GLIMPSES OF YESTERDAY
North of Capricorn

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(The paper was illustrated by Lantern Slides of Historic
North Queensland towns and scenic spots)

Part of this paper was presented as the Inaugural Address
of the Seventh North Queensland Medical Congress in Sep­
tember 1966. The title, "Glimpses of Yesterday North of
Capricorn", is because of my long association with this part
of Queensland.

I was born at Hughenden shortly before the turn of the
century. My father, at the time, was Resident Engineer
supervising the construction of the Hughenden to Winton
Railway; subsequently as the railhead advanced we lived in
what was called the Main Camp, first at Stamford and then
again at Corfield. I cannot remember anything of those early
years in the North-West, but I can recall my parents' later
comments on the rigours of life on railway construction
camps in Queensland only sixty-odd years ago.

After a time at Gladstone and Bajool near Rockhampton
during the construction of the Gladstone to Rockhampton
Railway and then, later, at Mt. Morgan, where I saw
the great Open Cut in operation, we moved to Jericho where my
father was in charge of the building of the Jericho to Blackall
Railway; from Alice Downs, then owned by the late Arthur
Whittingham, I was given my first horse and so learnt to
ride and muster sheep.

Years later as a student, I spent three long summer holi­
days in Townsville where I trained over improvised hurdles
in the grounds of our house on Ross Island and kept in con­
dition by fast climbs up Castle Hill.

Another Christmas holiday was spent at Kuranda at a
time when the railway up the Barron Gorge, which had taken
seven years to complete, was then the only available route
to the Atherton Tableland other than a bridle track.

At Kuranda I roamed the pathways round the Barron
Falls before the hydro-electric works spoiled their great
natural beauty. I also made many trips with my father
in a railmotor along the railways to the west and south of
Kuranda, during which I saw a lot of the old mining towns, once got lost in the Chillagoe Caves and, stimulated by my father's great knowledge and interest, I learned to appreciate the beautiful timbers of the district.

When in June 1942 I took the 2/2 Australian General Hospital to Watten Siding, 14 miles south-west of Hughenden, it was common gossip in the mess that only a sentimental urge to revisit my birthplace had forced the Unit from the fleshpots of Canberra.

In the later years of the Second World War as Deputy Director of Medical Services, Q.L. of C., I made many trips to Townsville, Sellheim, Charters Towers, Cairns, and the Atherton Tableland.

Quite recently, I have been in North Queensland twice again, once to fish and look for crocodiles on Starcke Station, a family property north of Cooktown, and once to spend ten days with my elder son, on his boat, cruising round the islands of Whitsunday Passage.

There are so many absorbingly interesting places in the development of this 361,000 square miles of Queensland, North of Capricorn, that it is difficult to know how to start or where to finish, and I find myself perforce limited to those aspects of the story which have particularly captured my imagination.

FIRST HUMAN OCCUPATION

The history of the first human occupation of Australia dates back to the remote era of the Ice Ages. During those periods of intense cold, humans and animals, in an effort to survive, were forced towards the tropical regions of the world. At such times, the accumulation of vast areas of ice so lowered the sea level that many land masses previously separated by water became connected. Thus, at one period Australia was continuous with New Guinea, and possibly also with Indonesia and the mainland of Asia.

So it was that at least 20,000 years ago, and perhaps much earlier than this, the first of our dark-skinned people, the Negritos, blindly following the primeval instinct of self-preservation, literally walked into North Queensland along the Indonesian Corridor. They were seldom more than five feet in height: they had tightly curled black hair, and a capacity to retain their youthful appearance into old age. There are reason for suggesting that they had found their way originally from Africa.

Probably thousands of years later, the Negritos were followed by tribe after tribe, this time from Central Asia, but treading the self-same path into North Queensland. The people of these later waves of migration were probably of
Caucasoid stock; they also were dark skinned, but taller than the Negritos, with straight black hair and long thin legs; their descendants are the aboriginals as we know them today.

NEGRITOS IN NORTH

Gradually the Negritos, bowing to the superior strength and skill of the Caucasoid invaders, were forced southwards until the remnants of them eventually reached Tasmania. Interestingly enough, however, a small number of Negritos have survived in isolated areas of North Queensland. They are called Barrineans, after Lake Barrine on the Atherton Tableland where several of their tribes once lived.

While for many thousand years the aboriginals, immured in their island continent after the last Ice Age, were employing their hard won skills in a continued fight for survival, the civilised world was unaware of the very existence of Australia.

Before any part of the earth, South of the Equator, was known to Europeans there was great speculation among men versed in theology and dialectics as to whether there could, in fact, be an Antipodes or not. St. Augustine of Hippo was one of the strongest opponents of the theory. "There is no reason", he wrote, "for giving credit to that fabulous hypothesis of men who walk a part of the earth opposite to our own, where the sun rises, when it sets with us."

It is one of the pleasant ironies of history that there are nowadays many churches dedicated to St. Augustine in the Antipodes, the very existence of which he declared to be incredible. The contentious question of the Antipodes was, however, finally resolved by Drake’s circumnavigation of the Globe in the 16th Century (1578).

Some years earlier, Magellan on his voyage into the Pacific Ocean in 1519 recorded in his notes: "When we were in the midst of that vast expanse, we saw a cross with five very bright stars, directly westward, which are placed very exactly with regard to each other." This is the first recorded sighting of the Southern Cross.

However, neither Magellan nor Drake were aware of the existence of Australia. It was left to the Dutch plying their trade between Holland and the Spice Islands to discover the Western and Northern Coasts of Australia, a land which they named New Holland.

At this time, it was thought that New Holland was part of a great land Terra Australis Incognita, stretching from New Guinea, through Australia on to New Zealand, and thence to a further land mass reaching to the Antarctic. It was not until that great navigator, Captain James Cook, as
a result of the second of his voyages of discovery proved that the mythical Terra Australis Incognita of the old maps did not, in fact, exist.

Prior to this, on his first voyage between 1768 and 1771 Cook became the first white man to sight and investigate the Eastern Coast of Australia.

COOK'S DISCOVERIES

Setting sail from England in the "Endeavour" Cook rounded Cape Horn, visited Tahiti and New Zealand, and on 20 April 1770, he sighted the Australian mainland just south of Cape Howe. Keeping the coast in view, and so, well inside the Barrier Reef, Cook crossed the Tropic of Capricorn on 26 May 1770. On 4 June his diary reads: "Steered through the passage on which we found to be three to six miles broad and eight or nine leagues in length. This passage I have named Whitsunday as it was discovered on the day the church commemorates that Festival"; on the same day, sighting one of the most arresting looking islands of the whole Whitsunday group he named it Pentecost.

Some 24 hours later he sailed past the future site of Bowen. Two days later he was opposite where now is the city of Townsville; here his diary records: "The Bay which I name Cleveland Bay appeared to be about five or six miles in extent every way. The East point I named Cape Cleveland and the West, Magnetical Island, as the compass did not traverse well when near it." On 10 June he rounded and named Cape Grafton and then Trinity Bay after the Sunday on which it was discovered.

On the night of 11 June, the sea made its bid for the Endeavour. Cook's original journal tells the story: "Before 10 o'clock we had 20 and 21 fathoms and continued in that depth until a few minutes before 11 when we had 17 and then before the man at the lead could heave another cast the ship struck and stuck fast."

ENDEAVOUR ON THE REEF

History records that Cook immediately came on deck in his underpants and gave his orders with his wonted coolness and precision. Twenty-four hours later, after everything possible had been jettisoned and with anchors out and all hands — with the exception of those pumping — manning the capstan and windlass, the ship floated off the reef at the top of the tide. Plugging the gaping hole as best they could, Cook and his anxious crew sailed on. You all know the story of how six days later he managed to beach his ship on the sloping bank of a river afterwards named by
Cook the Endeavour. Two months sufficed to repair the damage and the voyage north was continued.

On 12 August, Cook landed on what is now a part of Starcke Cattle Station, which I have previously mentioned; here he climbed a promontory — which he named Lookout Point — in order to find a way through the maze of reefs. Next day for the same purpose, he climbed a hill 1000 feet high on Lizard Island.

Just 111 years later it was from this same Lizard Island that Mrs. R. F. Watson with her baby set out on her tragic voyage in a beche-de-mer tank.

Cook, after many vicissitudes, brought the Endeavour round Cape York on 22 August 1770, and on Possession Island claimed for Great Britain the whole coast line he had traversed, under the name of New Wales.

For 35 years after Captain Arthur Phillip arrived at Port Jackson in January 1788, nothing more was known about North Queensland.

LEICHHARDT’S EXPEDITIONS

No further attempt was made to explore the north-eastern part of Australia until 1844 when Ludwig Leichhardt took the initiative in exploring the unknown North. Leichhardt, born in Prussia and educated at Berlin University, had come to Australia two years previously. He was a romantic and a visionary, lacking the fundamental background of a bushman’s experience, but, in his first expedition, fortune favoured him with a season in which the rainfall was adequate, but not so excessive as to impede his progress.

Leichhardt set out from Jimbour Station near Dalby on 1 October, 1844. In his diary he recorded: "After having repaired some harness which had become broken by our refractory bullocks upsetting their loads and after my companions had completed their arrangements, in which Mr. Bell kindly assisted, we left Jimbour and launched buoyant with hope into the wilderness." He set his course north-west across the Dawson, Mackenzie and Isaac Rivers, tributaries of the Fitzroy until in mid-February, 1845, he reached the Suttor River some 150 miles west of Mackay; he traced the Suttor north to a larger stream which he named the Burdekin after a rich young widow in Sydney. Whether this was motivated by altruistic, romantic, or practical financial reasons will never be known.

Crossing the watershed he continued north-west to the junction of the Lynd and Mitchell Rivers and pressing on round the Gulf of Carpentaria he reached Port Essington in Arnhem Land just 14 months from the day he set out from Jimbour.
What Cook achieved in exploration by sea, Leichhardt had now done by land. As you know, both these men met their deaths on subsequent journeys, but they had been able, in their relatively short lives, to lift the veil of obscurity from this part of Australia and their names are emblazoned forever in the history of North Queensland.

In 1855 A. C. Gregory landed with his party, including his brother, near the Victoria River, to trace Leichhardt's steps in reverse. They reached the headwaters of the Belyando River, the southern-most tributary of the Burdekin, before arriving on the coast at Port Curtis 14 months later.

JAMES MORRELL

Mention should be made here of one white man now almost forgotten who had a good knowledge of the Burdekin country long before the Gregorys but was not able to put it to any useful purpose. This man was James Morrell; a twenty-two year old sailor, he swam ashore in Cleveland Bay from a raft launched from the wrecked barque "Peruvian." Befriended by the blacks he lived with them for 17 years before he gave himself up to a couple of astounded station hands, exclaiming, "Don't shoot mates, I'm a British object."

In 1859, by the time people had just begun to realise that Queensland was a Sovereign State in its own right and no longer an outpost of New South Wales, the stage was set for the pastoral development of the North. The population of the whole State of Queensland was then 25,000, well less than half the present population of Townsville.

DALRYMPLE, FOUNDER OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

George Ernest Dalrymple with his diversified interests, has sound claims to be called the Founder of North Queensland. The tenth son of an Aberdeenshire Baronet, he made two expeditions to the North in 1859 and 1860 and together with Captain Henry Sinclair is given the credit for the establishment of a suitable Port which he named Bowen after Queensland's first Governor.

About the same time, John Mackay, a young 21-year-old Scot from Inverness, led an expedition from Armidale, which discovered good pastoral country in the valley of a river later named the Pioneer. This was the genesis of the city of Mackay as we know it today.

Before long adventurous graziers were taking up land in many parts of Northern and North-western Queensland.

In 1865 J. M. Black, part-owner of several large western properties, but financed largely by a clever old trader in
Sydney, Captain Robert Towns, established a township on Ross River which he called Townsville after the man who held such heavy mortgages on his properties.

DISCOMFORTS AND HAZARDS

Life for these new settlers carried many discomforts and hazards.

To illustrate this I cannot do better than quote from the Journal of my wife's Great-Aunt, Elizabeth Patricia Cameron, afterwards Mrs. Donald Beachamp Cameron, in which she tells the story of the settlement of my wife's great-grand-parents in Western Queensland. In this Journal, she says: "My father, Donald Charles Cameron, came to Australia in 1852. My mother was anxious to follow her husband to Australia as soon as possible and took passage for herself and children and nurses in the "Great Britain" on her first voyage in 1853.

"It was an unhappy journey for two of the children died of diphtheria, which was a new disease and the ship's doctor knew nothing of it. I was born in Victoria in 1855.

"After a few years my father and two young Scotsmen, James and William Crombie, decided to try and secure a lease of the new country then being thrown open, and stock it with sheep.

"The party set out in 1862." (Interestingly enough this was the very same year in which my own Grandfather, Simon Fraser, arrived in Brisbane with his family and established himself in Queen Street as a broker, estate agent and auctioneer).

BARCALDINE DOWNS

The diary continues: "Taking what sheep they could find they were making for the head of the Flinders River when they met Mr. Gregory, the explorer, who said he had found the country in that region disappointing, so they went on to the Alice River, and finding there beautiful country they took up 40 miles of frontage to the river calling the property Barcaldine Downs . . . . . . the blacks were really dangerous; they speared horses and sheep and then killed two shepherds. The men built a comfortable house of dressed gidyea slabs with a good bark roof . . . . . . there was no glass; the windows had heavy bolts and the walls were loop-holed for rifles.

"It was not until 1864 that the new station was so established that it could be considered safe for women and children to travel so far west. My father came to Sydney to take us home and we all travelled by steamer to Rockhampton."
“There were two covered tip drays which had been used for dam-making at Barcaldine. The roads had been surveyed for only a very short distance; after that they had to choose the best line they could keeping close to the track of former travellers. The distance of over 300 miles was made longer by the necessity of diverting in search of camping places with water and grass.

“As the blacks were hostile and dangerous at that time my father and my brother John took turns of watching with a loaded gun beside them every night. The journey took 28 days; we reached Barcaldine about sunset. It was far the prettiest house we had seen on all the road . . . . . . . . . . . . We had nothing with us except what could be brought in the drays, but my mother set to work to make it comfortable.

TALLOW LAMPS

“After a few months the bullock teams arrived with station rations and what furniture my mother had decided to keep from Sydney. We had no lights except fat or shrub lamps made by half filling a jam tin with earth, fixing a thin piece of stick covered with cotton cloth in the centre and filling up the tin with tallow. There were no other women in the district.” And so the journal goes on.

In the early 1860’s, the original settlers of North Queensland were too busy establishing their properties to think of prospecting for gold. In 1867, however, developmental problems and falling prices had commenced a temporary slump in the pastoral industry which led to an energetic search for gold to boost the resources of the North.

GOLD DISCOVERIES

Alluvial gold was discovered in 1867 on the Cape River, a tributary of the Burdekin, which looked at first to be a promising field.

Other diggings were quickly established at Ravenswood (1868), Etheridge (1870), Charters Tors, named after the local Mining Warden (1871), the Palmer in 1873 and the Hodgekin Field in 1876.

The fantastic Palmer gold rush which led to the rapid development of Cooktown as the Port for the field is a story in its own right. Chinamen poured into the area in spite of violent opposition from the white miners; a tree on Sandy Creek carried the warning — “Any Chinaman found higher up this creek will be hanged until he is dead.” The local blacks were belligerent; typhoid, malaria and dysentery claimed many victims, but the lure of gold kept ardent
optimists pouring into Cooktown until its population approached 40,000.

Charters Towers as a gold mine had a less dramatic history than the Palmer, but in spite of early imperfections it became a stable community, and by 1900 had a population of 30,000, and was then the largest city in the State except Brisbane.

All the North Queensland gold-fields, with the exception of Charters Towers and Ravenswood, had a transitory existence and many have now become ghost towns living in the shadow of their former greatness.

COPPER FIELDS

Copper was first discovered in Northern Queensland at Peak Downs in 1860; seven years later, Ernest Henry, soldier, explorer and grazier, and the original owner of Hughenden Station, found large deposits of copper ore on the Cloncurry river, only six years after Burke, Wills and King had passed that way.

Chillagoe was not mined until William Atherton found out-crops on his cattle station; Atherton had named his property Chillagoe after a well-known sea shanty of the time, the refrain of which ran "Ikey, pikey, psyche, crikey, chillagoe, wallabantorin."

Silver lead has been mined at Mungana and tin mines have been worked at many places around Herberton and also at Mt. Garnett.

All these centres have had their days of glory but the mine that has most captured the imagination in this century is Mt. Isa.

Towards the end of 1920 four men, Mullavey, Roberts, Simpson and Winters, who had been working on Barkley Downs Station, left to work the shining mica out-crops on the Leichhardt River.

Later they were joined by a horse-breaker, Condamine Davidson, who, shortly afterwards, found the first payable copper ore in the district; the five men moved their camp to a new lease the Native Bee where, continually broke, they mined and bagged copper ore from the patch outcrops.

One morning, Simpson, returning from a visit to their mail box on the Camooweal road, remarked casually that he had there met and talked with a man taking horses to the Northern Territory.

JOHN CAMPBELL MILES

The man he had met was John Campbell Miles. Already an experienced and dedicated prospector, with a good know-
ledge of the district, Miles had set out from Melbourne, as he records, the year Sister Olive won the Cup; with his six horses he travelled slowly, eventually passing through Hughenden, Richmond and Duchess on his way to the Northern Territory. After a yarn with Simpson at the mail box he continued on, looking for a camping place, which he found on the banks of the Leichhardt River.

Fastening the bells on his horses, he set off with his farrier's hammer in his hand, attracted to a low range across the valley. Avoiding the prickly spinifex he cracked off a fragment from a yellow-brown rock; its broken face was black and honeycombed and it was remarkably heavy. The ore was lead carbonate; although he did not realise it at the time, Campbell Miles had discovered the silver lead field to which he later gave the name Mt. Isa.

The prospectors from Barkley Downs helped Miles bag the first ore and later took out a number of leases. With the exception of Miles, however, they all let the money, obtained from the subsequent sale of these leases, slip through their fingers.

The amazing story of Mt. Isa's trials and tribulations and of the men who fought so manfully for its survival, believing in its eventual success is well told in Blainey's book "Mines in the Spinifex." Copper is now its major output, though lead, silver and zinc concentrate, still play a significant part. It employs 4,100 men and is bringing ore up the K 57 shaft from 3,753 feet below the surface.

John Campbell Miles, who died in Melbourne less than two years ago, lived to see the mine he had discovered grow into one of the greatest in the world.

ALEXANDER KENNEDY

On 3 November 1922, an 87-year-old man was a passengers in a small single-engined plane, flying at 4,000 feet, from Longreach to Cloncurry; he looked down in wonder on the ranges he had in the past taken weeks to cross on horseback. He did not know that, down there, was an unknown traveller called John Campbell Miles, camping with his horses and waiting for rain, just three months before he was to discover Mt. Isa's silver lead.

The old man in the plane was Alexander Kennedy, flying as the sole passenger with the first Qantas air mail; he had claimed this privilege as a condition when he put his £250 into the new company. A few days later, Hudson Fish, the pilot of this first Qantas Mail flight, received a letter from Fergus Macmaster, the guiding spirit of the early days of Qantas, which read inter alia: "I am simply sending you this
letter to commemorate one of the most eventful days in the history of the development of Queensland, a day which you yourself have worked hard to make possible."

Forty years later, seeing the name Qantas flashing in large letters in Piccadilly, I thought back to the struggle of its early years in the West and its dramatic rise to become one of the best-known and most reliable airlines in history.

**THE FLYING DOCTOR**

One cannot talk of Qantas without thinking of the work of the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Queensland with which in its early days Qantas was so closely associated.

It was the Rev. John Flynn who first conceived the idea of an aerial medical service operating in conjunction with the Australian Inland Mission.

The first flight was made by Dr. George Simpson in a Qantas plane in June 1927 when he flew to Mt. Isa in a DH 50 to bring a miner with a broken pelvis back to Cloncurry. Since then the elaboration of the Royal Flying Doctor Service at its two bases in North-Western Queensland has given a welcome sense of security to widely scattered and, at times, isolated communities.

While the pioneers in the hinterland were continuing their struggle to establish themselves in a sometimes difficult environment, a new primary industry was beginning to take shape along the more heavily watered regions of the coast.

The soldiers of Alexander the Great on their return from India in the fourth century B.C. had told strange stories of a reed grown there, which had juice as sweet as honey.

**RISE OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY**

This sweet reed, however, was unknown in Queensland until John Spiller, returning from a visit to Java, brought back some cane cuttings which he gave to Captain Louis Hope. Hope grew some of these at Ormiston near Brisbane and later sent a considerable number of setts back to Spiller. On 1 June 1865, Spiller planted these on a 40-acre block on the north bank of the Pioneer River and so set in motion the cane industry in North Queensland.

Five years later G. E. Dalrymple, on a government sponsored expedition to assess the resources of the coast north of Townsville, reported that the valleys of the Johnston, Mulgrave and Mossman Rivers were ideally suited for sugar growing. Here, as well as in the valleys of the Herbert and Tully Rivers and in the Burdekin Delta, cane farms began to spring up like mushrooms.
JOHN DRYSDALE

John Drysdale, kindly, shrewd, purposeful and autocratic to a degree, will always be remembered for his development of the irrigation system of the Burdekin Delta by the use of specially constructed spear pumps.

Roy Connolly, Drysdale's biographer, wonders whether his hero has been given adequate recognition for his inventive appreciation of the spear pump principle without which cane-growing in the district would surely have fallen by the wayside.

"Millions of people," he says, "must have taken a bath before Archimedes, but only the great mathematician discovered, in his bath, the principle of displacement; and how many people watched apples fall from trees before Newton was inspired, by seeing an apple fall, to prove the law of universal gravitation?"

KANAKA LABOUR

By 1877, Pacific Islanders were being brought in increasing numbers to work the cane fields of North Queensland. My maternal grandfather, a sugar planter, always claimed that the kanakas from Malaita in the Solomons were the toughest to handle, but were by far the best workers. Recruitment of this imported labour was open to great abuse and many lurid incidents of gross maltreatment are on record; their living conditions were often deplorable and sickness was rife.

I can remember my mother telling me how, as a young girl, she had often seen her father's kanakas have lung haemorrhages as they were waiting for their daily dose of cod liver oil, at that time the usual, but quite futile, treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis, which was so prevalent in their midst.

The question of kanaka labour was for 40 years a major political issue before it was finally prohibited in 1904.

As had happened with grazing and mining, the sugar industry over the years has survived fluctuatory fortunes until now, aided by applied science and increasingly efficient mechanisation, including mechanical harvesting and bulk loading, it has become firmly established as one of the bulwarks of the North.

Twenty-two great sugar mills are now operating in North Queensland. In the Mackay district alone there are eight mills — six of them co-operative — which this year are expected to produce 675,000 tons of sugar.
EPIDEMIC OF FEVER

As commonly happens in tropical countries with a high rainfall, conditions favour the spread of certain pyrexial diseases and North Queensland has been no exception to this rule. Inevitably, therefore, the discovery and settlement of new districts has been associated with frequent epidemics of fever of one kind or another.

As long ago as 1860, when John Mackay and the members of his expedition were camped on the banks of the Pioneer River, four members of the party became prostrated with anorexia, fever and headache, and one of the aboriginals in the party died. This is the first recorded account of fever in the era of North Queensland exploration and development.

For a long time, in the absence of definitive knowledge as to causation, it was a natural corollary to diagnose unspecified fevers on a geographical basis. So arose the names of Cape, Coastal, Palmer, Mossman, Daintree, Sarina and Gulf Fever.

In the earlier days, cases of Typhoid or Malaria which deviated from the accepted pattern of either disease but combined some features of both, were often confused, one with the other, and so arose the convenient but unscientific diagnosis of Typho-malaria. However, great credit must be paid to the patient and painstaking observations of succeeding generations of general practitioners who recorded most faithfully the clinical findings in their fever cases and by so doing paved the way for the later elucidation of many of the problems which had previously confronted them.

INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL MEDICINE

By the turn of the century, however, it was realised that there should be an organised and systematic investigation of Tropical Diseases in North Queensland. Ten years later, due in large measure to the advocacy of George Frosham, D.D., Bishop of North Queensland, the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine was established in Townsville, with Anton Brienl as its first director, a position later held with distinction by your President.

As a young medical student on holiday, I can well remember often walking past this unpretentious wooden building in Townsville wondering what mysterious investigations went on within its walls.

There seems no doubt that a great deal of the serious fever encountered in the early settlements was typhoid.

It is not easy for young medical graduates to realise that as recently as when I was a second year resident medical officer at the Brisbane General Hospital, the beds in Wards
8 and 9 were always filled to over-flowing with typhoid cases; indeed my first patient in private practice was a girl whose face I had permanently scarred when opening a parotid abscess, an unusual complication of typhoid fever.

With improvements in local hygiene and an understanding of the causes and spread of the disease, typhoid has now virtually disappeared from North Queensland.

MALARIA IN NORTH

Malaria was already being diagnosed microscopically in 1908 in the North, but except in very isolated instances it has not occurred south of Townsville. The only city north of this centre which has been repeatedly beset with malaria is Cairns.

However, no case of malaria locally acquired has been reported on the mainland of North Queensland since 1946.

Scrub typhus is another disease which has bedevilled North Queensland. It has occurred repeatedly where heavy scrub country is being cleared. It is a formidable disease and until recently could only be treated symptomatically.

We have now, however, reached a stage where the various fevers commonly encountered in tropical countries are no longer a real menace to citizens of the North.

Delving into the past history of North and North Western Queensland, one cannot fail to be mildly surprised at the avid interest which has been displayed from time to time by certain politicians in the financial prospects of new ventures of their day, and perhaps even to wonder how much their personal interest swayed their objective judgment when pending legislative enactments were under consideration. On the whole, however, due credit must be paid to succeeding Governments which by their sustained faith in the North have allowed formidable obstacles to be overcome.

A LONG STEP FORWARD

Tropical Queensland has taken a long step forward since John Mackay camped on the Pioneer River in 1860. The population of Queensland, North of Capricorn, is now 369,000, of whom 83 per cent. live east of the Great Dividing Range. Probably because of the great difficulties encountered by the early settlers, there has been built up a reputation for mutual help and generous hospitality which has become a byword.

There has developed, also, a spirit of sturdy independence and a determination not to accept defeat, qualities often lacking in more settled and more densely populated communities. That this spirit is still alive is well illustrated by a letter
received just before last Christmas in Canberra addressed to Santa Claus, C/- Department of Supply. The letter read:

"Dear Santa,

May I have two guns and a cow-boy suit, two pouches and a rifle. Every Friday our teacher takes us for a swim.

Lots of love
from

Brent — aged 7.

C/- Post Office, Chillogoe."

It is hardly necessary to record that Brent's Christmas request was duly received and appropriately acknowledged.

North Queensland is now a settled and thriving community.

Great cities have grown up along the Coast, very different from the rough and ready township from which they sprang. Rockhampton has now a population of 45,000, Mackay 23,000, Townsville 56,000 and Cairns 26,500.

GREAT ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The early primary industries of which I have spoken are now firmly established. The remarkable increase in the commercial and domestic use of alumina adds significance to the discovery of vast reserves of bauxite at Weipa. Industrial enterprise is on the march. The tourist trade is thriving. Water conservation, which can be achieved by harnessing the outflow from the Herbert, Fitzroy and Burdekin River basins, holds great hope for further development. The building of vital beef roads and the development of the brigalow belt are exciting prospects.

On the Educational front the University College of Townsville, only six years old, has made tremendous strides; three full degree courses are available and a new Chair in Marine Biology, the first in Australia, has recently been filled. Some of the new buildings on the splendid site on the slopes of Mt. Stuart have already been opened and the College will become a University in its own right in 1970.

"UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES"

Provided always that we are spared a national disaster pouring in on a wave of Asiatic terrorism, great vistas will continue to open up along the road to progress in the North. Perhaps one cannot do better than reiterate the words of Queensland's friend and benefactor, our grand old ex-Governor, Sir Henry Abel Smith, when he said at Mackay, just before he left Queensland — "Unlimited opportunities are on the horizon."
I am somewhat fearful that my talk has been over influenced by personal memories. My only excuse for this is that tonight, I have, in a sense, travelled upon a somewhat sentimental journey. May I conclude by thanking you all for giving me the opportunity, for a short space, to return to what I am happy to remember as my early home, North of Capricorn.