Squatter, Eton Vale</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
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</tbody>
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12 shares

B. Final Shareholding List, 19 August 1872
(Source: Q.S.C.R., v. 3, p. 99)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation and Place</th>
<th>Shares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T.B. STEPHENS</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.H. WALSH</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. BAYNES</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.H. PALMER</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. THORNTON</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. MILES</td>
<td>Squatter, Dulacca</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James COWLISHAW</td>
<td>Architect, Brisbane</td>
<td>1 sh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares transferred to Company but not repurchased by individual shareholders</td>
<td>3 sh.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 shares

As sole owner prior to 1868, Stephens enjoyed the decided advantage of possessing an intimate knowledge of the Courier staff. His younger brother, John Stephens, continued to act as manager and accountant. Yet it is noteworthy that the formation of the Brisbane Newspaper Company created serious doubts among Brisbane Liberals about Stephens' capacity to resist the demands of the squatters. In direct contrast with Palmer and Walsh, Stephens cultivated a restrained political style. In parliament, he rarely attacked his critics openly, preferring the "flank" assault to the "frontal". The Queensland Daily Guardian, under its squatter ownership, had been inclined to dismiss him as "a rather commonplace man of inferior education and attainments".

The neglect of the first Brisbane Newspaper Company by Queensland historians is even more inexplicable given the intense speculation which accompanied its formation. In his periodical, Our Paper, Coote recorded that the question of "who and who were not members of the new proprietary limited of the Courier (had been) canvassed with untiring
vigour during the previous week" and added mischievously that "a concise summary of their several speeches against each other would be amusing... At any rate it would afford some idea of their probable unanimity". At Toowoomba, the Darling Downs Gazette was equally pessimistic about the Courier arrangement and predicted its early collapse on the basis of the contradictory political principles of its owners. Robert Atkin's Queensland Express, which survived Our Paper and competed with the Courier until March 1871, emerged as the most perceptive critic of Brisbane Newspaper Company editorial policy. A political renegade from the northern squatting lobby and former editor of the Guardian under company control, Atkin was well placed to comment on the changing political stance of the leading journal. In his view, the conservative proprietary of the Guardian (Walsh, Palmer, Raff) had negotiated the merger to gag the press of the colony and to rob the Courier of its political convictions. It is the purpose of this chapter to assess the accuracy of his claim.

Atkin's contemporary judgement runs counter to Allan Morrison's conjecture that the Courier, under company control, continued to operate freely as a Liberal organ under the patronage of its original proprietor, T.B. Stephens. Morrison's observation about the continuity of Courier policy was based upon the belief that T.B. Stephens retained a controlling interest in the Brisbane Newspaper company. Yet although Stephens was easily the largest individual shareholder, his influence over Courier affairs was limited in the original agreement by a clause restricting the number of votes to which he was entitled at Company meetings. With five of the twelve £600 shares, he was allowed only three votes compared with one vote for each of the others. In an effort to dominate the Company's affairs, the Guardian interest (Walsh, Palmer and Raff) would look to other shareholders for support, especially to Robert Ramsay, the established Downs squatter and member for Western Downs. The delicate balance of power between Stephens and the squatter shareholders was soon to become the most decisive single factor governing the Company's affairs.

Although Atkin and other critics had predicted that the Courier would emulate the Guardian Company and abruptly transform its editorial position, such a change was not immediately forthcoming. Indeed the Courier's opposition to the squatter administration of McKenzie and Palmer became, if anything, more intense in the last months of 1868. With the McKenzie-Palmer Ministry facing defeat early in the second session of 1868, the Courier was clamouring for the resignation of what it dubbed "a weak and mischievous Government... devoted absolutely [to] the interests of a particular class". The Courier editor responsible for these statements was William O'Carroll, a well-respected identity in Brisbane journalism with previous assignments on the Toowoomba Chronicle and the Queensland Daily Guardian. On the eve of the election, O'Carroll campaigned openly against Palmer and the landed interest.

The election campaign of August 1868 and the defeat of the squatter Ministry, only four weeks after the formation
Brisbane Newspaper Company shareholders around 1870. Clockwise from top left: William Henry Walsh, Wide Bay pastoralist and politician, in 1870; Thomas Blackett Stephens, manager, in 1867; George Raff, Brisbane merchant-banker and member of the Caretaker Ministry, in 1866; and Arthur Hunter Palmer, central Queensland pastoralist and Colonial Secretary, around 1870. (Courtesy OML)
of the Brisbane Newspaper Company, precipitated the first direct clash between the Courier shareholders. While A.H. Palmer figured prominently in the defeated government, T.B. Stephens, the leading Company shareholder, was appointed Treasurer and Colonial Secretary in the incoming Liberal administration. During the run-up to the 1868 election, Courier journalists had aggravated tensions between shareholders by exposing what became known as the Gracemere Affair. After ministerial changes at the close of the McKenzie-Palmer term, O'Carroll alleged that Archibald Archer, "the great gun of the north", had been unable to accept the Land or Works portfolios offered to him by Palmer, because of suspicious circumstances attending the pre-emption of the Gracemere runs. The Courier charged that Archer had failed to notify the Lands Department three months in advance of his intention to consolidate and, secondly, since the runs were registered under different names, the very act of consolidation was "an absolute violation of the Act". Public outcry was such that the proclamation was hurriedly rescinded, Archer's ministerial post did not materialise and E.W. Lamb, the Lands Minister, was obliged to resign a few weeks later.

The fall of the squatter Ministry at the close of 1868 intensified the struggle for control of the Courier. Four days after the Gracemere editorial, Ramsay wrote to the other shareholders from Eton Vale denouncing "the dissemination throughout the colony of totally opposite opinions to myself". Insisting that his communication be read out at the next Company meeting, Ramsay went on to state that:

[He had joined the Company] on the distinct understanding that the paper was no longer to be a violent party organ which it had been up till that time... but was to try to assume a higher and more impartial position; in effect to take the Sydney Morning Herald very much as its standard and to criticise measures not men... Now I find that no change at all is being made and I'm very much inclined to think that none is intended.

Ramsay's suggestion that an editor be brought from Sydney to replace O'Carroll was vigorously canvassed at subsequent meetings. In early 1869, a series of resolutions calling for his removal were brought forward at the Brisbane Newspaper Company meetings. In order to placate his Company critics and to attend to the three important portfolios with which he had been entrusted in the new Ministry, Stephens announced that he would step down as manager. For the time being, his influence at meetings was still sufficient to prevent O'Carroll's dismissal.

In addition to private complaints at Company meetings, squatter proprietors had begun to air their grievances against the paper in parliament. An abiding source of dissatisfaction among squatting proprietors was the retention of John Stephens, Thomas Blackett's brother, as the Courier accountant and new manager. The simultaneous presence in the Assembly, of politically divergent Courier shareholders and of its literary staff, occasionally in the supplementary role of temporary Hansard writers, aggravated an already
problematic business arrangement. In early 1869, A.H. Palmer, echoing his colleagues Archer and Lamb, stated indignantly that "he never expected to be properly reported" by the press.\(^{15}\) Walsh, a fellow shareholder, attributed the Courier's sins of omission directly to T.B. Stephens' baneful influence over the journal. In the Assembly T.B. Stephens sought to exonerate himself from the charge of political interference by insisting upon the need to administer the Courier on behalf of subscribers and readers. His defence was a shrewd commercial argument based upon the law of demand rather than on notions of proprietorial control.

Unable to convert the Courier into their ideological instrument, the emerging Palmer party was nonetheless prepared to adopt a "hire and fire" approach in its bid to silence adverse criticism from this quarter. A feature of squatter influence on the town press was the high turnover of literary personnel, exhibited in previous ventures like the Moreton Bay Free Press and the Queensland Daily Guardian Company. Stephens later claimed that the dissatisfied shareholders were prepared to dismiss one editor after another until a suitably compliant writer could be found.\(^{16}\) Those journalists who chose to remain with the Company would be forced to limit the scope of their commentaries on sensitive topics. William O'Carroll, who eventually defected from the Courier to Atkin's Colonist (1871), alleged that the indifferent journalism which had come to characterize the leading paper by 1869 was part of a deliberate strategy to placate discontented shareholders:

> If perchance the literary staff of that journal venture on subjects known to be Indexed they feel they are on unsafe ground and their writings are consequently timid, indecisive, and above all circumlocutory; the object is to appear to deal with some question which can not well be avoided. Something must occasionally be said to maintain the pretensions of the Courier to public support.\(^{17}\)

O'Carroll's observation had been accurately predicted by the Courier's rivals at the time of the Brisbane Newspaper Company's formation. The decision allowing journalists to address pertinent political issues, on condition that their treatment remained desultory and equivocal, emerged as a dubious compromise between Stephens' commercial arguments and the squatters' insistence on tighter censorship.

In order to confirm the persistent contention that the muzzling of the Courier had been gradual rather than immediate, it is necessary to refer to editorial statements on the everpresent land question and to contrast these with the Courier's performance prior to company control. If the Courier had published damaging letters by Downs selectors and printed allegations like the Gracemere Affair in 1868, the same paper appeared reluctant to examine the flawed Land Act during most of 1869. At a time when selector papers on the Downs were if anything more vocal in their attacks on the "blighted curse of dummyism", the Courier lamely called provincial critics to order and appeared to play down the land issue.\(^{18}\) The Warwick Argus, which looked to the
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_Courier_ for political support against local squatting interests, detected a strong dose of "editorial chloroform" in its utterances. Exposing the confusion of _Courier_ editorial policy, it characterized the variable tastes of the Brisbane Newspaper Company as "one week Stephens, next week Palmer".

The unwillingness of the _Courier_ to involve itself with any regularity in controversy over the dubious administration of the Land Act was matched by a growing reluctance to grapple with pressing new social and political developments. During the Company's short existence (1868-73), one issue - that of Melanesian labour - came to rival and overshadow the land question in the press. An explanation for this shift in emphasis lies in the flagrant abuses which characterised the Pacific labour traffic in its early years.¹⁹ The Melanesian question was not confined to the Brisbane nor Sydney press, as the land debate of the 1860's had been, but elicited widespread comment in the British press and throughout the southern colonies. At once a local and international issue, it had become an inescapable though highly sensitive news item by the end of the decade. Although the management and conduct of the Native Police Force had dominated racial debate prior to 1866, the coloured labour question had also received sporadic attention from local newspapers. Liberals who harboured growing doubts about the morality of such a traffic naturally looked to the _Courier_ to galvanise public opposition. How did the Brisbane paper under the stress of collective management respond to these calls and what differences of opinion emerged between local journalists and their political owners?

One of Palmer's major achievements in his first term as Colonial Secretary was the Polynesian Labourers Act, a measure designed to placate anxiety in Britain about the resurgence of a slave trade in the Pacific. Palmer's unswerving conviction throughout 1868 that a coloured labour force would cushion the worst effects of depression in the colony was applauded by two other _Courier_ shareholders, Robert Ramsay and George Raff. Ramsay, who served as Treasurer to Palmer in 1870-71, was also a longstanding business associate of Louis Hope, the pioneer planter of Cleveland. Honoured by a land grant from the Palmer-McKenzie government, Hope inspired optimism in an indigenous sugar industry cultivated by coloured labour. During the late 1860's, most of these experimental plantations were located within a fifty-mile (80 km) radius of the capital. One of Hope's leading emulators was George Raff, whose Caboolture plantation was held by Melanesian advocates to be a model of Christianising industry.

Like the land issue, the Melanesian question was emerging as a potential source of disagreement between the _Courier's_ squatter proprietors and the leading shareholder, T.B. Stephens. Under Stephens' sole ownership, the _Courier_ had reprimanded Palmer and his colleagues for their failure to implement adequate safeguards under the Polynesian Labourers' Act. The abuses of recruiters, coupled with the inability of Melanesians to understand the terms of their contracts, had, according to the editor, turned the trade into a mere farce.²⁰ A strenuous advocate of British
immigration, Stephens never sought nor gained a parliamen-
tary reputation on the Melanesian question comparable with
the status he achieved on land matters. The strongest
resistance to the Palmer party in this instance came not
from Stephens but from members of the Courier's editorial
and parliamentary staffs.

In examining the Melanesian issue and the press, it
becomes once again important to include a discussion of
authorship as a catalyst for political and proprietorial
intervention. Between January 1868, when the Polynesian
Labourers' Bill was introduced into parliament, and 1871,
when the first full-scale debate on the issue took place in
the Assembly, William Brookes, a manufacturer and radical
Nonconformist, used the Brisbane press regularly in
attempts to stir up local opposition among farmers and
labourers. Dismissed by the Guardian as "a moralizing
philanthropist", Brookes, throughout 1868, captured con-
siderable attention as a Courier correspondent. An import-
ant press contact and associate of William Brookes at this
period was Robert Short. Formerly a journalist in the West
Indies, Short was a member of the Courier Company's parlia-
mentary staff and was employed on a casual basis as a short-
hand writer in the Assembly. Short's views on the
Melanesian traffic were clearly expounded in a series of
public lectures in early 1868. Like Brookes, Short con-
demned the expanding trade on predominantly moral grounds.
He believed the Polynesian Labourers Act to be pernicious,
not merely because it invested the sinister operations of
recruiters with a semblance of respectability but because it
appeared to infringe on areas of imperial jurisdiction.
The upshot of this activity was an immediate petition of
protest by Short, Brookes and local alderman, Joshua Jeays,
to the Acting-Governor, Maurice O'Connell.

The Courier's resistance to indentured labour through-
out 1868 was consistent with its initial rejection of the
Palmer-McKenzie Land Act. In its early months of Company
control, the Courier continued to publicize complaints
against recruiters. One example of this agitation was the
"Syren" case of September-October 1868. Early in the same
year, the "Syren" under Captain McEachern reached Brisbane
with a cargo of 130 Melanesian males, a number of whom had
died during the voyage. In addition to the obvious lack of
hygiene on board, the "Syren" was alleged to have committed
other irregularities. In parliament, Palmer admitted that
its captain had offered to sell fifty of his cargo to a
Sydney concern while the ship was still under quarantine at
Dunwich.

William Brookes' unofficial inquiries into the
"Syren's" recruiting activities, including conversations
with crew members, revealed a far stronger case against
McEachern. On 5 September 1868, Brookes published in the
Courier a sworn deposition by its former cook and steward,
Ishmael Williamson, to the effect that the "Syren" had
obtained its cargo by deception, that is to say, by luring
men on board the vessel and casting off while the Islanders
were below inspecting the hold. In a series of Courier
letters, Brookes alleged that further irregularities had
occurred after arrival; firstly, those who had died on the
return voyage had not been entered into the registry office records as having arrived; and secondly the Immigration Agent had made little attempt to confirm that the Islanders had undertaken their agreements on a voluntary basis. These allegations were sufficiently serious to create early doubts about the effectiveness of Palmer's Act. Under the influence of writers like Short and O'Carroll, the Courier was emerging as a useful mouthpiece for the small but vocal opposition to Melanesian labour.

Publication of Brookes-McEachern exchanges in the Courier sparked a lively local and inter-colonial debate on the Melanesian question. A flurry of correspondence followed in the Courier and in the weekly Queenslander as writers took sides with one or other of the contestants. Although Tasmanian papers had given McEachern some support, the Sydney press and the Herald in particular, were already implacable in their opposition to the trade. The Reverend John West, the influential Herald editor, concurred with Brookes during and after the "Syren" controversy. Outspoken criticism from both parties assumed the dimensions of a moral crusade in the following decade. As early as 1868, the Sydney paper openly referred to the trade as a species of slavery and engaged in regular agitation to arouse southern opinion. Indignant replies by individual recruiters like McEachern could not, in the Herald's opinion, exonerate the system from persistent charges of barbarity and fraud.

Agitation of 1868-69 by clergymen and journalists sparked complaints to the Courier and Herald that metropolitan papers were censuring the planters' viewpoint and opening their columns to "a set of mischievous individuals who make it their business to propagate falsehood, suppress truth and work every mischief in their power with the view of putting a stop to what they are pleased to call a slave trade". One prominent correspondent who defended the traffic was Queensland Colonial Secretary, Arthur Hunter Palmer. In October 1868, he took the unusual step of addressing the Herald in an effort to rebut information supplied to that journal by Rev. J.P. Sunderland. Palmer's economic interest in the Courier Company invited speculation about imminent attempts to disengage the paper from "the tyrannical brain grip of Mr. Brookes". The Queensland Express, alluding to the Courier debate, predicted that a softer line would soon be taken, while the Queensland Times, at Ipswich, detected in the same month "signs of relenting by our contemporary on the issue".

In the specific case of the Brisbane Newspaper Company, ties between individual shareholders and planters were well established. In addition to Robert Ramsay's longstanding association with Louis Hope, Arthur Hunter Palmer's legislative role and George Raff's direct participation have already been noted. W.H. Walsh, the most strident of the conservative proprietors, was also involved in the establishment of a sugar industry at Maryborough. The vested interests of Courier shareholders in Melanesian labour increased the likelihood of editorial intervention during 1869. In the wake of the Herald's forthright opposition to coloured labour, men like Ramsay and Raff were much less
likely to uphold the Sydney daily as a model for the Courier to imitate and more inclined to view the press as uniformly antagonistic and scurrilous.

The opposition of the Courier to the Melanesian traffic emanated not from Stephens and Liberal shareholders but from journalists like William O'Carroll and Robert Short. The circumstances surrounding the newspaper campaign and the active part played by Courier rank-and-file invite comparison with the Native Police campaign of 1861. During both these episodes, the Courier, in the face of Liberal parliamentary lethargy, galvanized significant extra-parliamentary opposition and helped to precipitate a Select Committee of Inquiry into persistent allegations of racial abuses. As in the Native Police campaign, the press drew on a variety of arguments—economic, legal and moral to buttress its case. Despite the provisions of the Polynesian Labourers' Act, the question of legal powers vested in country magistrates remained a point of contention. Important, too, were the moral arguments and accusations of slavery voiced by Nonconformists like William Brookes and the Rev. John West. The noteworthy contribution of the Sydney Morning Herald to the debate marked the end of a long period of antipathy between Brisbane and Sydney papers. While the Courier lacked the initiative of the Herald in agitating against Melanesian labour, it did play an early part by publicizing local disputes between masters and servants and by regularly reprinting Sydney and British extracts condemning the Pacific Island trade.

In addition to rejecting anti-Melanesian labour petitions out of hand, Queensland parliamentarians voiced displeasure of the press by a series of privilege motions in the Lower House. The Courier bore the brunt of these attacks, some of which originated from Brisbane Newspaper Company shareholders. The presence in the gallery of Robert Short, Brookes' staunch supporter and press contact, inspired parliamentarians in their regular recriminations against the Courier. Arthur Morley Francis, the member for East Moreton, was one who complained that he was being misrepresented by the paper's parliamentary staff.

When criticised by Brookes and the Courier during the hard-fought East Moreton election of 1868, Francis retaliated by accusing the press of adopting an exaggerated and sensationalist tone in its Melanesian reports. Francis was shortly to emerge as an important political identity in Brisbane journalism. In the early years of his parliamentary career, he wrote from Oxley to Brisbane papers putting the Melanesian case from an agriculturalist's viewpoint. After 1870, when he moved to Corinda and abandoned farming for journalism, the differences between Francis and the Brookes Courier faction were to become an integral part of the struggle for control of the Brisbane Newspaper Company. For Francis was to become one of O'Carroll's editorial replacements on the Courier and editor of the Telegraph before his elevation to the magistracy.

The precedent for Francis' journalistic career with the Courier was his successful motion for a Select Committee of Inquiry into the workings of the Polynesian Labourers' Act. This body, appointed on 14 May 1869, issued on the 28 August
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a report which, with only minor reservations, upheld the Act as highly satisfactory and opened the way for an escalating traffic. As Chairman of that Committee Francis was in a strong position to discredit newspaper critics of his conduct and of Melanesian immigration in general. The Select Committee of 1869 was primarily intended to allay the misgivings of the Colonial Office. Under growing pressure from London missionary groups, the Secretary of State, Granville, wrote to Governor Blackall on 23 April 1869 asking for an account of steps taken in the wake of the petitions. Enclosed in the same dispatches were allegations by missionaries of recruiting malpractices, extracted from leading British and Sydney newspapers - the London Times, the Leeds Mercury and the Sydney Morning Herald. Clearly Granville expected some form of local investigation in so far as the press extracts contained specific incidents and factual allegations made by well known members of the clergy.

Directly implicated in the controversy was George Raff, a co-proprietor of the Brisbane Newspaper Company and an employer of some 60-100 Melanesians on his Morayfield plantation at Caboolture. Like most planters, Raff, in spite of his newspaper investments, rarely appeared in print and seemed reluctant even to address his critics through his own property. When confronted with the recycling of colonial press criticism by British journals, Raff wrote a long letter to the Brisbane Courier, casting doubts on the allegations of "this excellent (anti-Kanaka) movement ... remarkable for its false and offensive statements". During the prolonged debate over Raff's plantation, the Courier and Queenslander had recorded an abnormally high rate of abscondings from Morayfield, culminating in a court action by Raff against 16 of his coloured labourers. In evidence, Raff himself acknowledged the restlessness of the Loyalty Islanders employed on the plantation; he described them as "a flock of sheep" led on by troublemakers.

The Courier's matter-of-fact reporting of court cases involving inadequate rations and wages would have been embarrassing enough when reproduced in the Herald or Leeds Mercury, but the same Brisbane paper persisted in disputing at length the findings of a Select Committee, composed for the most part of planters and Melanesian employers. The editor, William O'Carroll, began by pointing out that the striking absence of any recruiters or ship owners among the witnesses nullified the Committee's emphatic rejection of kidnapping and abuses on the islands. Moreover, the Courier estimated that of the 2,000 Melanesians employed in the colony, as many as 160 were unaccounted for and qualified as probable absconders. Tacit sympathy with William Brookes persisted among key members of the Courier staff. Sceptical of the moral argument concerning the civilising effects of indenture, the Courier argued that no more than 100 (or 1 in 20) of the Queensland Melanesians had any grounding or inclination towards Christianity. The publication of a survey of 114 employers by the Presbyterian church, requesting their permission to introduce missionary ministers onto plantations for the purpose of enlightening Melanesian workers, met with a dismal response. Only six
parties bothered to reply and the majority of these rejected
the suggestion out-of-hand. These revelations, editorial
and otherwise were in keeping with Brookes' condemnation of
the 1869 Select Committee as a farce and a device to obscure
exploitation of coloured people beneath a smoke screen of
paternal rhetoric.

The Courier, lacking the contacts and authority of the
Herald, confined its opposition to a few pointed editorials.
Alert to the fact that the Palmer party looked to the
Courier as the defender of local interests against the
Herald, O'Carroll adopted the indirect tactic of advocating
increased British immigration and appeared in mid-'69 with
William Brookes, Atkin and others at a public meeting for
that purpose. Another common practice to which Courier
journalists resorted was that of citing lengthy Herald
extracts about the Melanesian trade. Commenting on the
prosecution of the Herald over the "Young Australia"
recruiting episode, O'Carroll observed that the more
conscientiously papers expose such abuses, the more virulent
was the animosity incurred against them. Yet O'Carroll's
continuing defiance of management, was to prove his undoing
in the months to follow. During a previous Company
meeting, Stephens had been forced to use his casting vote to
thwart a motion for O'Carroll's resignation. A new init­
itiative by the squatter proprietary, coinciding with a
successful bid for government by Palmer, Walsh and Ramsay,
finally brought about O'Carroll's resignation in October
1869.

Industrial relations in both the Courier Company and
its relative, the Guardian, were strained and highly politi­
cized. One talented Courier reporter who left Brisbane in
June 1868 was David Watterson. Watterson subsequently
embarked on a distinguished editorial career with the
Melbourne Argus and Australasian. William O'Carroll the
Courier editor was to imitate William Belbridge's example
and defect to Atkin's Colonist (1871), the violent anti­
Walshite successor of the Express. His temporary replace­
ment on the Courier in the closing months of 1869 was George
Hall, formerly the Guardian's sub- editor. Finally A.M.
Francis, Chairman of the 1869 Melanesian Select Committee
and opponent of O'Carroll succeeded O'Carroll and Hall on
the Courier in 1870. Francis and the Select Committee
members had effectively discredited Brookes and local news­
paper reports over the issue. In one such episode, the
evidence of Robert Short, the Courier's parliamentary
reporter associated with Brookes, was refused by the Commit­
tee and his fee for casual Hansard reporting was withheld by
the Assembly. Arguably, the Select Committee Report was
the catalyst for the intervention of shareholders and for
Francis' appointment as leader writer. In anticipation of
the editorial changes, William Brookes wrote a revealing
letter to the Queensland Express in which he accused the
Courier and Queenslander of censoring those letters to the
editor which depicted the Melanesian traffic in an unfavour­
able light.

Under the editorship of George Hall (1869) and A.M.
Francis (1870), the Courier was more inclined to put the
planters' case in its correspondence columns than it had
The Courier office, corner Charlotte and George Streets, Brisbane, around 1870. (Courtesy OML, Neg. 64379)
been under O'Carroll. Throughout most of 1870-71, criticism of the Melanesian labour trade was muted and less likely to appear in the Courier's editorial columns than in articles and letters extracted from the Sydney Morning Herald. In order to offset the Herald's negative publicity, some of which continued to find its way into Brisbane papers, Palmer subsequently adopted the practice of sending to the Courier innocuous accounts of island recruiting by the newly-appointed Government Agents. This practice was consistent with the conservative strategy of using the Courier as a source of local support against a hostile southern and British press. Abrupt shifts in editorial policy clouded the Liberal reputation of the leading paper without greatly satisfying its critics. Palmer, new Colonial Secretary, was inclined to dismiss his own speculation as a puerile and parochial publication, incapable of combating the influential Herald. Nor did the ascendancy of the squating party prevent the defeat of George Raff in the East Moreton election of 1870, a contest fought largely on the Melanesian issue. About this time, Raff sold his interest in the Courier company and retired from active politics. Like most of the planter class, he seemed prepared to leave the Melanesian question to Palmer and his Ministers.

If Raff and Palmer were tempted to regard their newspaper speculation as politically embarrassing and financially unsound, W.H. Walsh, armed with greater experience of newspaper management, appears to have applied direct pressure on Courier journalists on a number of occasions. Irrespective of his early scruples about the Polynesian Labourers' Act and his self-confessed paternalism towards the "lower races", Walsh was primarily concerned to protect the reputation of Brisbane and Maryborough planters. One of his closest business associates of this period was Robert Travis, a fellow shareholder with Walsh in the Maryborough Sugar Company and a co-proprietor of the Maryborough Chronicle. Travis, a Maryborough merchant and early resident, was part owner of the "Jason", a recruiting vessel which subsequently acquired a notorious reputation for its sinister part in the Pacific Island traffic. In return for Travis's political and electoral support at Maryborough, Walsh was prepared to move against press critics of Melanesian recruitment. When charges of kidnapping and drugging a Government Agent were later brought against the "Jason"'s captain, Walsh appeared reluctant to proceed with a full investigation.

To placate Walsh and the other conservative proprietors, the Brisbane Newspaper Company embarked upon a new editorial experiment. In order to supplement the listing of "indexed subjects", upon which journalists were expected to tread lightly, a system of collective editorship was introduced as a means of curbing outspoken writers. Nineteenth-century newspapers had frequently improvised a system of collective authorship with impressive results but the simultaneous use of several editorial writers was a new and direct threat to journalistic independence. When practised systematically, such a system could only have exacerbated existing divisions between the new appointment,
A.M. Francis, and the other staff members. Apart from Walsh's own insistent distinction between the Courier's editor and the leader-writer, little internal information on the mechanics of collective editorship is available. Presumably, Francis, as the leader writer was free to choose and write upon a given topic but would send his contribution to the editor before printing. The fact that the Courier's sub-editor was none other than T.P. Pugh tends to confirm the hypothesis that the Courier's editorial experiment was initiated by Walsh on behalf of the pro-Palmer shareholders. Pugh, as former Courier editor to Stephens, was a far more experienced journalist than Francis. Had Stephens retained control, Pugh, no longer in parliament, would have undoubtedly been promoted, for the two men had enjoyed a successful economic and political relationship earlier in the decade.

One important effect of disagreement among Brisbane Newspaper Company shareholders was to hasten the decline of the Courier. Inconsistencies in editorial policy exposed the leading journal to criticisms from both Liberal and conservative country journals. After less than ten years of circulation as a daily, the Courier had ceased to lead public opinion. Another less obvious but significant effect of these divisions was the expansion of the Queenslander, the weekly synopsis of the Courier, at the expense of its daily relative. The Queenslander's bulk and apolitical tone appealed increasingly not only to provincial readers, at which it was aimed, but also to metropolitan readers. Under the continuous editorship of Angus Mackay, an authority on the sugar cane plant, the Queenslander became less dependent on the Courier for political direction and was consequently able to escape the wrath which the management had directed at O'Carroll. Predictably, Mackay was more preoccupied with the technology of sugar cultivation than with the politics of the coloured labour question. When the Queenslander did venture upon the subject, its performance was timid and unconvincing. One typical editorial of 1869 combined criticism of the Melanesian labour traffic with insinuations against the Melanesians themselves.

During the early years of Palmer's second term (1870-74) the squatter ascendancy in the legislature was far from secure. The shrewd appointment of Macalister to the Speakership, a move calculated to deprive the Opposition of their land spokesman and a much-needed vote in the Assembly, proved to be an unexpected boon for the Liberals. Lilley, untroubled by the constant intrigues of "Slippery Mac", was now able to forge a coherent Opposition to the Palmer party. In 1871, the call for Liberal unity was based on several popular issues designed to win the G.L.P. substantial support in the southern part of the colony and split Palmer's narrow parliamentary majority. These included opposition to the two-thirds clause required for constitutional amendments and electoral reform and redistribution. The participation of the Courier in support of Lilley would be vital to Liberal chances of regaining power.

Throughout the 1860's, constitutional agitation had been a consistent rallying point for Brisbane-based opposit-
ion to the powerful squattocracy. It has already been shown that much of this opposition was directed at autocratic powers exercised by the first Queensland Governor, George Bowen. Bowen's precipitate actions rebounded on his successors. During the parliamentary jostling which took place after his departure, Governors Blackall and Normanby were lobbied intensively in a series of parliamentary crises. Confident of a "moral majority" out of doors, Lilley prepared to block Supply and petition the Acting Governor Maurice O'Connell for Palmer's removal. A combination of critical factors - the legal weakness of the Ministry, a slender governing majority and an Acting-Governor - combined to make the deadlock of mid 1871 a volatile affair. These events were a test-case for the Courier under company control. Would the leading journal revive the Whig rhetoric of former years and adopt a high profile in the ensuing struggle or had it been gagged by the Palmer party?

Historian A.A. Morrison described the months that followed as "the bitterest and most protracted conflict the colony had yet known". To the universal indignation of the squatters, the Palmer Ministry, deprived of its working majority in Committee, was threatened with the loss of Supply. Palmer responded to the challenge by attempting to prorogue parliament for an unprecedented period of five months. He did so without consulting the Acting-Governor, O'Connell. In addition to a term of office in 1868, O'Connell held the reins of power during most of 1871, pending Normanby's arrival. O'Connell's social and business ties with the northern Ministry of Palmer and Walsh were unmistakable. As the first Government Resident and Crowns Land Commissioner at Gladstone, he had become personally acquainted with Walsh, Palmer and the Wide Bay and Leichhardt squattocracy over a period of almost two decades. In his despatch of the 8 July during the deadlock, O'Connell remained convinced that the claims of the Opposition to a workable majority were exaggerated. Presented with the option of a two month postponement or a dissolution, Palmer opted for the latter; in the election which followed, Palmer emerged with a slightly increased majority in the Lower House.

In the months to follow, Lilley and the G.L.P. strenuously contested the propriety of O'Connell's judgement and aroused extra-parliamentary opposition to the entrenched squattocracy Ministry. Lilley, in a series of pointed public allegations, insinuated that O'Connell's volte-face was dictated by his financial predicament for, he was, at that time, in debt to Palmer and two of his ministerial colleagues. His blistering attacks on O'Connell in parliament and at public appearances aroused the squattocracy and an outspoken provincial press against him. Country opinion was decidedly with O'Connell and Palmer. Despite some strong language from the newly published Colonist, metropolitan censure of the Governor was mild by comparison with the persistent and vociferous attacks of provincial journals on Lilley and the G.L.P.

As a product of the Fourth Estate and a former Courier editor himself (1857-58), Charles Lilley would have expected strong press support during his constitutional quarrels with
O'Connell and the Executive. A decade earlier, Lutwyche had been successful in galvanizing Stephens' *Courier* into agitation over the franchise issue. Lilley, influenced by Lutwyche's example, was still prepared to assign the press an important role in the struggle for constitutional change. Why then was the same support not forthcoming in 1871? The setback to the G.L.P. occurred on two fronts. Firstly, Lilley, unlike Lutwyche, failed to win significant rural popularity; secondly, and most importantly for this study, the *Courier*, under company control, pursued a faltering line on the issue. Only Robert Atkin, the talented editor of the *Express* and the *Colonist*, continued to uphold the tradition of militant metropolitan journalism until his premature death in May 1872.

If the *Colonist* was prepared to dismiss the *Courier* as ineffective and ambivalent in the constitutional crisis, Lilley denounced the same paper as actively harmful to the Liberal cause. In one of a series of fiery parliamentary debates, Lilley accused the conservative Minister for Works, W.H. Walsh, of circulating slanders against him and using his influence as a *Courier* proprietor to destroy the Liberal leader's public credibility.69 Insinuations of drunken and debauched behaviour during a Sydney visit of 1869 continued to surface against Lilley well after the fall of his government. To add to the discomfiture of *Courier* journalists, Liberal parliamentarians joined with Conservatives in moving breaches of privilege against the *Courier* during 1871. In a move designed to embarrass W.H. Walsh, H.E. King went so far as to demand that the *Courier* proprietors be summoned to the bar of the House.70 The complexities of company ownership invited speculation in parliament about the difficulty of proceeding for libel against a collective proprietary. It was widely alleged that Walsh was simultaneously gagging the *Courier* and inciting the provincial press to assail Lilley's political and moral reputation.

Liberal dissatisfaction with the *Courier* prompted a series of detailed revelations about the Brisbane newspaper Company in the Assembly. T.B. Stephens disclosed that, in order to save the paper from further political injury, he had offered either to sell his three shares at £500 to the squatting proprietary or to buy theirs at £800, an advance of £200 on the original share price.71 Despite the suggestion of the *Northern Argus* that "the only remedy now is a voluntary winding up of the concern",72 the squatters, at Walsh's insistence, refused Stephens' offer, not because of the B.N.C. profits (at 3d a copy in 1871, the *Courier* was hardly a lucrative concern) but primarily because Palmer, Walsh and Ramsay were now holding the reins of government. In political terms, the Conservatives had reason to be satisfied with their metropolitan investment; 1871 was a crucial year for the Palmer Ministry. Once the Liberal challenge of that year had been met, the popularity of the Conservatives improved as discoveries of tin and gold together with better wool prices saw an easing of the lengthy commercial slump. In evidence given during a prominent libel case of late 1871, Stephens, alluding specifically to Walsh, acknowledged that:

The Palmer party bought it (the *Courier*) as a
political organ but they never succeeded in making it one, but they had succeeded in gagging it. They never succeeded in getting the liberty as Mr. Walsh had done of coming in and out as they pleased and dictating to the editor. The only paper in which the honourable member had this power was the one over which he possessed the mortgage, the Maryborough Chronicle and which constantly bore proofs of his skill. The tactic of gagging the leading Brisbane paper persisted throughout most of Palmer's four years in office. After a protracted and drawn-out Supreme Court hearing, at which Lilley put the case for Stephens and Griffith for the squatters, the Brisbane Newspaper Company was formally dissolved in April 1873.

The case in equity of Walsh versus Stephens and Others began in August 1872 and lasted seven months. A complex and sensitive dispute, it involved the careful dissection of the 1863 Companies Act by Chief Justice, James Cockle. Walsh, Palmer and Cowlishaw accused Stephens and the remaining shareholders, Baynes and Thornton, of attempting to buy the share of the seventh and most recent shareholder William Miles, thereby reducing the limited liability partnership to six instead of the stipulated minimum of seven. To this substantial charge, the squatters added accusations of irregular conduct at Company meetings during 1872. Walsh was largely responsible for initiating legal proceedings. His autocratic behaviour was consistent with his prosecution of Guardian manager, William Belbridge and his recent libel writ for £2000 against a local Wide Bay newspaper. The Courier Company thus ended on the same vindictive note as the Guardian enterprise which had preceded it. Strained relations between journalists and management did not afford the squatters the belated satisfaction they had sought. On the basis of evidence by John Stephens, the Company accountant and brother of Thomas Balckett, most of the charges brought were quashed. It became apparent in evidence that, since the formation of the Palmer Ministry in 1870, the squatters had largely boycotted Company meetings and prevented the formation of a quorum. In a diplomatic and difficult judgement, Cockle distributed the costs evenly among the parties.

After a thirteen year period of association with the Courier, T.B. Stephens had severed his connection with Brisbane journalism. He was to remain in politics only two more years before his death in 1875. The Brisbane paper and plant was auctioned in November 1873 and purchased briefly by William Baynes, one of the original shareholders in sympathy with Stephens. Within three days of the purchase, the Courier had passed to another original shareholder, E.I.C. Browne and to Gresley Lukin, a civil servant. As the new manager of the Courier and Queenslander, Lukin sought to appease both political camps by concentrating his organizational ability and literary gift on the Queenslander. His task of rebuilding the paper's literary staff was complicated by the industrial and political upheavals of the post 1866 years and the steady
migration of dissatisfied journalists into the provinces or to southern colonies.

Metropolitan journalism was now at a low ebb. The new journalism of the *Queenslander* and of the *Telegraph*, a comfortable hybrid of literary prose and statistical commentary, represented a retreat from the political campaigns of the immediate post-Separation years. Paradoxically, the declining militancy of the *Courier* coincided with the rise of a highly polemical brand of provincial journalism in Queensland. In part, this development was an explicit rejection of the *Courier's* staid example under corporate ownership. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, personality and strident individualism continued to be vital ingredients in the style of the Queensland country editor.
Chapter 7

Town and Station: Land Disputes in Southern and Central Queensland

The blatant gagging of the *Courier* and its limited growth by the end of the 1860's, threatened to create an unprecedented situation in Queensland whereby provincial publications would enjoy greater influence than their counterparts in southern colonies. The shift in press agitation from Brisbane to the provinces was most pronounced during the years 1867-71, and varied according to local conditions. Provincial competition at Warwick, Rockhampton, Maryborough and Ipswich was one factor which offset the decline of metropolitan papers and sharpened tensions between town and station. The broad scope of the Crown lands Alienation Act of 1868, encompassing pastoral leasehold, agricultural selection, town commonage, coastal reserves and the gazetting of goldfields, encouraged loose alliances of townspeople to oppose the pastoral monopoly. In assessing the political impact of the comprehensive 1868 legislation, historian Beverley Kingston has upheld the 'via media' thesis on the basis of her metropolitan newspaper soundings.¹ However, a closer study of the provincial press will reveal the fragility of the consensus over land, while the preceding analyses of Brisbane newspaper companies help to account for the growing docility of metropolitan papers on the same question. It will be argued that provincial editors, like James Morgan (*Warwick Argus*) and Charles Hardie Buzacott (*Peak Downs Telegram*), usurped the militant role of Brisbane journalists on the land issue, and played a significant part in galvanizing opposition to the obstructive tactics of the squatters.

Prior to 1867, Brisbane newspapers like the *Brisbane Courier* and the *Queensland Daily Guardian* had played the most prominent part in land agitation on behalf of the agriculturalist. Queensland country editors of the early 1860's, inhabiting what was still the squatters' bastion, were initially forced to exercise greater restraint than their metropolitan counterparts, when commenting on high-handed actions by the landed class. This situation continued to operate in centres like Dalby, Toowoomba and Gayndah, where metropolitan allegations of land fraud against individual squatters provoked a parochial reflex in favour of the local benefactor. At Maryborough, land was not a political issue until the election of 1871.² However the restrictive focus of country papers, the capacity of their
editors and the sharp personality differences in small settlements ensured that, once land disputes had flared, political feuds and newspaper polemics would be bitter and protracted.

In the absence of other serious preoccupations, land issues loomed large for early settlers on the Darling Downs. Although the local press did not sponsor land leagues like those at Brisbane and Rockhampton, the strategic position of the Downs and the intensity of the debate over selection, after 1866, promised to inject its prosaic journalism with new vitality. Yet the label "pro-selector" did not immediately commit the Downs press to a strong anti-squatting position. Widespread editorial acceptance of the viability of "farming-cum-grazing" in the wake of Macalister's Leasing Bill inhibited outbreaks of militant journalism. The Dalby Herald's Brisbane correspondent optimistically interpreted the combination of these two activities as an incentive to the small capitalist to keep stock as well as to cultivate the land. At Warwick, the Argus, heartened by the establishment of new Agricultural Reserves on the Downs, had not yet begun to contest the practical effects of simultaneous farming and grazing. The only dissenting voice was that of "Caustic", an unidentified Darling Downs Gazette contributor. Commenting on the recent freehold purchase of 3,200 ha. of Gowrie station by the original pastoral occupants, "Caustic" predicted that the monopoly exercised by large capitalists over the public estate would prove "an irresistible barrier to the progress of agriculture".

Before the comprehensive legislation of 1868 had even been introduced into the Queensland parliament, the "via media" proposal was the subject of sharp disagreement in the provincial press. The fall of the Macalister administration and the advent of a new Ministry, openly favourable to the large land owner, prompted a bitter and sustained denunciation of decisions which the Warwick Argus, in a prophetic moment, called "class legislation and preservation". The new Lands Minister, E.W. Lamb, encouraged rapid alienation by extending the scope of selection to unsurveyed land, the only condition of residence being cultivation of one-sixth of the area selected. The results of this "free selection" policy were felt most dramatically on the Toowoomba and Warwick Reserves. In the months September to October 1867, 65,000 hectares were snapped up, with three-quarters of it going to squatters and speculators. Conservative journals like the Warwick Examiner and Times and the Queensland Times (Ipswich) hailed the new regulations as the generous act of a progressive administration. The Darling Downs Gazette, however, insisted that:

The general public had no proper notice; the land speculators and pastoral lessees have been given a start and, whether justly or not, it will be believed that this has been done so purposely.

Central to the ongoing press controversy was the role played by E.W. Lamb and officials of the Lands Department in countenancing the recent transactions. While the Dalby Herald and the Darling Downs Gazette tended to ascribe the defects of the regulations to bureaucratic incompetence
rather than to political conniving. The Warwick Argus viewed the land speculation of August-October 1867 as unmistakable evidence of a "wholesale swindle of the rights of a class" and evinced suspicion of the Lands Department as a willing aim of the squatters. One regular complaint in the Warwick Argus was the failure of provincial land agents to provide intending selectors with adequate guidelines or maps. At Toowoomba, where speculation was equally rampant, James Taylor and John Watts continued to hold sway over the town and its institutions. Toowoomba and its press had developed a strong sense of social order and routine which militated against radical land politics. With the aid of the Chronicle, W.H. Groom, the town's leading Liberal spokesman during the 1860's, pursued a pragmatic brand of politics which rarely confronted the squatters.

In Sworn to No Master, the most recent study of the Queensland provincial press, Rod Kirkpatrick carefully documents pioneer newspaper proprietors and publications of the Downs. Despite the fact that he was based at Toowoomba, Kirkpatrick has more to say about central and northern Queensland papers than about local developments. Tacitly, he appears to accept Waterson's authoritative judgement about the mediocrity of local productions. The first Downs publication, the Darling Downs Gazette, established at Drayton in 1858 and funded by 15 squatters (£20 each), continued to reflect predictable community concerns with material progress and moral improvement after its removal to Toowoomba in 1861. If Toowoomba's early politics and journalism fit the model of cultural mediocrity and apathy outlined in Squatter, Selector and Storekeeper, Duncan Waterson's pervasive "petty bourgeois ethos" was less in evidence at Warwick. Warwick's distinctive position as a provincial battleground between town and station was determined by the spirited resistance of the Argus and by the quality of its parliamentary representatives.

James Morgan, Warwick's Mayor, militant editor and politician, was not the archetypal storekeeper of Waterson's perceptive study. Rather he belonged to a different class of men in the colonies - better-educated, ambitious and acquainted with practical realities on the land. Already fifty years of age in 1866, Morgan possessed an intimate knowledge of both squatting and farming which he put to good use in his onslaught on local land jobbers. The son of a farmer, Morgan had been a surveyor before immigrating to the Australian colonies in 1841. After managing W.C. Wentworth's Namoi River station, he had helped to establish Talgai and Rosenthal stations at Warwick before Separation. John Douglas, the polished member for Eastern Downs and Chairman of the dummying inquiry of late 1867, was another local figure who fitted the social category occupied by Morgan. It was John Douglas, rather than Arthur Macalister, who, aided by a knowledge of pastoralism and publicity from the Argus, initiated the first serious attempt to check the squatting monopoly on the Darling Downs. For a substantial number of men who had unsuccessfully owned or managed stations in southern and central Queensland prior to 1866 - James Morgan (Warwick), John Douglas (Eastern Downs), Robert Atkin (Clermont and West
Moreton), Henry King (Wide Bay) and Alexander Fyfe (Rockhampton) - Liberal politics, civil administration and journalism became important career outlets. One misconception surrounding the press stereotype of the 'Fighting Editors' was the assumption that he was a man of little or no education. For while a significant proportion of Queensland country journalists were of Irish background, most emanated from privileged Irish Protestant stock. Thrown up in the wake of the pastoral boom, this disaffected group, of which Morgan was the classic example, assumed responsibility for a series of local anti-squatting offensives.

In contrast with the staid journalistic formula which prevailed at Toowoomba, the Warwick press featured a lively correspondence on the land issue. The Examiner, in competition with the Argus, published a series of letters by "Libra" and "Grazier" to refute unidentified complaints in the Argus about dummies and land sharks. "Grazier", an Examiner subscriber, undertook to defend the pastoral pioneer on the grounds that:

... they are the only men who have colonised and contributed to the permanent advancement of Queensland. They risked their capital and, in many instances, their lives in their endeavour to settle the country.17

While contributory authorship continued to play a part in provincial journalism, editorial exchanges came to dominate polemics over land. Feuding with the Examiner became an integral part of the Argus's mission to expose the "blighted curse of dummying". Edited by Richard Cowton and backed by the squatters, the Examiner, purchased a new printing press in an attempt to put the irreverent Argus out of business.18

The Argus' popular appeal lay in the force and inventiveness of its style, shaped largely by Morgan himself. Even before the first proprietor, Patrick Ritchie, had sold his concern, Morgan appears to have been involved in the writing of Argus editorials. As its new proprietor and editor, he signalled his political aspirations and confirmed his invidious reputation among the squatters as "an irrational fanatic".19

James Morgan's purchase of the Warwick Argus in mid 1868 corresponded with important new developments in the land debate. The Crown Lands Alienation Act of that year offered pastoralists in settled districts ten year leases on condition that half of their runs would be resumed for selection. The August regulations of 1867 had already demonstrated that Darling Downs pastoralists, aided by officials, could subvert selection provisions to consolidate their land holdings. If metropolitan papers entered a general protest against Lamb and the Lands Department over the unfavourable resumption of runs, the Argus was better placed to publicize specific complaints against prominent individuals. Warwick squatters, anticipating local criticism, had come to regard the local press as a useful political investment. F.J.C. Wildash, owner of Canning Downs and a relentless land speculator, financed the Warwick Examiner and Times and took shares in the Brisbane Guardian newspaper company. Partnering Wildash in the Examiner venture were the Clarks, sons of a wealthy Tasmanian merchant and owners
Map 4  Warwick district around 1870, showing township, reserves, stations and pre-emption.
of the prosperous Talgai stud. With their speculation in newspapers, Warwick squatters appeared to have overcome a deep-seated reluctance to act as ideologues on the land question. Prior to his election as member for Warwick, George Clark had written a series of letters entitled "Squatter and Farmer" for the *Examiner and Times*, in which he argued the rights of each, on the basis of aggregate capital.20 Once elected, however, he promptly abandoned promises of co-operation for naked self-interest.21

The location of the Warwick Agricultural Reserve and the extended commonage of 1868 brought selectors and townspeople into direct competition with Wildash for grazing and watering rights. Dubbed the "arch dummer of the colony", Wildash leased 29,800 hectares of rich land along the Condamine under the provisions of the Crown Lands Alienation Act. Undeterred by threats of legal action against the *Argus*, Morgan launched a series of relentless attacks on the Canning Downs proprietor in 1869-70; Wildash was accused of impounding selectors' stock and systematically obstructing attempts to declare a goldfield at Lucky Valley. The *Examiner*, rebutting charges that Wildash had poisoned the Condamine and served as its Lucky Valley correspondent, dismissed the *Argus* insinuations as "the lowest form of Billingsgate".22 Nevertheless, the *Argus* pressed home its less extreme charges against the unstable Canning Downs proprietor and helped to destroy his political credibility. Unlike the Clarks, Wildash never contested a parliamentary election; after his rabid speculation precipitated him into insolvency, Wildash ended his colonial career in drunkenness and suicide.

While the *Darling Downs Gazette*, at Toowoomba, winked at unchecked abuse of the Land Act by James Taylor and George Davenport, the *Warwick Argus* continued its offensive against the Clarks of Talgai. It repeatedly accused the sitting Warwick member of submitting a false description of nine surveyed blocks of the Railway Reserve as one unsurveyed portion. Furthermore, the *Argus* insinuated, leading officials of the Lands Department had colluded with Clark in accepting the false declaration and allowed him to pocket £25 in survey fees. So persistent were the charges that George Clark and Frank Gregory felt obliged to explicitly reject them in public during 1870. Alluding to the now famous 508 acres (206 ha) at a Toowoomba pre-election meeting, Clark denied that he had dummied but affirmed his determination to exercise his rights under the 1868 Act.23 Matters came to a head in August 1870 after the *Argus* published a government survey map showing the problematic selections as surveyed24 and printed a letter by "Hampden" which rehearsed the allegations against the Warwick member.25 The association of William Carr-Boyd, the local land agent, with the "Hampden" letter kept alive suspicions that members of the Lands Department had condoned the Clark transactions.

Held at the Brisbane Supreme Court in August 1870, the libel case Clark v. Morgan for damages of £500 was at once a political and highly technical exercise. While Clark's description of the land as unsurveyed was shown to be legally correct within the terms of the 1868 legislation, the
evidence of Lands Department officials served to highlight discrepancies associated with the interpretation of land regulations. During the drawn-out hearing, A.C. Gregory failed to explain why applications for blocks on which surveys had been cancelled had been granted in some instances and not in others. After four days of complex argument, the jury exonerated Clark and imposed a modest fine of £50 damages on the Argus owner. However, the imposition of court costs left the defendant with a substantial debt of over £100 to meet - not sufficient to silence the Argus as Clark had hoped, but an effective deterrent against further anti-squatter outbursts.

If the charge of political opportunism against Morgan had some basis, the Argus proprietor could make the counter claim that the libel action against his outspoken newspaper had been deliberately postponed until such time as he himself decided to stand for parliament. The sitting Liberal member, E.L. Thornton, had proved a failure in parliament and Morgan emerged as his obvious successor. In the same month as the successful Supreme Court action, Morgan was compensated by a tactical victory over Clark. At the Warwick election of mid-August, Morgan making his political debut, emerged with a majority of 18 votes over his opponent and was driven triumphantly through the streets of the township, amid "great shouts" and "wild excitement". The contest between Morgan and the Clarks was to culminate in the still more dramatic 1871 election, an incident to be discussed in the final Chapter.

Hailed as a milestone in class co-operation, the Land Act of 1868 created unexpected tensions between town and station. In comparing developments in southern and central Queensland, this study defines the land issue in broader terms than either Duncan Waterson or Beverley Kingston. In central Queensland, selection was of far less political importance than pressure for Goldfield and Town Reserves. Yet, insofar as the extension of commonage and the creation of reserves threatened to deprive squatters of well-watered pasture, the situation at Rockhampton and at Clermont was little different from that on the Darling Downs. The revival of the controversy over Emu Park was the first symptom of discontent in central Queensland. Rockhampton residents had previously petitioned parliament for the creation of a Coastal Reserve, forty-eight kilometres from the township, on the site of the Cawarral pastoral run. However, Robert Ross, who managed Cawarral on behalf of Ross, Beddome and Palmer, was unwilling to relinquish this fertile coastal property and lodged an application for 2,560 acres (or 2,037 ha.) of Cawarral as first class pastoral land under the Coffee and Sugar Regulation of the new Land Act. The intention of the owners was to secure Melanesian labour from recruiting vessels which had begun to arrive in the north during that year.

The conspicuous contribution of central Queensland pastoralists, Archibald Archer and Arthur Hunter Palmer, to the land debate had immediate implications for the situation at Rockhampton. By October 1868, when a second and larger petition of protest was collected over Emu Park, Palmer, one of the joint proprietors of Cawarral and brother-in-law of
Robert Ross, was holding the strategic portfolio for Public Lands. The Rockhampton Bulletin, which had played some part in getting up the first petition, noted politely that the new document would "test Mr. Palmer's disinterestedness". Its quarrelsome competitor, the Northern Argus, ridiculed southern insinuations against Palmer and predicted a defeat for the Bulletin over the petition. Ultimately, the success of the new Emu Park petition reflected little credit on either the Cawarral owners or the lukewarm town press. In a series of fortuitous developments, Palmer, still resisting the demands of the petitioners, was ejected from office by a southern Liberal administration. Ironically, the declaration of Emu Park Reserve was the work of an unpopular southern politician, Arthur Macalister. Much of the groundwork and lobbying over Emu Park had been performed by Robert Atkin, a Liberal journalist-politician. Atkin's background in central Queensland pastoralism, and his outspoken criticism of the squatters in the Queensland Express, marked him an important political voice in central Queensland, comparable with that of James Morgan on the Darling Downs.

Since its inception in 1861, the Rockhampton Bulletin had offered only timid criticism of local landholders. A test case for editorial independence was the Gracemere Affair of September 1868, during which both the Bulletin and rival Argus defended the Archer family against southern accusations of manipulating the provisions of the Land Act for their own advantage. The subservience of Rockhampton papers to the landed interest was all the more remarkable, given the constant feuding of its editors. When Archibald Archer wrote to the Bulletin to protest against metropolitan press allegations over Gracemere and attempted to praise local journalists, the Bulletin balked at any attempt to place the paper on the same level as the rival Argus, a paper which "even when advocating Mr. Archer's own candidature has indulged in the grossest and most scurrilous attacks and established a terrorism over many weak-minded persons in the town who are cowed into silence through mere fear of being attacked by its foul-mouthed proprietor". In following weeks, the Bulletin initiated libel proceedings for £200 against Bourcicault, the Argus proprietor.

The volatile world of Rockhampton journalism was an important breeding ground for one of Queensland's best known colonial editors, Thadeus O'Kane. His defection from Bourcicault's Argus to Buzacott's Bulletin, was undoubtedly a fruitful source of grievance between the two papers. Best known for his long-standing editorship of the Northern Miner (Charters Towers), Thadeus O'Kane has been lauded as "one of the most independent editors who ever trod Australian soil". Yet his Rockhampton career of the 1860's was overshadowed by the editorial activity of contemporaries like James Morgan (Warwick) and C.H. Buzacott (Clermont). While newspaper competition at Rockhampton generated bitter personal feeling, the Warwick and Clermont contests of the same period represented more than this, based as they were on clearly defined class interests and a consistent ideology of land settlement. The third provincial editor of note during the sixties was C.H. Buzacott, brother of the Rock-
Charles Hardie Buzacott, proprietor and editor of the *Peak Downs Telegram*, around 1870. (Courtesy OML, Neg. 6478)
hampton Bulletin proprietor. Like Morgan, Buzacott used his paper, the Peak Downs Telegram, to dispute the land monopoly of the local squattocracy. His difficult years at Clermont, discussed here, and his contribution to the Native Police Debate (Chapter Four), confirm his importance as the leading provincial editor/proprietor of the decade.

Throughout 1868, the political predicament of Buzacott's Peak Downs Telegram was comparable with that of the Bulletin at Rockhampton. Would the Telegram oppose the squatters and risk the ire of Sandeman, De Satgé and Palmer, or would it fall in step with local pastoralists as the Bulletin had done during the Gracemere Affair? More perceptive and forthright than the Bulletin, the Telegram, in its self-conscious editorials, invoked the language of class to explain impending conflict. Its references to the "men of blue blood" and "the Monarch of Wolfgang" were reminiscent of James Morgan's allusions to the Darling Downs squatters. For the most part, the Telegram was to engage in more dignified opposition than the Warwick Argus. Buzacott was well aware of his financial vulnerability; he had already been embroiled in a drawn out libel action and been forced to pay the plaintiff, Clermont physician Spiros Candiottis, the sum of £75. Politics appears to have played some part in this legal dispute, for the quarrelsome Candiottis, was in the following months, one of the loudest advocates of the squatting party in the township.

More than the Emu Park petition or the Gracemere consolidation of the same year, the clashes at Clermont and Copperfield over land and water rights threatened to open a substantial rift in central Queensland class relations. Throughout the colony, gold, like selection, was becoming a lever for unlocking the land. The presence of miners around Warwick and the rush to Cawarral in late 1868 helped to fuel protests against the squatters. The pattern of disputes surrounding these early gold discoveries was most clearly delineated on Peak Downs. Unlike Nashville (Gympie) where a large concentration of diggers proved relatively innocuous to pastoralists, the six smaller finds on northern Peak Downs were scattered between Clermont, Copperfield, Blair Athol. The presence of some 3,500 diggers in the district by 1865 encouraged the growth of small towns and the occupation of substantial portions of pastoral runs. Central to land disputes of the period was the question of access to water. Selectors, miners and town residents resented the monopoly exercised by large landholders over creeks and water frontages. On Peak Downs, this resentment was fuelled by a severe drought which gripped the district in 1868 and threatened alluvial operations.

The Peak Downs stations on which mining and settlement had occurred - Wolfgang, Huntley, Cheeseborough, Drummond and Langton - were held by two partnerships, Milson, De Satgé and Sandeman, and Mood and Manning. While the latter were Sydney-based speculators operating through the Australian Joint Stock Bank, Gordon Sandeman and his brother-in-law, Oscar de Satgé, were taking an active part in Queensland politics as parliamentary advocates of the outside squatting interest. Like the Pure Merinos of
Map 5  Clermont district, with pastoral runs and mineral discoveries approximately marked.
southern Queensland, the Peak Downs squattocracy availed itself of pre-emptive provisions within the 1868 Land Act in its attempt to stave off unwanted intruders. The Peak Downs Telegram, reporting the situation at the Springs Diggings on Wolfgang, accused De Satgé and his neighbours Hood and Manning, of purchasing all permanent water in the neighbourhood and conspiring to abolish the recently declared Peak Downs Goldfields Reserve. According to Buzacott, Oscar de Satgé and his partners, by exercising their pre-emptive right on Wolfgang and Cheeseborough, were cutting off the much-needed water supply of miners and teamsters in the area. De Satgé was further criticised in the Telegram for fencing portions of his runs, impounding diggers' horses, and selling water to the local people. Similar tensions prevailed at Copperfield and at Clermont where strategic purchases by pastoralists had left the town occupants without good land or fresh water.

C.H. Buzacott's pointed denunciation of the selfish policy pursued by Peak Downs squatters coincided closely with press debate over the Gracemere consolidation and the Emu Park Reserve. The "Springs Affair" on Wolfgang threatened to compromise northern unity more seriously than the Rockhampton disputes by casting further doubt on the efficiency of the Lands Department and the integrity of northern Ministers. At Rockhampton, the Archers who were the original pastoral occupants of Peak Downs, sought to act as arbiters in the dispute. Archibald Archer, writing to the Bulletin, was critical of the Telegram and sought to exonerate E.W. Lamb, the Lands Minister and an extensive land investor on Peak Downs, from charges of calculated bias over the Springs. According to Archer, the responsibility for approving the pre-emptive purchases lay not with Lamb, but with his predecessor Arthur Macalister. Subsequently, both the Bulletin and Telegram refuted Archer's claim and stated that Lamb, by abolishing the Peak Downs goldfield, had paved the way for pre-emptive purchases on Wolfgang, Drummond and neighbouring runs. At Rockhampton, the Northern Argus, the only central Queensland newspaper to support Lamb and the squatters over the Springs, taxed the Buzacott brothers with "Squatters on the Nerves" and disparaged the Telegram as little more than a copy of the Bulletin. Yet, the outspoken editorial policy pursued by the Telegram at this time was in reality stimulating the Bulletin, rather than merely imitating it. Although the Bulletin was unwilling to tackle Archer and the local squatters head on, it was quick to defend the Telegram against the Argus and to publicize the "insane policy" practised by pastoralists inland. Under such circumstances, argued the Bulletin, Clermont residents had little option but to support a Town Liberal candidate. The return of a Liberal Ministry at the close of 1868 hastened the resolution of northern land disputes. Along with Emu Park, the Springs dispute was defused by the declaration of two Water Reserves along Gowrie Creek.

With the fall of the squatting ministry at the close of 1868, Peak Downs squatters met at Springsure and nominated Oscar de Satgé as their parliamentary spokesman. In addition to upholding the pre-emptive right, they agreed to lobby the incoming administration for a ten year extension
of leases with option to purchase their head stations and improvements.52 De Satgé, who managed Gordon Sandeman's Peak Downs stations, was on the threshold of a successful parliamentary career as an active supporter of the emerging Palmer party. In January 1869, C.H. Buzacott, asserting the independence of the Telegram from Sandeman and the Palmer Party, opted to stand himself as the town candidate in place of Robert Atkin. In a concerted attempt to discredit his rival, De Satgé issued a series of personal attacks on Buzacott in the Rockhampton Argus. Buzacott promptly indicated his intention of preserving the correspondence as evidence, in the event of libel proceedings against the Telegram.53

After a hard fought election, Clermont was the scene of a protracted quarrel between C.H. Buzacott and the new Police Magistrate, C.H. Lambert.54 The most important charge against Lambert touching the 1869 election was that of gross partiality to the successful squatter candidate. According to Buzacott, Lambert was a member of De Satgé's electoral committee, and a social acquaintance of Candiotis and De Satgé.55 Buzacott's allegations of partisanship extended to the entire Clermont bench, one of whom was Oscar's brother, Henry De Satgé. The practice of elevating relatives and friends of local squatting families to influential positions was widespread in provincial Queensland. Just as the Clarks, at Warwick, made no secret of dominating the Bench, so De Satgé made little attempt to refute Buzacott's accusation that "the whole of the sworn-in magistrates of the District, except the writer, are representatives of Sydney Capitalists and warm partisans of Mr. Oscar de Satgé".56 Indeed, the influence of the Sydney interest extended to the Copperfield mines where the superintendent, a brother of the Bank of New South Wales general manager, successfully exerted pressure on his employees to vote for De Satgé.57 Even if Buzacott's counter-charges could have been vindicated in the aftermath of the Clermont election, the possibility of concerted official action against the strong conservative faction was remote. After a drawn-out correspondence lasting more than three months, the Colonial Secretary, Arthur Hodgson, dismissed both sets of charges and terminated the election enquiry.58

For the remainder of 1869, C.H. Buzacott remained a pariah at Clermont, shut out from polite station society. In January 1870, the drought on Peak Downs was broken abruptly by serious flooding which inflicted £15,000 damages on the Clermont settlement. It was an ironic end to a political dispute which had originated over access to water. Buzacott passed the night up a tree, after part of the Telegram office and most of his printing machinery were swept away.59 The flood, one of series which ravaged Clermont in its history, hastened C.H. Buzacott's decision to return to Rockhampton. With his remaining capital he purchased the Rockhampton Bulletin from a joint stock company managed by his brother, and sold the depleted Telegram to Charles Graham. Under Graham's editorship, the Telegram was transformed into a moderate pro-squatting organ. After the electoral redistribution of 1872, Graham was himself elected for Clermont and served for a time as
Minister for Lands to Arthur Hunter Palmer.60

The land disputes and scandals, which erupted in the press during the late 1860's, had a significant impact on parliamentary elections and on the fortunes of successive Queensland Ministries. For squatter-politicians like E.W. Lamb, Arthur Hunter Palmer, Archibald Archer and George Clark, control of the Lands portfolio had become a sensitive, if not invidious, exercise. The intense land debate of late 1868-69 undoubtedly contributed to the defeat of the squatting administration of McKenzie and Palmer (Aug. 1867-Nov. 1818) and aided the resurgence of the Town Liberals in the Queensland parliament (Nov. 1868-May 1870). To what extent class conflict in provincial centres was translated into ongoing parliamentary initiatives remains a moot point. Despite calls from the press, the new Liberal administration made no concerted attempt to restructure the Lands Department while the squatters' local power base, the magistracy, also remained unaltered.

Even in centres where no newspaper competition had arisen, politically active newspaper editors and proprietors were vulnerable to legal pursuit, because of the unswerving support which provincial magistrates provided for local squatters. During the early decades of settlement, country magistrates were invariably recruited from the ranks of the pastoralists. Clashes between magistrates and journalists occurred at Gayndah (1862), Rockhampton (1863), Clermont (1869), Maryborough (1870) and Mount Perry (1874).61 In addition to serious pecuniary loss, offending journalists ran the risk of physical assault and of having expensive printing equipment confiscated or destroyed. The rising incidence of libel suits involving provincial newspapers after 1867 was testimony to the genuine anti-squatting sentiment which persisted in parts of rural Queensland.
Chapter 8

“Scribes and Hirelings!”: The Provincial Press and the Elections of 1871

While the dynamic relationship existing between 19th century Liberal politicians and the press has been generally acknowledged, the ties between leading conservative politicians and colonial newspapers have remained more obscure. Arthur Hunter Palmer, Queensland's longest-serving Premier of the 1870's (May 1870-Jan. 1874) is a case in point. Unlike Charles Lilley, his parliamentary rival, Palmer had not mastered the rhetoric of the Fourth Estate, nor could he claim to have occupied an editorial chair. Palmer's most significant involvement with the Queensland press was undoubtedly his substantial shareholdings in the Queensland Daily Guardian and Courier companies. In the unstable years of the Palmer Ministry, the press was viewed as a vital political investment in its bid to retain power. Metropolitan business connections appear to have stimulated the emergence of a broadly-based conservative party, still dominated by squatters, but drawn from different regions of the colony. In the wake of unexpected provincial resistance on the land issue, politically active squatters in southern and central Queensland, along with their conservative town allies, were agreed upon the need to exercise greater vigilance over the country press. The upshot for the Palmer years was systematic political patronage of the press, extending to most Queensland provincial centres.

Ties between conservative politicians and provincial journalists were durable and expedient in the case of Palmer's first Lands Minister, John Malbon Thompson and the Queensland Times. Prior to the 1870 election, Thompson, using the pseudonym of "Diard", had written a series of articles for the Queensland Times in which he expressed support for free trade in land, a low upset price and a limited franchise. A solicitor, rather than a barrister or squatter, Thompson was accused by his fellow professionals of using his newspaper and Freemason connections in a precocious bid for the Attorney-Generalship. The Queensland Times, keen to break the legal monopoly of the Liberals, strongly defended Thompson as a politician "not given to clap-trap (or) inflammatory appeals to popular passions and prejudices." Under its second editor, Edward Butterfield (1864-1871), the Ipswich tri-weekly disseminated a brand of shrill conservatism pioneered by the Sydney Morning Herald in previous decades. By the time he retired
## Table 4

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*(Original Source: Q.V. and P., 1868-69, p. 425).*
in mid 1871, Butterfield had given valuable support to suc­
cessive squatting ministries. During the 1866 crisis and
the Liberal split of 1869, the Queensland Times had played a
major part in mobilizing provincial opinion against the
Courier and the Liberal press. In return for favourable
publicity and political service, journalists could expect to
be rewarded by the local patron. A teacher and classical
scholar, Butterfield was elevated to the Education Depart­
ment under Palmer.⁴ His brother, Joseph, who succeeded him
as Times editor, employed the same vendetta tactics against
Thompson's opponents. Chairing an Ipswich gathering in
honour of the departing editor, Thompson paid tribute to a
writer whom he claimed to have known for upwards of thirty
years.⁵

The co-operation of the Queensland Times with squatting
ministries encouraged Liberal allegations of a "hireling
press", patronized and funded by conservatives. During the
election of 1868, the Courier had accused the Queensland Times of accepting bribes from conservative politicians.⁶
The question of government patronage in the form of paid
advertisements to newspapers was also raised in parliament
at this time. A comprehensive listing, tabled in March
1869, revealed that, of £2,700 spent on advertising by
government departments, the Queensland Times received £297
and the Darling Downs Gazette £208, well ahead of Liberal
competitors like the Toowoomba Chronicle £118 and Dalby
Herald £101.⁷ The Queensland Times, in its defence,
argued, on the basis of the parliamentary disclosure, that
metropolitan papers had been consistently favoured over
provincial publications. The charges of bribery were
revived during the 1871 election campaign, when it was
revealed in parliament that the Queensland Times was receiv­
ing priority from the government printery for Railway
Department job printing.⁸

Sharp competition developed at Ipswich, when the newly­
published Ipswich Observer, selling at 2d a copy (1d less
than the Times), took up the cause of Liberals and farmers.
A moderate opponent of the Palmer Ministry, the Ipswich Observer nevertheless incurred the wrath of J.M. Thompson,
the Minister for Lands and friend of the rival Queensland Times. In mid-August, the Observer abruptly announced to
its readers that, owing to a government directive withhold­
ing further advertising revenue from land sales, the news­
paper was threatened with premature extinction.⁹ The
Observer proprietors implied that the loss of government
funding at a time of commercial stringency was a consider­
able financial blow. More seriously, they pointed out that
the withdrawal of land sales from the paper would effective­ly deter their agricultural subscribers from purchasing the
journal at all. This well-publicised incident involving the Ipswich Observer provided some basis for Liberal claims
of bribery against the Ministry.

With its stranglehold on local advertising and a new
Harrod printing press, capable of producing 1000 copies an
hour,¹⁰ the Queensland Times was well placed to act as an
ideological filter between Brisbane and the Downs, censuring
the temperate views of the Courier and championing rural
conservative values in concert with the Warwick Examiner and
Along with a common commitment to conservative politics, these two provincial newspapers were united by family connections and business interests. The Irwins at Warwick and the Stephensons at Ipswich enjoyed a close and enduring social relationship founded upon reactionary politics, local commerce and Freemasonry. Samuel John Irwin, a dour Irishman, had been employed on the *Queensland Times* before partnering R.A. Cowton on the *Warwick Examiner* (1867). His brother John Irwin was to become an editor of the *Times*, while a third family member, James, transferred from Ipswich to the *Gympie Times* in 1868. In this instance, family networks within provincial journalism buttressed the influence which landed families exercised over judicial and administrative appointments and helped to disseminate the influence of the squatters in the townships. Like their better-known newspaper rivals, the Grooms of Toowoomba and Morgans of Warwick, the Irwins and Stephensons epitomised the success story of the provincial printer, establishing family businesses which would last for more than half a century.

A central figure in the conservative bid for control of the press was Palmer's Minister for Works, W.H. Walsh. Since his election to the Assembly in 1865, Walsh had consistently used the *Maryborough Chronicle* to consolidate his political influence. At the end of the decade he was still contributing local and Brisbane news to the paper and held a mortgage over it with three other Wide Bay pastoralists, at a time when metropolitan and southern newspapers were disputing the morality of the local Pacific Island labour traffic. Like his fellow Minister J.M. Thompson he was inclined to regard colonial journalists as political hacks and hirelings. In his strategic position as Minister for Works, Walsh ensured that the *Chronicle* would maintain a monopoly over local government advertising. Neither Thomas White's *Maryborough Mail* nor W.S. Lambert's *Tribune*, two publications which appeared briefly during 1869-70, were able to compete for long with the more established *Maryborough Chronicle*. In July 1870, however, serious opposition to Walsh emerged with the establishment at Maryborough of the *Wide Bay and Burnett News*, a weekly paper owned by Ebenezer Thorne and edited by Carl Fielberg. The *News*, disputing the views of Walsh and the *Chronicle*, sponsored a series of protest meetings at Maryborough over the escalating Melanesian traffic. Thorne and Fielberg, who had both worked on the land as farmers and station hands, argued that sugar could be grown locally without resorting to cheap labour. Fielberg's outspoken editorials stiffened opposition to local landholders. In April 1871, forty-one Wide Bay selectors petitioned parliament for the immediate resumption of runs held by W.H. Walsh and the Browns since the 1850's. The properties in question - Barolin, Tantitha, Monduran and Kolan - had been carefully subdivided after the 1868 Land Act to obstruct the agricultural advance. Like Emu Park near Rockhampton, Barolin was in growing demand as a Coastal Reserve.

Unlike the Darling Downs or Central Queensland, the Wide Bay and Burnett districts had not been the scene of land disputes between Europeans prior to 1870. The dis-
covery of a paying goldfield at Gympie in 1868, did not pose an immediate threat to the more established Gayndah and Kolan pastoral stations. Once accessible deposits of alluvial gold had been exhausted, however, the 5,000 miners still inhabiting the field supported moves for a Goldfields Selection Bill with provision for up to 40 acres (16ha) to local residents. The miners' spokesman was Henry Edward King, a popular politician and energetic administrator who became the parliamentary architect of pioneering goldfields legislation in the colony. King was one of a number of promising back-benchers to emerge from provincial Queensland during the years of opposition to Palmer (1870-1874). Like James Morgan at Warwick, and Alexander Fyfe at Rockhampton, H.E. King combined experience of pastoralism with administrative capacity, having served as Crown Lands Commissioner for the Mitchell Pastoral District (1862-64) and as the first Goldfields Commissioner at Gympie (1865-70).16 King's outspoken support for the small man estranged him from the Wide Bay squattocracy and marked him as a political enemy of W.H. Walsh. Having established himself as the champion of the miners, King turned his attention to the land conflict emerging along the Burnett. A vigorous parliamentarian and prolific press correspondent, King engaged the Chronicle and the owners of Barolin and Tantitha over the limited quantity and poor quality of land available to Burnett selectors.17 While the Wide Bay and Burnett News and the Gympie Times were both sympathetic to King, it was the new Maryborough journal, and not the mining paper, which spearheaded the Liberal challenge.

Confronted with mounting criticism from the Wide Bay and Burnett News and the Gympie Times during 1870-71, W.H. Walsh resorted to legal prosecution in an attempt to subjugate local editors. A series of libel actions were launched against the News in an attempt to close down the paper. In November 1870, shortly after the successful action of Charles Clark against the Warwick Argus, Walsh claimed £2,000 damages against Thorne for libel, but won only minimal compensation (£20).18 Thereafter, the Maryborough member intimidated the second News proprietor, Carl Fielberg, with threats of further prosecution. Walsh's extreme tactics surpassed those employed by J.M. Thompson against the Ipswich Observer. After a hard fought election between Walsh and King in 1871, J.P. Lyons, a Maryborough solicitor acting on Walsh's behalf, issued a second writ against the Wide Bay and Burnett News, and unsuccessfully sued Fielberg for a further £2,000.19 An assessment of the Wide Bay and Burnett News' performance during these episodes is complicated by the loss of crucial newspaper files. While political censorship is not the only explanation for their disappearance, it remains the case that, while conservative provincial journals have survived intact for this period, early runs of the News and the Warwick Argus have completely disappeared.

When the Palmer government seized power from the Liberals in May 1870, the colony was deeply divided into warring local and regional factions. In south-east Queensland, bitter wrangles over expenditure and public works aggravated the long-standing rivalry between Brisbane and
Ipswich, while, in the north, the central Queensland separation movement gained renewed vitality. In the face of these chronic divisions, Palmer adopted the anti-Brisbane strategy perfected by his Minister for Public Works, W.H. Walsh. Opposition to metropolitan extravagance and to Queen Street tyranny became catchcries of his rurally-based administration. This tactic was used effectively to discredit Liberal inflationary policies and to win over the dissident Ipswich faction in the Assembly. The desertion of Macalister from the ranks of the G.L.P. and his appointment by Palmer to the speakership precipitated disarray among the Opposition. Ultimately, however, the Liberals were to gain in ideological cohesion and unity. As party alignments sharpened in the Assembly, Charles Lilley, untroubled by the constant intrigues of "Slippery Mac", emerged as a skilful tactician and determined Opposition leader to Palmer. A barrister and former Attorney-General, Lilley emerged as a direct successor to Lutwyche's brand of democratic liberalism. Within a year of taking office, the Palmer government faced a series of parliamentary crises which culminated in prolonged constitutional agitation during 1871.

Alert to the unpopularity which threatened to overtake administrations pledged to financial stringency. Palmer and his Ministers formulated a series of proposals designed to consolidate their provincial support. The most important of these, aired successfully at the 1870 election, was the provision for substantial electoral reform, including a redistribution of Assembly seats and an extension of the male franchise. A major stumbling block to the implementation of Palmer's legislation was the two-thirds majority required for constitutional amendments in both Houses. In the Assembly, Lilley sought to exact significant concessions from the government over its Elections Bill. The Opposition proposed firstly to vote with the government to abolish the restrictive two-thirds clause itself; the Palmer Ministry would then be free to implement its Election Act by a simple majority. Palmer, fearing the excesses of future popular administrations, flatly refused. He accused the G.L.P. of obstructing a liberal measure and, in December 1870, introduced a Bill to enfranchise all adult Queensland males who could pass an educational test. It was estimated that under this restriction 20% of labourers in the outside districts and 10% in south-east Queensland would still be ineligible to vote. The only serious threat which Palmer's legislation posed to rural interests was on the Darling Downs.

The Liberals, advocating the population principle as the sole basis for parliamentary representation, refused to co-operate with Palmer. During the debate, Lilley aired an ambitious proposal to enfranchise adult females, most of whom were located in the settled districts of the colony. The majority of Liberals, especially the vocal backbenchers, were more concerned with the removal of the education qualification and the creation of the multi-member electorates to guarantee minority representation. As parliamentary business ground to a standstill, party bitterness and public feeling threatened to surpass the dramatic
developments in 1866. Palmer, with timely support from Acting-Governor, Maurice O'Connell, sought to wear down an obstructive Opposition and implement his stringent economic policies. A double dissolution in mid-1871 brought matters to a head, as both parties began campaigning vigorously throughout the colony. In the conservative press and in private correspondence, Lilley was vilified as a political opportunist and demagogue. His support for the female franchise, for example, was dismissed as a thinly-disguised attempt to gain votes for the Liberals and offset the adverse effects of a redistribution. Yet in other domains of public life, notably jury service, Lilley was equally prepared to accord colonial women a significant place. His later years on the Bench and his ideological differences with the conservative brand of Griffith Liberalism which came to prevail in Queensland suggest that Lilley was a no less sincere or ambitious reformer than Palmer.

In the hotly contested elections which followed the 1871 dissolution, the Palmer party and the G.L.P. canvassed provincial press opinion as a true reflection of the popular will. During the early stages of the campaign, editorial support for Palmer was strong in the outlying districts of northern and central Queensland where he had promised to create new electorates. The Rockhampton Bulletin, a prominent advocate for the north, berated the Liberals for attacking the Acting-Governor, Maurice O'Connell, over his decision to grant Palmer another dissolution. Closer to Brisbane, the Queensland Times, a leading advocate of Palmer and Thompson, denounced Lilley's attempt to institute "the tyranny of the minority" and thundered against the Brisbane Party. On the Downs, the Warwick Examiner and Times, still at war with Morgan and the local Argus, deferred to Butterfield and the rabid Queensland Times.

The conservative practice of patronizing country journals was now bearing fruit. The Walshite Maryborough Chronicle, documenting the "Opinions of the Press on the Crisis", cited the Bulletin and the Gladstone Observer as true exponents of popular opinion. The Chronicle, a constant critic of Brisbane's monopoly on parliamentary representation, argued that a Liberal majority "out of doors" did not justify the obstructive parliamentary tactics of Lilley and the "Greasy Hatters" (Whigs). A new Brisbane weekly, the Colonist, edited by Robert Atkin, took issue with the Chronicle and rallied the Liberal press. A relentless critic of Walsh and Palmer, the Colonist declared O'Connell's decision to prorogue parliament for five months to be the act of a blatant partisan. At Ipswich, the newly-published Observer documented provincial support for the Liberals. Two Wide Bay papers, the News and Gympie Times, consistently campaigned with Atkin and King against Walsh, while at Rockhampton and at Toowoomba, the Northern Argus and the Darling Downs Gazette, respectively, were openly critical of Palmer's legislative intentions.

Opposition newspapers, struggling to overcome conservative patronage of the provincial press, repeated allegations that established provincial papers - the Rockhampton Bulletin, Maryborough Chronicle, Queensland Times and Warwick Examiner and Times - had been bribed by members of
The appearance of several lengthy contributions in the *Warwick Examiner and Times* of Feb. 1871 had helped to fuel Liberal claims that prominent writers were defecting to the Palmer camp. The *Examiner* articles, devoted to electoral reform and financial separation, were attributed to William Coote. A close examination of these contributions reveals far more than partisan support for Palmer. Coote emerged as a strong critic of the regional divisions upon which the Palmer hegemony was based. In the *Examiner* articles, he argued for the abolition of geographical electorates and a strong local government system as a means of uniting the faction-ridden colony. Yet the fact that Coote had sent his erudite contributions to the *Warwick Examiner* was a source of consternation to Lilley and the Liberals, for it invested the violent partisanship of that paper with an element of intellectual respectability.

In 1871, the capacity of Queensland country papers to weigh the pros and cons of electoral reform and redistribution was severely compromised by political interference, economic competition and deepening social divisions. After initial press reaction to the tactics of the parliamentary Liberals, allegations of editorial corruption were made on both sides. During the 1871 election, the *Bulletin* and the *Maryborough Chronicle* openly accused Fyfe and the *Northern Argus* of accepting bribes from the Liberal party. The Liberals, in turn, contended that the Palmer party was using minor legal appointments and official positions to reward pro-government journalists. Thadeus O'Kane, the *Northern Argus* editor, later contended that the *Bulletin*'s unexpected support for Palmer had been secured in this manner. Certainly patronage of journalists was an essential feature of Queensland political life by 1870. William Coote's nomination to the Bar at this time was supported by none other than Arthur Hunter Palmer, while Edward Butterfield, editor of the conservative *Queensland Times*, was, as mentioned earlier, appointed to the Education Department.

During 1871, the larger provincial towns, where competition was well established, saw the sharpest electoral struggles. At Rockhampton, both the *Bulletin* and the *Argus* had abruptly switched their political loyalties since the 1870 election. Under Charles Hardie Buzacott, the *Bulletin* was now supporting the Palmer party along regional lines, while the *Argus*, traditionally a supporter of the squatters against the *Bulletin*, was promoting the town candidate, Alexander Fyfe. The *Argus'* loud support for a popular separation movement threatened to discredit Archer and Palmer by exposing their vacillation on this all-important question. Archibald Archer, his allegiances divided by a recent appointment as Queensland Agent-General and his pledge to act as a central Queensland separation representative overseas, wrote to Palmer from England about the volte-face of the *Argus*:

'It is long since I gave up trying to make out Bourcicault, but I thought I had so far mastered the man that nothing that he could do could surprise me... I must admit that he is too much for me. Why he started on the
Map 6 Provincial press expansion 1846–71, showing movements of proprietors and years of arrival.
tack he is sailing is more than I can make out... What has given the amiable O'Kane such a down on you? Have you cut him or refused him a billet? Altogether one would suppose from reading the papers that things are, in spite of your majority, rather in a muddle.40

Archer's references to the Argus proprietor and editor epitomized the mixture of concern, exasperation and scorn which characterized conservative relations with the press. Despite Palmer's personal appearance, the Rockhampton election was a setback to the government. Fyfe, an ex-Ballarat digger and former parliamentary representative for Geelong,41 was returned with a comfortable majority of 200 votes.

The abortive Rockhampton election meeting became the subject of widespread press comment throughout the colony. Palmer, who had been imbibing freely, attempted to address the gathering but was howled down and heckled by Fyfe's supporters. Losing his temper, the Colonial Secretary abused the crowd before clambering onto the reporters' table and falling from the stage. When Palmer challenged the interjeters to a fist fight, the excited meeting broke up in disorder.42 "Treating", a common electoral practice involving the distribution of liquor to party faithfuls, had exacerbated the situation. Liberal journals, reporting the Rockhampton meeting, focussed southern attention on Palmer's "disgraceful escapade". The Gympie Times, the Colonist and the Ipswich Observer published detailed telegrams of the incident with expressions of shock at the Premier's "filthy and blasphemous language".43

The Maryborough contest of 1871 proved to be no less divisive than that at Rockhampton. The election struggle between King and Walsh confirmed Maryborough's earlier reputation as a township riddled with factions and deep class divisions. Racial conflict had always been an issue in and around the settlement. In 1871, Henry King, campaigning strongly on an anti-Melanesian ticket, gained the support of the Wide Bay and Burnett News and of Maryborough working men. Walsh's brand of ultra-conservative politics inspired deep distrust throughout south-east Queensland. At Brisbane, the Minister for Public Works was burnt in effigy. On the Gympie goldfield, he was given a hearing but jostled by the crowd on his departure.44 The Gympie Times alleged that Walsh's exclusive use of the Maryborough Chronicle, to advertise tenders for public works projects, had deprived distressed Gympie miners of alternative employment on the field.45 To strengthen his campaign in Maryborough, King enlisted support from the newly-formed Gympie Miners Protection Association and the Brisbane Reform League. The formation of a local German Reform League coincided with a systematic attempt by the Liberals to enrol eligible voters. The Wide Bay and Burnett News, backing the political underdog, was confident that King would make a "bold stand" against Walsh. The Brisbane Colonist, less optimistic, predicted an uphill struggle for King, on the grounds that Maryborough officials, the Chronicle and members of the clergy were solid supporters of the Minister for Public
As the long-serving local member and a Wide Bay pioneer, Walsh could claim the loyalty of propertied Maryborough residents. King was able to generate only a small following among local tradesmen and manufacturers. However the *Chronicle* confirmed his support among the working class and noted ironically that the "Bloated Squatter" and "Polynesian Godsend" figured prominently in his anti-Walsh rhetoric. Interwoven with the coloured labour issue and the burgeoning "Jason" scandal, involving the mistreatment of respected planter and Government Agent, John Meiklejohn, was the belated opposition of selectors and townspeople to the entrenched Wide Bay squattocracy. Always a vigorous partisan, Walsh made little effort to disguise the blatant electioneering tactics employed in his favour during the campaign. After his narrow defeat by 16 votes, King alleged in the *Gympie Times* that Henry Palmer, the Returning Officer, and W. Faircloth, the Police Magistrate, had manipulated the rolls to Walsh's advantage. The *Colonist* pointed out that Henry Palmer was also a member of Walsh's election committee and had addressed several Maryborough gatherings in his favour.

At Warwick, where Morgan and the Argus were facing a strong challenge from Charles Clark, brother of the former member, the 1871 election proved to be one of the most violent in the history of the Darling Downs. A series of visits by Lilley to the Darling Downs to woo the selector vote away from the squatters and the renegade Macalister polarized an already tense community. Both the *Warwick Examiner and Times* and the *Queensland Times* at Ipswich issued a series of savage personal attacks on Lilley's "stump oratory" and contended that the G.L.P. leader was using the truncated political reports of provincial papers as a shield to malign his former colleague. At Warwick, the everpresent land issue had become interwoven with calls for electoral reform. In June of 1871, one month before the election, Morgan had presented a petition to the Assembly on behalf of local selectors, requesting that the Warwick Agricultural Reserve be constituted a separate electorate from the township. Longstanding resentment over the restrictive franchise and squatting influence on Warwick officialdom were major factors in precipitating a local disturbance of considerable proportions. On the evening of 21 July at about four o'clock, a large crowd, estimated at between 1,800 and 2,000 people, gathered to hear the election result outside the Court House. The Returning Officer, a known Clark supporter, made the error of calling the defeated candidate's name first. When Morgan's jubilant supporters eventually learnt that their man had been beaten by 17 votes, a riot, lasting more than four hours, erupted on the streets of Warwick.

The first serious melee after the announcement of the poll result was a clash in Fitzroy Street between Clark's and Morgan's supporters at around 5.30 p.m. En route to Queen's Park, the victorious candidate Charles Clark was pulled from the shoulders of his followers, several of whom were set upon and struck with stones. One of those injured was the local police officer who had come to Clark's aid;
Large crowd gathers 4.00 pm
Clark chaired by supporters
Police and horsemen intervene
Clark's party attacked 5.30 pm
Shotgun blasts injure four

1 Old Court House and Telegraph Building
2 "Warwick Examiner and Times" newspaper office
3 Australian Joint Stock Bank
4 J.J. Kingsford's Royal Exchange Hotel
5 Bank of New South Wales and residence
6 Dispensary
7 David Bugden's Criterion Hotel

Map 7  Warwick township of 1871, showing election riot, movement of crowd, and shooting incident of 21 July.
his small force appeared incapable of controlling the situation. Horsemen eventually dispersed the angry crowd and enabled Clark and his company to retreat to David Bugden's Criterion Hotel in Palmerin Street. At 8 p.m., Bugden's hotel, a known meeting place for the squatters, was surrounded by a mob of 20 to 50 men, armed with palings and batons. Stones were thrown through the hotel's front windows, whereupon the enraged proprietor fired a series of shotgun blasts indiscriminately into the crowd. Four people were wounded in the shooting, at least two of whom were innocent passers-by. Bugden's two sons were also seriously injured during the stoning. Further large scale outbreaks of electoral violence were prevented by the arrival of police detachments from Ipswich and Toowoomba.

While the Argus accused the local police of favouring Clark and the squatters throughout the affair, the Examiner and Times published details of legal proceedings against the rioters alongside dramatic telegraphic reports of "The Paris Commune" and "Fearful Rioting in New York". Electoral incidents at Warwick, Rockhampton and Maryborough were seized upon by the conservative press to emphasize the dangers of extending the suffrage to the "unruly mob". The popular will had been judged and found wanting. To uphold its own authority, the Palmer party was forced to resort to less scrupulous, undemocratic methods.

Outbursts of popular disorder at the 1871 contests can best be understood as expressions of working class frustration after a decade of electoral manipulation and malpractice. Commenting on everpresent electoral transgressions in early Queensland, historians Duncan Waterson and A.A. Morrison have attributed political corruption and malpractice in an evenhanded fashion to Town Liberal and Squatter alike. Morrison, in particular, was keen to defend Palmer and the emerging conservative party against the worst charges of electoral fraud. Yet the squatters' capacity to manipulate the vote in and around provincial settlements, through such practices as the domination of Revision Courts, bribery of prominent electoral officials, intimidation of tradespeople and "personation" on behalf of compliant station hands, was consistently greater than that exercised by the Liberals. In 1871, the squatters' assault on the Queensland parliamentary system was unprecedented, both before or since Separation. During the remainder of 1871 the G.L.P. and its editorial supporters attributed the narrow political defeat to the systematic intervention of the Palmer party in provincial journalism. To contemporary allegations of a metropolitan press "gagged" by Palmer, Walsh and Ramsay were added accusations of a "hireling" country press, funded and patronized by local conservative politicians.

The flurry of defamation suits which accompanied the election of 1871 provided further confirmation of deep-seated social and political divisions within Queensland society. By the end of that year, no fewer than four actions involving newspapers were pending in the Supreme Court. Joint actions by Opposition leader, Charles Lilley, against conservative provincial papers, the Warwick Examiner and Times and the Queensland Times, confirmed the
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<th>MONTH and YEAR</th>
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<td>Verdict for defendant</td>
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<td>Feb 1862</td>
<td>Haynes v. White, prop.</td>
<td>Burnett Argus</td>
<td>Attorney-General refuses to file bill against defendant</td>
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<td>Oct. 1864</td>
<td>Feez v. Bourcicault, prop. Northern Argus</td>
<td>£140 damages to plaintiff</td>
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<td>Jan 1865</td>
<td>Pring v. Stephens, prop. Brisbane Courier</td>
<td>Reflections on professional integrity</td>
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<td>July 1866</td>
<td>Brown, prop. C.B. Herald v. Black (agent Robert Towns)</td>
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<td>July 1867</td>
<td>Cardiottis v. Buzacott, prop. Peak Downs Telegram</td>
<td>£5,000 damages claimed</td>
<td>Settled out of court £75 damage and public apology</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1868</td>
<td>Cooper v. Queensland Daily Guardian</td>
<td></td>
<td>Settled out of court £100 damages and public apology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Plaintiff</td>
<td>Defendant</td>
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<td>Buzacott, prop.</td>
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<td>Oct 1869</td>
<td>Warmald</td>
<td>Bourcicault, prop.</td>
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<td>Faircloth</td>
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<td>Bay and Burnett News</td>
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<td>Nov 1870</td>
<td>Walsh</td>
<td>Thorne, prop.</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
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<td>Nov 1871</td>
<td>Godfrey</td>
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<td>(Clermont lawyer)</td>
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<td>Nov 1871</td>
<td>Lilley</td>
<td>Cowton and Irwin,</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Leader G.L.P.)</td>
<td>prop.</td>
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<td>Warwick Examiner and Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 1871</td>
<td>Lilley</td>
<td>Parkinson, Sloman and Kidner, props.</td>
<td>£1,000 damages claimed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Leader G.L.P.)</td>
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<td>Queensland Times</td>
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steady increase in press prosecutions since 1866 and attracted widespread attention because of Lilley's standing in parliament and in the courts. The plaintiff's claims for £2,000 and £1,000 respectively arose from an Examiner election editorial which the Queensland Times had reprinted six days later, under the heading "Mr. Lilley on the Stump". The damages involved were sufficiently heavy to ruin even well-established provincial concerns. Unable to recruit legal assistance from Sydney, the Queensland Times decided to plead guilty; the Examiner owners, however, were unrepentant and further jeopardized their chances by entering a series of provocative pleas against the plaintiff.

When the well-publicized trials eventually began in mid-November, the Brisbane Colonist reported that the "Supreme Court had been densely thronged by the public who manifest ... great interest in the proceedings". The distinguished composition of the jury and witnesses made the hearings something of a showcase for the press. Serving with prominent bookseller George Slater, and Brisbane business men on the jury, was James Swan, the first Courier proprietor. His successor, T.B. Stephens, who had been sole proprietor of the Courier and was still manager of the Brisbane Newspaper Company, appeared as a witness. Stephens' appearance for the defence was unexpected, since the Queensland Times had accused the Brisbane press of complicity with Lilley prior to the trials. Although indignation at the strictures of a "hireling press" was deep-seated, some G.L.P. members were harbouring doubts about the wisdom of the prosecution. With defence counsel, E.O.D. McDevitt, Stephens argued that the Lilley actions would serve only to hasten the decline of Liberal influence in the press.

Previous Queensland episodes, like the state action of 1861 against the Courier, lent some credibility to assertions that prosecution ran the risk of bestowing a species of political martyrdom on offending journals. However, attempts by Stephens to mediate between Lilley and the defendants were undermined by his sharp criticism of Lilley while in office and by his continuing association with the languishing Brisbane Newspaper Company. The Examiner and Times which had penned the four original libels was fined £475, while the Queensland Times, which had reprinted the offending editorials from its contemporary was left with damages of £300.

By waiving the substantial damages inflicted on both journals, Lilley stopped short of inflicting heavy pecuniary losses on his newspaper adversaries. Nevertheless the success of his court actions alarmed provincial writers. By disputing the right of country papers to reproduce extracts from one another's columns, Lilley v. "Queensland Times" and Lilley v. "Warwick Examiner and Times" raised important issues for the provincial press. Without this local intelligence, country editors would be hard put to fill their weekly four-page issues. It was feared that the success of Lilley's action would encourage a series of damaging writs against provincial newspapers by zealous members of the Bar. Even before the trials were concluded, the Courier reported that an action for £1,000 was pending against the Peak Downs Telegram in central Queensland for...
After two decades of credibility, the elevated Liberal claim of a "Fourth Estate", capable of reform through rational debate, had become problematic throughout Queensland. The reception of leading provincial papers to the court ruling was openly hostile. Pressure was mounting throughout the colony for the revision of outdated statutes pertaining to the press and the courts. During 1871, Queensland newspapers published details of a Libel Amendment Bill introduced into the New South Wales Assembly by R. Forster. At the opening of the Queensland parliamentary session of 1871, a Libel Amendment Bill was also read but not proceeded with. The question of libel reform continued to be raised in Queensland throughout the following decade. Commenting in 1874 on the unwillingness of the local legislature to abandon aspects of the old Darling press laws, a chagrined Thadeus O'Kane would observe:

The legal members of the Assembly wish to preserve their instruments of torture. The Squatters would increase them... It is rather strange that though there are some half-dozen newspaper proprietors in the Assembly and many more ex-editors, not one of them has even moved to effect a much needed reform in the law of libel... One and all, they have forgotten the legal patter hung up over the editor's desk.
Conclusion

Writing on the press has never ceased to be a highly selective and discreet activity which censures and, at times, emasculates newspaper sources. By stressing calm historical research and avoiding aggressive polemics, academics have often discouraged the detailed probing of newspaper sources. An early exception to this pattern was literary historian, H.M. Green. Green, using a distinction between pure and applied literature, emphasized the centrality of the newspaper to colonial culture, in place of the magazine. In a series of informed commentaries, he expressed the view that colonial culture was essentially political. The interplay of newspaper editorials, contributions and correspondence, constituted the basis for a vigorous but neglected culture.

In keeping with traditional elitist and literary values, academics have tended to regard this culture as one of little intrinsic worth. With a revival of interest in popular culture, however, historians and literary critics have begun to reassess the contribution of 19th century newspapers. Raymond Williams' distinction between writing for the community and writing by the community is a fertile one for understanding colonial journalism. Williams' productive analysis has been taken up and explored in the Australian context by Sylvia Lawson. In her acclaimed biography of J.F. Archibald, Lawson develops the notion of collective authorship in the precise context of the Bulletin. Conceptually, the present study is indebted to Lawson's work and should enhance an appreciation of the Bulletin by providing the mid-century background necessary for understanding its genesis. However Lawson's implication, that collective authorship was associated exclusively with a democratic subculture, is not borne out in the Queensland press of the mid-colonial period. An analysis of local authorship patterns diverges from both the democratic and Liberal models by identifying a range of prominent figures (squatters, planters, Legislative Councillors) at the top of the social scale. Colonial Junius could be either reformist or reactionary but he was not a revolutionary or working class hero.

The discussion of newspaper authorship is relevant to the contemporary debate in Australian studies over text and context. The Archibald Paradox may be seen as both con-
textual and textual in so far as Lawson plumps exclusively for the Bulletin. Objection has been taken by historians to her focus on an isolated "collective text". The aim of this study has been to broaden the contextual approach, by combining an assessment of the internal dynamics of authorship with an analysis of the exchanges between newspapers. Whatever the merits of individual editors or correspondents, the polemical tradition remained a collective enterprise. Journalistic stereotypes of the period - the fighting editor or the political hireling - tended to be complementary or even reversible.

Between the elitist view, which eschews journalistic debate, and the commercial view, which sees the polemical tradition as merely a device for selling newspapers, there remains a viable libertarian ("free press") interpretation. Along with company history and industrial relations, the study of libel and censorship is a critical reminder of press accountability to individuals and institutions. If 19th century libel laws were administered erratically by the courts, they were nevertheless a substantial deterrent, given the limited capital of many newspaper concerns. Libel costs, ranging between 10 to 50 percent of capital assets could be imposed, in addition to confiscation and destruction of property. Moreover, the upsurge of libel cases against newspapers was not solely the result of chronic editorial feuding but reflected more deep-seated social divisions throughout the colony. If there is evidence to sustain a "free press" interpretation in mid-colonial Queensland, serious doubts may be raised about the viability of the "Fourth Estate" rhetoric. For it has been show in concluding chapters that prominent members of the literary community, far from elevating the press in social and political prestige, were usually responsible for the more severe cases of censorship and recrimination, irrespective of their political positions. This perjorative perception of journalists, though by no means objective, is sufficiently informed to be taken seriously by historians, for it provides a useful counterpoint to uncritical insider notions.

Although colonial newspapers were prone to disconcerting shifts of opinion and content, their long-term preoccupations were by no means unpredictable. The consistency with which the Queensland press addressed broad debates over race, land and constitution, provides valuable insights into the forces shaping the emerging colony. The catalyst for these mid-century press debates was undoubtedly the turbulent rule of Governor Gipps in New South Wales. The land struggle which erupted during his term of office (1838-1846) exacerbated racial tensions and constitutional grievances in the colony. By 1846, when the Moreton Bay Courier was first established in the north, the land issue had been resolved in favour of the squattocracy. The Land Sales Act of that year and the Order-in-Council of 1847 guaranteed squatters 14 year leases and the pre-emptive right. For the rest of that decade, the Moreton Bay press, equating pastoral expansion with racial conquest, turned its attention to the northern frontier. The Walker episode, discussed in the first chapter, confirmed the political ascendancy
of the squatters and emerged as a test case for race relations in nineteenth century Australia. In the wake of the Gipps era, northern editors and their country correspondents continued to espouse a vigorous anti-centralism and an intense regionalism which coloured their treatment of racial and constitutional questions. By 1850 separation became the focal point for this agitation. J.D. Lang's opposition to Wentworth in the early 1850s and constitutional conservatives in New South Wales helped to spark local confrontation between squatters and townspeople; for the rest of the decade, however, the separation debate was more about regional interests than ideological differences.

With a decline in editorial and political controversy at Moreton Bay, the declaration of Separation in December 1859 appeared to be a non-event. It was not long however before Queensland colonists were caught up in a new round of discussions about the direction which their colony should take. Rapid pastoral expansion, the establishment of a local bureaucracy and legislature, and a burgeoning newspaper industry, all combined to produce a vigorous political climate during the early 1860s. At the hands of the Brisbane Courier and its town liberal supporters, constitutional questions were more clearly defined and contested than in the pre-Separation period. During the Lutwyche Affair, analysed in Chapter Three, the authority of the new Governor and the Legislative Council were simultaneously called into question. Anti-Sydney sentiment of the pre-Separation years was easily transferred onto imperial members of the new Executive. Nevertheless, it has also been argued in Chapter Three that Governor Bowen failed, at decisive moments, to nurture responsible government in the colony and that these omissions did not escape the attention of the local press. The advent of Separation encouraged further press agitation against the operations of the Native Mounted Police during 1861. This particular episode in Queensland journalism was characterised by an unsuspected humanity towards the Aborigines. Unlike New South Wales, where the Myall Creek massacre resulted in the trial and execution of the participants, Queensland failed to pursue viable alternatives to violent dispossession. In the light of the 1861 debate, however, it would be difficult to ascribe this failure solely to the press. The issue of racial violence received sporadic and varied coverage. In the 1850s (Chapter One) and early 1860s (Chapter Four) it flared and abruptly disappeared under the influence of frontier and political developments.

By contrast with reaction in the press to the slaughter of the Aborigines and to the decisions of an Imperial Executive, the land debate in Queensland proved to be more compact and sustained. Throughout their first decade, Queenslanders nurtured high hopes of preserving class harmony and avoiding the conflict of southern colonies. Four local Land Acts, introduced by Bowen and Herbert in 1860, had elicited little press comment. With the free selection battles raging in New South Wales during the early 1860s, Queensland colonists were inclined to delay discussion of this potentially divisive question. However substantial immigration and a depression brought the issues of the upset
land price, freehold title and selection to the fore by the mid sixties. Contrary to accepted historical opinion, the evidence produced in the latter half of this study suggests a break-down of class harmony over the land question. It has been argued that the moderate expectations enshrined in early Queensland land legislation were not fulfilled, partly because of the squatters' determination to subvert the regulations, and partly because of the vigour with which individual newspapers denounced local abuses. The sustained land debate of the late 1860s in turn stimulated argument over constitutional and racial questions. Confrontations over land helped to precipitate a series of constitutional crises and shifted racial debate from the mistreatment of Aborigines to a discussion of Melanesian recruitment and plantation labour.

An historical analysis of press debates raises questions about the capacity of individual newspapers and editors to sustain a parallel discussion of several of the above issues. Historians, impatient with the lacunae of early papers, should be aware of the limited resources and the production constraints of colonial journals. The scope of newspaper debate varied considerably according to the frequency, circulation, staffing, technology and capital of the individual journals concerned. Many of the country weeklies and bi-weeklies of the period became, in effect, single issue papers which tended to be given over regularly to the same subject. This predictability was at once the weakness and strength of nineteenth century provincial journalism. The more astute country editors, recognizing their limitations, were able to stamp their personality and individual interests on their papers. At Warwick, James Morgan's Argus became the scourge of the squatters and the Lands department; Butterfield's Queensland Times of Ipswich was the self-appointed upholder of the Queensland constitution, whilst A.S. Lyon's four pioneering journals exhibited a pronounced emphasis on racial matters. Reproached by modern writers and journalists for their parochialism and lack of news sense, nineteenth century editors could nevertheless command greater authority on particular topics than their modern counterparts.

By contrast with the provincial weeklies, the metropolitan press enjoyed a decided advantage in its capacity to promote and direct discussion of critical issues. In the years 1846-71, these advantages had less to do with the price and size of publications, than with their frequency, staffing, and proximity to the centres of political life. Throughout the period under examination, Brisbane remained the only township in the colony with a daily press; the Courier began as a daily in 1861 and the Guardian followed suit in 1863. Yet even on these established concerns, the scope for editorial comment was limited. In a few notable instances, two major issues ran concurrently. In its first year as a daily, the Courier combined spirited constitutional debate with a sharp critique of racial injustice. Similarly, Guardian editor George Wight engaged in constitutional criticism of the Governor while advocating the popular land cause. Rarely were all three major debates broached simultaneously in the Queensland press. Ambitious
attempts in this direction by Brisbane and Rockhampton journalists invariably failed and detracted from a clear discussion of any single issue. The 1871 election during which racial, land and constitutional matters competed for newspaper space, marked the chaotic limits of press debate in colonial Queensland.
## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.D.B.</td>
<td>Australian Dictionary of Biography</td>
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<td>A.J.P.H.</td>
<td>Australian Journal of Politics and History</td>
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<td>ANU</td>
<td>Australian National University</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
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<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Burnett Argus (Gayndah)</td>
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<td>B.C.</td>
<td>Brisbane Courier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Col. Sec.</td>
<td>Colonial Secretary</td>
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<td>D.D.G.</td>
<td>Darling Downs Gazette (Drayton/Toowoomba)</td>
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<td>Dalby Herald</td>
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<td>DL</td>
<td>Dixon Library (Sydney)</td>
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<td>D.N.B.</td>
<td>Dictionary of National Biography</td>
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<td>G.T.</td>
<td>Gympie Times</td>
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<td>I.O.</td>
<td>Ipswich Observer</td>
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<td>J.R.A.H.S.</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>J.(R.)H.S.Q.</td>
<td>Journal of the (Royal) Historical Society of Queensland</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly</td>
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<td>LC</td>
<td>Legislative Council</td>
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<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
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<td>M.B.C.</td>
<td>Moreton Bay Courier</td>
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<td>M.B.F.P.</td>
<td>Moreton Bay Free Press</td>
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<td>M.C.</td>
<td>Maryborough Chronicle</td>
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<td>NL</td>
<td>National Library (Canberra)</td>
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<td>NMP</td>
<td>Native Mounted Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>OML</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q.D.G.</td>
<td>Queensland Daily Guardian (Brisbane)</td>
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<td>Q.E</td>
<td>Queensland Express (Brisbane)</td>
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<td>Q.G.G.</td>
<td>Queensland Government Gazette</td>
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<td>Queensland Supreme Court Reports</td>
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<td>Q.T.</td>
<td>Queensland Times (Ipswich)</td>
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<td>QU</td>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUP</td>
<td>University of Queensland Press</td>
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<td>Q.V. and P.</td>
<td>Queensland Votes and Proceedings</td>
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<td>R.B.</td>
<td>Rockhampton Bulletin</td>
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<td>S.M.H.</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
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<td>T.C.</td>
<td>Toowoomba Chronicle</td>
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<td>U.P.</td>
<td>University Press</td>
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<td>W.A.</td>
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<td>W.E. and T.</td>
<td>Warwick Examiner and Times</td>
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Notes

Introduction: Redefining the Colonial Newspaper

3. To take the example of Queensland during the mid 1860s, the Brisbane Courier and the Rockhampton Bulletin were both under strong challenge from the Queensland Daily Guardian and the Northern Argus, two popular organs which commanded greater authority than their better known counterparts.
8. George Loyau, The Personal Adventures of George Loyau (Adelaide: Henn, 1883); George Wight, Congregational Independency (Brisbane: Gordon and Gotch, 1887).


18. In colonial Queensland, the chequered career of William Coote provides an example of the Junius phenomenon. A freelance journalist and historian, the elusive Coote was generally considered to be the most able and dangerous political writer of his day.


28. Manion, *Paper Power in North Queensland*, p. 27. More useful are the individual portraits which the author has included in the final section of his book.

29. Susan Carey, "Owner/Editors of South Australian News-


Chapter 1: Press and Police: The Northern Frontier

2. M.B.C., 3 April 1847, p. 2.
10. Forster to James Dowling, 28 Feb. 1838 in Dowling Correspondence (MSS, ML).
18. "The Blacks in Queensland". Appendix to Gideon Scott
Notes to pages 13–23

Lang, The Aborigines of Australia in their original condition and in their relations with the white men (Melbourne: Wilson and McKinnon, 1865).


23. William Forster to Col. Sec., 26 April 1852 (QSA, NMP, J6).
24. Gordon Sandeman to Col. Sec., 27 Jan 1851 (QSA, NMP, J5).
25. Walker to Col. Sec., 1 March 1852.
27. Walker to Col. Sec., 1 March 1852.
30. S.M.H., 21 Aug. 1852, p. 3.
31. M.B.F.P., 1 July 1852, p. 3; M.B.C., 17 July 1852, p. 4.
34. M.B.C., 14 Aug. 1852, p. 2.
37. Leslie Skinner Police of the pastoral frontier; native police 1849-59 (St. Lucia: QUP, 1975), p. 376 ff. Bligh's Queensland career as Commandant will be examined in Chapter 4.
39. Walsh to John Murray, 3 Dec. 1852 (QSA, NMP, J2).
40. S.M.H., 11 Sept. 1852, p. 3.
41. M.B.C., 17 July 1852, p. 2; M.B.F.P., 15 July 1852, p. 3.
44. Walker to Col. Sec., 25 Jan. 1853 (CSIL/3 DL).
46. S.M.H., 30 Jan. 1855, p. 3.
50. Native Police Questionnaire, 14 July 1856 (ML).
52. M.B.C., 14 Nov. 1857, p. 2.
Chapter 2: Press and Platform: Lang and the Nonconformists

16. *S.M.H.*, 10 April 1849, p. 2; also 12 April 1849, p. 2.
23. Lang, *New South Wales*, v. 2, p. 170. For a progressive listing of northern publications from 1846, see Appendices 1 and 2.
27. Russell, *The Genesis of Queensland*, chs. XXIV and XXV.
Notes to pages 31-41

30. Request by the Stanley electors, 22 March 1854 in Lang Papers, v. 21.
32. Lang, Cooksland, pp. 308-9.
34. M.B.C., 15 July 1854, p. 3.
35. M.B.F.P., 1 Aug., 1854, p. 3.
40. Lang letter, "To the Electors of the Clarence River and Darling Downs districts", M.B.C., 1 March 1856, p. 3.
41. M.B.C., 11 May 1855, p. 2.
42. M.B.C., 14 Jan., 1856, p. 2.
43. Queenslander, 29 Aug., 1914, p. 29; Telegraph, 13 June 1970, p. 5.
47. Wilkes to J.D. Lang, 12 Sept., 1854 in Lang Papers, v. 21.
48. For confirmation of Wilkes' democratic views, see Nehemiah Bartley, Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences, p. 396.
50. M.B.C., 16 Oct., 1852, p. 3.
52. B.C., 28 Aug. 1877, p. 3.

Chapter 3: Press and Bar: The Politics of Separation

2. Lang, The Coming Event or The United Provinces of Australia (Sydney: Welch, 1850), II, p. 35.
8. S.M.H., 10 March 1859, p. 4.
10. Illawarra Mercury, 22 Dec. 1858, p. 2. An account of
Berry's long colonial career is to be found in J. Jervis, "Alexander Berry. The Laird of Shoalhaven", J.R.A.H.S., v. 27, Pt. 1, 1941, pp. 18-88.
12. S.M.H., 10 March 1859, p. 4.
18. Lutwyche to the Private Secretary of the N.S.W. Governor-General, 1 Nov. 1859 in Q.V. and P., 1860, p. 454.
21. Bowen to Newcastle, 3 Feb. 1860 in Governor's Dispatches to the Secretary of State for the Colonies (QSA, Gov 22).
23. Not to be confused with Alfred Stephen.
31. Herbert to Lutwyche, 10 February 1861 in Q.V. and P., 1861, p. 347.
32. Courier, 30 May 1861, p. 2.
33. Courier, 1 July 1861, p. 2.
34. Courier, 1 July 1861, p. 3. The final draft appeared in Q.G.G., 10 Aug. 1861 as 25 Vic. No. 7.
35. Courier, 1 July 1861, p. 2.
38. M.C., 6 June 1861, p. 3.
39. T.C., 7 Feb. 1861, p. 2. For a full list of newspapers published in 1861, see Appendix 1.
40. Courier, 2 July 1861, p. 2.
42. S.M.H., 8 Aug. 1861, p. 4.
Chapter 4: "Wilful Murder!": Native Police Operations in the Settled Districts 1860-63

1. The paucity of available press material makes the recent study by Gordon Reid, A Nest of Hornets (Melbourne: Oxford U.P., 1982), all the more commendable. Significantly, Reid devotes only a few pages of his account (pp. 44-45, 73-74) to press comment and opinion of the central incident.


3. Wide Bay and Burnett Times, 27 March 1860, p. 3.

4. Empire, 3 March 1860, p. 3.

5. G.D. Lang to his Father 6 March 1860, in J.D. Lang Papers, v. 25, p. 636 (MSS, ML).


12. M.C., 17 Feb. 1862, p. 3.


16. M.C., 28 Feb. 1861, p. 3.
17. M.C., 4 April 1861, p. 3.
18. M.C., 21 March 1861, p. 2.
29. Memorial from the inhabitants of the Wide Bay district and the town of Maryborough to Sir George Bowen, 17 Dec. 1860 (QSA, COL/A9, 60/2336).
31. Gordon Reid casts some doubt on the renegade role ascribed to Walker's men. Nevertheless, this prospect created considerable unease among Native Police officers (Reid: *Nest of Hornets*, p. 110) and among squatters (Evidence of E.B. Uhr to the Select Committee on the murders by the Aborigines on the Dawson River, *NSW V. and P.* (LA), 1858, v. 2, p. 906). Walker's early career has been discussed at length in Chapter One.
32. M.B.C., 17 Jan. 1861, p. 3.
35. M.C., 11 April 1861, p. 2.
36. It is important to distinguish between Frederick Walker, mentioned in this and a previous chapter, and Frederick Wheeler. During his long career in the Queensland Native Police, Wheeler, unlike Walker, was notorious for his sadistic treatment of Aborigines. The incident which provoked his dismissal, though not his conviction, was the brutal flogging to death of a sixteen year old Aboriginal boy. For details, see Reid, *Nest of Hornets*, p. 125ff.
37. M.B.C., 19 Feb. 1861, p. 3.
casts some doubt on the assertion of Hobbs' A.D.B. biographer (v. 4, p. 403) that he was a probable member of the Aborigines Protection Society during the 1850's. A medical practitioner and keen amateur scientist, Hobbs appears to have been more influenced by nineteenth-century racial theory than by any durable moral concern for the Aborigines.

40. M.C., 14 March 1861, p. 2.
41. M.B.C., 16 March 1861, p. 3.
42. M.C., 28 March 1861, p. 3.
43. Col. Sec. to Mortimer, 19 March 1861 (QSA, COL/R2, 61/199); Mortimer to Col. Sec., 3 April 1861 (QSA, COL/A14, 61/908).
44. North Australian, 10 May 1861. Quoted in M.B.C., 14 May 1861, p. 3.
46. M.B.C., 12 May 1861, p. 2.
47. Q.V. and P., 1861, p. 507.
49. Reid, Nest of Hornets, p. 125.
52. M.C., Rockhampton column, 12 Dec. 1861, p. 2.
54. M.C., 21 Nov. 1861, p. 2.
55. Walker to the Attorney-General, 10 July 1861 (QSA, COL/A18, 61/1909).
58. Walker to Col. Sec., 6 Sept. 1861 (QSA, COL/A12, 61/2545).
60. Q.D.G., 8 Aug. 1863, p. 2.

Chapter 5: Company Formation: the "Queensland Daily Guardian" and the Land Question (1866-68)

3. B.C., 18 Aug. 1866, p. 5.
and Articles of Association (QSA, Companies file, A/21277). For further details, see Appendix 2, Genealogy of the Brisbane and Ipswich Press, 1846-1873.


6. Pugh's Almanac of 1865 (p. 165) indicates that 25% of Queenslanders (male and female) could not read at this time. Brisbane workingmen of the 1860's probably confined their newspaper purchases to single issues ("about once a week") at the standard 6d per copy (B.C., 5 Jan. 1861, p. 2).


10. Q.D.G., 10 Aug. 1866, pp. 3-4.


13. B.C., 31 Aug. 1886, p. 5; Telegraph, 31 Aug. 1885, p. 4. This substantial sum was not the full amount owing, since a number of former Guardian employees including William O'Carroll (editor), G.D. Lang and John Searl were either no longer alive or had left the colony indefinitely.


15. With Henry Marcus, Mellefont started the Ipswich Observer (1870) before assuming sole ownership of the Bundaberg Star (1875).


21. B.C., 5 Dec. 1871, p. 3.


23. Queensland Patriot, 18 Nov. 1876, p. 5.


30. Q.D.G., 13 May 1867, p. 3.
31. Q.P.D. (LC), v. 6, 1867-68, p. 776.
32. Q.D.G., 16 May 1867, p. 2.
33. B.C., 16 May 1867, p. 2.
35. A.H. Palmer to Wm. Archer, 16 May 1867 in Archer Papers, A3887 (MSS, ML).
37. For unacknowledged examples, see "Our Waste Lands" (Q.D.G., 21 Jan. 1868, p. 3) and "Progress of Settlement of the Lands of the Colony" (Q.D.G., 2 Nov. 1867, p. 3).
38. Waterson, Biographical Register, p. 57.
40. For examples of northern correspondence see Q.D.G., 24 Sept. 1867, p. 3, 1 October 1867, p. 3, and 10 October 1867, p. 3.
41. W.H. Walsh to Wm Archer, 26 July 1862 in Archer Papers, A3884 (MSS, ML).
42. W.H. Walsh to Wm Archer, 5 March 1866 in Archer Papers, A3887 (MSS, ML).
44. Northern Argus, 29 Nov. 1865, p. 2.
46. Ch. A. Bernays, Queensland Politics during Sixty Years (1859-1919) (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1919), pp. 139-40.
47. Waterson, Biographical Register, p. 144.
49. William Coote, Cutting Book 1876-79 (OML).
52. Q.P.D. (LA), v. 5, 1867-68, p. 513.
59. Waterson, Squatter, Selector and Storekeeper, pp. 35-36.
60. Q.D.G., 1 June 1868, p. 2.
61. B.C., 13 June 1868, p. 2.
62. Q.E., 23 Oct. 1869, p. 3.
63. T.B. Stephens in Colonist, 15 Nov. 1871, parliamentary
Chapter 6: "Gagging the Press": the first Brisbane ("Courier") Newspaper Company (1868-73)

7. Our Paper, 1 Aug. 1868, p. 5.
12. In the long term, as Beverley Kingston notes, the failure of the consolidation attempt necessitated a series of petitions and costly claims by the Archer family on subsequent Queensland administrations. By 1874, with renewed pressure for land from townspeople and selectors, the Archers had surrendered a further 390 sq. kilometres for closer settlement. The Gracemere Pre-emption Bill, introduced into the Assembly of that year, was a unique piece of legislation designed specifically to restore some 12,960 hectares of freehold title to the Rockhampton pioneers.
16. Colonist, 15 Nov. 1871, p. 3.
18. B.C., 23 Oct. 1869, p. 2. For a detailed discussion of provincial developments, see Chapter Seven.
19. Kay Saunders' extensive research into the indentured labour system, (Uncertain Bondage. An Analysis of Indentured Labour in Queensland to 1907, Ph.D. thesis, QU, 1974), indicates a high incidence of "overt coercion" (pp. 58, 69) at this period.
23. Maurice O'Connell to the Secretary of State, 27 Jan. 1868 (QSA, Gov/25).
26. B.C., 9 March 1869, p. 3.
27. Secretary of State to the Governor of Queensland, 23 April 1869, Nos 21 and 22, in Q.V. and P., 1869, v. 2, pp. 15, 17.
June 1869, p. 3; 2 July 1869, p. 3.

47. B.C., 5 July 1869, p. 2.

48. Parliamentary Reports, Colonist, 15 Nov. 1871, p. 3.


50. Pressmen File (A.D.B., ANU). For details of Hall's and O'Carroll's careers, see Appendix 2.

51. Francis, Then and Now, p. 19.


53. Q.E., 4 Nov. 1869, p. 3.

54. B.C., 21 Feb. 1871, p. 2; 10 May 1871, p. 2; 8 Nov. 1871, p. 3; 10 Nov. 1871, p. 4; 27 Nov. 1871, p. 5.

55. Maryborough Sugar Company Shareholding List, 18 Aug. 1873 (QSA, Companies file, A/21276); B.C., 5 Dec. 1871, p. 3.

56. M.C., 15 Sept. 1868, p. 2.


58. B.C., 15 Sept. 1871, p. 3 and 23 Sept. 1871, p. 3.

59. M.C., 13 June 1871, p. 2.

60. Q.E., 16 Oct. 1869, p. 2.


62. Waterson, Biographical Register, pp. 118-19.

63. Queenslander, 13 March 1869, p. 4.

64. William Coote Cutting Book 1876-79, "Our Public Men No. 2" (OML).


66. O'Connell to the Secretary of State, 8 July 1871 (QSA, Gov 25).


68. Colonist, 21 June 1871, p. 2.

69. Q.P.D. (LA), v. 12, 1871, p. 375.


71. Colonist, 15 Nov. 1871, p. 3.


Chapter 7: Town and Station: Land Disputes in Southern and Central Queensland


2. See Chapter Eight.

3. For the period under discussion here, the relevant publications are, in order of appearance, the Darling Downs Gazette (1858), the Toowoomba Chronicle (1861),
160 Notes to pages 108-116

the *Warwick Argus* (1864), the *Dalby Herald* (1865) and
the *Warwick Examiner* (1867). No files of the *Warwick Mail* (1862) have survived. For full details, see
Appendices 1 and 3.

20. W.E. and T., 8 March 1867, p. 2; 15 March 1867, p. 2 and 22 March 1867, p. 3.
21. See, for example, Clark's famous pro-dummying state­ments in Q.P.D., v. 5, 1867, p. 459.
23. D.D.G. 23 April 1870, p. 3.
24. Quoted in T.C., 2 July 1870, p. 3.
27. B.C., 13 Aug. 1870, p. 3.
33. R.B., 17 Sept. 1868, p. 2. *Northern Argus*, 21 Sept. 1868, p. 2; This episode was previously in Chapter Six.
36. An autobiographical account of the genesis and strug­gles of the early *Telegram* can be found under "Reminis­cences of Charles Verney" in *Daily Mail*, 30 March 1907,
Chapter 8: "Scribes and Hirelings!": the Provincial Press and the Elections of 1871

1. John Malbon Thompson is not to be confused with J.C. Thompson, the first Queensland Times editor. (Ipswich).
2. Q.T., 26 April 1870, p. 3; 10 May 1870, p. 3 and 17 May 1870, p. 3.
3. O.T., 12 May 1870, p. 3.
5. B.C., 19 July 1871, p. 2.
8. Q.V. and P., 1871-72, p. 139.
9. I.O., 16 Aug. 1871, p. 3.
12. See Chapters Five and Six.
13. The early files of the Wide Bay and Burnett News have not survived (Appendix 3) but see extracts in G.T., 14 July 1871, p. 2 and M.C. 29 June 1871, p. 2; 13 July 1871, p. 2 and 15 July 1871, p. 2. A full list of Queensland newspapers published in 1871 has been compiled in Appendix 1.
20. Under the new system, the number of Assembly seats were to be increased from 32 to 42 with a mean quota of 1,000 adult males per seat.
23. R.R. Mackenzie to Palmer, 7 July 1870, and Arnold Wienholt to Palmer, 5 Dec. 1871, in Palmer Papers, Box 3 (MSS, OML).
28. M.C., 20 June 1871, p. 3.
32. G.T., 7 June 1871, p. 2 and 17 June 1871, p. 2.
35. Quoted in W.E. and T., 1 July 1871, p. 2.
36. M.C., 17 Aug. 1871, p. 2; Northern Argus, 19 July 1871, p. 2.
39. B.C., 14 July 1871, p. 2. For Butterfield's previous attempts to secure a post as the colony's first official historian, see I.O., 16 July 1871, p. 3.
40. Archibald Archer to Palmer, 1871, in Palmer Papers, Box 3 (MSS, OML).
42. M.C., Telegraphic Intelligence, 20 July 1871, p. 2 and 21 July 1871, p. 2. Quoted in G.T., 26 July 1871, p. 2.
43. G.T., 26 July 1871, p. 2; Colonist, 29 July 1871, p. 2; I.O., 2 Aug. 1871, p. 2.
44. Letter by Gympie Miner in Colonist, 8 July 1871, p. 3.
45. G.T., 26 July 1871, p. 2.
46. M.C., 15 July 1871, p. 2.
47. M.C., 22 July 1871, p. 2 and 27 July 1871, p. 2.
48. G.T., 26 July 1871, p. 3; also M.C., 29 Sept. 1871, p. 2.
49. Colonist, 28 June 1871, p. 2.
50. Waterson's "A Darling Downs Quartet". (p. 7) includes the only brief analysis of this event.
51. W.E. and T., 21 July 1871, p. 2; Q.T., 27 July 1871, p. 3.
52. Q.V. and P., 1871-72, p. 256.
54. B.C., 26 July 1871, p. 3.
56. Q.V. and P., 1871-72, p. 50.
62. I.O., 12 June 1871, p. 2; Colonist, 20 July 1871, p. 2 and 4 Nov. 1871, p. 3.
63. Two of these actions have been previously discussed. The case Walsh v. Stephens and others was examined in Chapter Six. Walsh v. Fielberg (Wide Bay and Burnett News) has been reviewed earlier in this chapter.
64. See Table Five, "Libel Cases involving Queensland Newspapers, 1861-1871".
68. B.C., 10 Nov. 1871, p. 2.
69. W.E. and T., 8 April 1871, p. 2.
70. Q.V. and P., 1871-72, p. 6.
71. Northern Miner, 1 Aug. 1874, p. 2; see also Mount Perry Mail, 12 Feb. 1874, p. 2.

Conclusion

Appendix 1

Chronological List of Queensland Newspapers at Five Year Periods, 1851–71

(showing frequency, place and date of publication)

1851

Moreton Bay Courier, weekly, Brisbane. Established June 1846.

1856

Moreton Bay Courier, w., Brisbane.
Moreton Bay Free Press, w., Brisbane.

1861 (Source: Pugh's Almanac, 1862, pp. 53-54)

Courier, daily, Brisbane.
North Australian, 2w., Ipswich.
Wide Bay and Burnett Times, w., Maryborough. Estab. March 1860.
Burnett Argus, w., Gayndah. Estab. April 1861.

1866 (Original Source: Pugh's Almanac, 1867, pp. 78-79)

Courier, daily, Brisbane.
Darling Downs Gazette, 3w., Toowoomba. Estab. June 1858.
Queensland Times, 3w., Ipswich.
Queensland Daily Guardian, daily, Brisbane.
Maryborough Chronicle, 2w., Maryborough.
Burnett Argus, w., Gayndah.
Toowoomba Chronicle, 2w., Toowoomba.
Rockhampton Bulletin, 3w., Rockhampton.
Weekly Herald, w., Brisbane, Estab. May 1863.
Port Denison Times, 2w., Bowen. Estab, March 1864.
Cleveland Bay Herald, w., Townsville. Estab. March 1866.
Mackay Mercury, w., Mackay. Estab. April 1866.
Cleveland Bay Express, w., Townsville. Estab. June 1866.

1871 (Original Source: Pugh's Almanac, 1872, pp. 95-96)
Courier, daily, Brisbane.
Darling Downs Gazette, 2w., Toowoomba.
Queensland Times, 3w., Ipswich.
Maryborough Chronicle, 3w., Maryborough.
Toowoomba Chronicle, 2w., Toowoomba.
Rockhampton Bulletin, 3w., Rockhampton.
Northern Argus, 3w., Rockhampton.
Port Denison Times, 2w., Bowen.
Peak Downs Telegram, w., Clermont.
Warwick Argus, w., Warwick.
Dalby Herald, w., Dalby.
Queenslander, w., Brisbane.
Cleveland Bay Express, w., Townsville.
Mackay Mercury, w., Mackay.
Colonist late Queensland Express, 2w., Brisbane. Estab. June 1871.
Appendix 2

Genealogy of the Brisbane and Ipswich press, 1846-73, showing changes of title, ownership and editorship (-/-), location (X), and movement of journalists (►).
Appendix 3

Missing Queensland Newspaper Files, 1846–71

A. NEWSPAPERS WITH MISSING RUNS

Moreton Bay Free Press, 1850–51.
North Australian, 1855.
Ipswich Herald, 1859–60.
Burnett Argus, 1861.
Weekly Herald, 1863.
Northern Argus, 1863–65.
Dalby Herald, 1865.
Mackay Mercury, 1866.

B. NEWSPAPERS NOT LOCATED

Queensland Magazine (Brisbane), 1862.
Warwick Mail, 1862–64.
Ipswich Mercury, 1866.
Journal of Commerce (Brisbane), 1866–
Brisbane Leader, 1866.
Cleveland Bay Herald (Townsville), 1866.
Gladstone Observer, 1867–
Wide Bay and Burnett News (Maryborough), 1870–
Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Newspapers and Periodicals (*Denotes extensive consultation)

Atlas, 1844-1845
Australian, 1846-1847
Burnett Argus, 1862-1871
Cleveland Bay Express, 1866-1871
Colonist, 1871
Dalby Herald, 1866-1871
Darling Downs Gazette, 1858-1871
Empire, 1850-1861
Gympie Times (also Nashville Times), 1868-1871
Ipswich Observer, 1870-1871
Mackay Mercury, 1866-1871
Maryborough Chronicle, 1860-1871
Maryborough Mail, 1869-1870
Moreton Bay Courier (also Courier, Brisbane Courier), 1846-1873
Moreton Bay Free Press, 1852-1859
Mount Perry Mail, 1872-1874
Northern Argus, 1865-1871
North Australian, 1856-1865
Our Paper, 1868
Peak Downs Telegram, 1864-1871
Port Denison Times, 1864-1871
Queensland Express, 1868-1871
Queensland Guardian (also Queensland Daily Guardian), 1860-1868
Queensland Times, 1861-1871
Queenslander, 1866-1871
Ravenswood Miner, 1871-1872
Rockhampton Bulletin, 1861-1871
Sydney Chronicle, 1846-1847
Sydney Morning Herald, 1846-1871
Telegraph, 1872-1874
Toowoomba Chronicle, 1861-1871
Warwick Argus, 1866-1869
Warwick Examiner and Times, 1867-1871
The Week, 1876-1877
Weekly Herald, 1864-1871
Wide Bay and Burnett Times, 1860
Unprinted Official Sources

Customs Office (NSW) W.A. Duncan, Moreton Bay
- Two letters to J.C. Wickham 9 Feb. and 13 Feb. 1847
- One letter to J.C. Burnett, 13 Feb. 1847
- Sworn Statement about attempts to capture Aboriginal murderers at Moreton Bay (DL, Add. 81, 47/2542)

Lands Office (NSW) Darling Downs
- Commissioner of Crown lands, Letterbook, 1843-1848 (ML, A 1764)

Native Police Force (NSW)
- General Correspondence Records of the Native Police, including some personal letters to its officers. Oct. 1848-Jan. 1857 (QSA, NMP/J1)
- General Correspondence of the Native Police, including some items of the NSW Colonial Secretary and in letters dealing with Aboriginal relations, letters received by the Commandant Frederick Walker and drafts of addresses given by Walker to his troopers. Feb. 1849-Aug. 1854 (QSA, NMP/J2)
- Four letters by Frederick Walker to the Colonial Secretary, 1849-1853 (DL, CSIL/3)
- Native Police Commandant to the Colonial Secretary, Burnett, 10 March 1851 (DL, 51/3266)
- Reports of native depredations, correspondence, records, vouchers and warrants respecting the Native Police in the Burnett District, Aug. 1850-Jan. 1851 (QSA, NMP/5)
- Reports of Aboriginal depredations, correspondence, records, vouchers and warrants respecting the Native Police in the Waller district, Oct. 1850-July 1857 (QSA, NMP/6)
- Reports of Aboriginal depredations, correspondence, records, vouchers and warrants respecting the Native Police in the south Wide Bay District, July 1851-Feb. 1857 (QSA, NMP/8)
- Petition Aug. 1852 addressed to Gov. General Fitzroy respecting aggression by Aborigines and praying protection (DL, Add. 176)

Colonial Secretary's Office (Qld.)
- Drafts and Copies of Correspondence, Aug. 1859-June 1863 (QSA. COL/A1-A47)
- Letters Received, 1859-1869 (QSA, COL/C1-C9)
- Indexes to Registers of Letters Received (QSA, C Series)
- Index to Letterbooks of Letters to Other Departments, 1861, 1863-1864 (QSA, COL/T1-T4)
- Index to Letterbooks of Miscellaneous Letters, 1862-1864 (QSA, COL/U1)

Companies Office (Brisbane)
- Chronological Register of Companies, 1863-1959 (QSA, COM1)
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Outspoken and influential, the newspapers of colonial Queensland wrote history as well as made it. Press owners, controllers and journalists are the subject of this valuable study into metropolitan and provincial newspapers from the 1840s to 1875.

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