Queensland has been the premier cattle producing state in Australia since 1885. While the industry is the major user of land resources in North Queensland, the climate is not naturally conducive to this activity. A short summer distribution of rainfall is followed by long, dry periods in which native grasses lose much of their nutrition with the result that beasts put on weight only during a few months of each year. Parasites also revel in the warm tropical climate. Distance is a disadvantage, though less onerous than in previous times. The earliest pastoralists who pushed out into this alien environment brought with them their British breeds of cattle. Ultimately Herefords became established in the more settled regions along the coast and immediate hinterland; Shorthorns were favoured in the west, north and north-east. Three distinct periods can be detected in the development of the northern industry. The first dates from 1861 with the arrival of the initial herds and draws to a close in the early 1890s. During most of this period cattle production far exceeded demand with an obvious fundamental disequilibrium existing. Some significant structural changes in the 1890s ushered in a new period, characterised by erratic fluctuations resulting ultimately in stagnation. The beginning of the third period is discernible in the 1950s. With massive injections of capital, both private and public, the industry was poised on the brink of maturity.

* * * *

1861 - 1890s

Confronted with limited resources and a vast undeveloped area in the north of the colony, the newly formed Queensland government formulated a land code in 1860 to favour pastoral activities. The initial allocation of large tracts of land to relatively few squatters was intended as a short term solution; closer settlement was the ultimate objective. An 1875 editorial bearing the marks of agrarianism reflected popular opinion at the time:
[A great] but not excessive desire to see cultivation flourish has always been apparent in this colony.... All classes look to the cultivation of the soil as a means of increasing the production of the country, and of enabling it to support a larger population.\(^3\)

In drawing up the first Queensland land legislation, one aim was to eliminate speculation which retarded genuine settlement; the stocking of runs was viewed as an imperative forerunner to any extensive settlement.

Unaware of the problems which lay ahead, most early squatters who ventured north stocked their runs with sheep;\(^4\) within a decade they were to find that footrot, fluke, lung worm and speargrass rendered much of the area unsuited to that purpose. There were some individuals, however, who stocked with cattle from the start. The demand for sheep for stocking new country drove prices beyond the means of the less affluent squatters.

Another advantage of cattle was their greater mobility. As the right of occupancy was bestowed on the first to stock the country, those with cattle sometimes obtained the best land. But with only a small population and no satisfactory way of exporting surplus meat, it must have been obvious that those who chose cattle would have marketing difficulties.

The typical northern squatter in the 1860s was an owner-manager who frequently had the backing of a sleeping partner, business house or family member,\(^5\) but there was some company ownership. Most noticeable in this respect were the numerous runs taken up on behalf of various Towns partnerships and operated by managers.\(^6\) Another pastoral company operating in North Queensland in the 1860s was the Landsborough River Co. which in 1864 used cattle from its Bowen Downs station to stock Beames Brook near the present site of Burketown.\(^7\)

Throughout the entire nineteenth century most North Queensland cattle stations operated as cheaply as possible using the open range system. Except in the more settled areas, little fencing or herd
management was used. The typical outside station consisted of a fairly primitive homestead, an assortment of buildings used as store, saddle room and men's quarters, a stockyard where drafting, branding and spaying was carried out and perhaps a couple of paddocks near the house for horses and stud cattle. On large properties, the erection of outstations, usually consisting of a hut and a series of stockyards, made cattle management more efficient. The widespread use of Aboriginal labour from the 1870s was a further means of reducing operating costs. In fact many station owners, plagued with high expenses and low returns were only able to retain their holdings by using low or unpaid black employees.

Although North Queensland was not to be a "big man's frontier", the capital required to form a station was even in the earliest stages quite considerable. Taking into account the cost of stock and sundry other items, one pioneer squatter estimated that capital formation alone amounted to over £11,000. Other substantial cash outlays were also necessary; the cost of obtaining the lease for the land and rent for instance. It was also necessary to have sufficient capital to pay for wages and rations until the station produced income - often two or three years. Many pioneers failed to accurately gauge the amount of capital required to form a new station. Rachel Henning wrote to her sister that "there [was] very little prospect for anyone out here now who had not a large amount of capital to begin with - £8,000 or £10,000 at least".

Throughout most of the period squatters experienced severe labour shortages. Distance and isolation, poor working conditions and Aboriginal attacks, forced squatters to offer high wages to induce workers into the industry. Labour shortages were further exacerbated by the need to have extra staff for personal and property protection. Phillip Somer, one of North Queensland's earliest pioneer squatters wrote to the Colonial Secretary explaining that:

the very great distance between the headstations, and still greater distances between the few police camps, and townships, compelled every squatter to keep a larger
staff of men to protect each other – than would otherwise be necessary to work the stations; and altho' in nearly every case squatters had extra hands, still they would have been entirely at the mercy of the blacks if the blacks had been allowed into see the Squatters weak points, for instance what could a half a dozen or twenty men do if surprised and surrounded by a host of savages...14

In addition Aborigines waged a highly successful economic campaign against pioneer squatters killing cattle, destroying huts and looting stores. Indeed it has been argued by Reynolds and Loos that "Aboriginal resistance presented a many pronged threat to the economic viability of frontier squatting".15

In the 1860s, almost the only means of disposing of surplus cattle locally was to sell them to other squatters stocking new runs,16 until boiling down works, opened in Townsville17 and Burketown18 in 1866, provided an alternative outlet. Five hundred head from Dotswood were the first mob to be treated in Townsville,19 followed by drafts from Salisbury Plains, Burdekin Downs, Bluff Downs20 and Inkerman.21 However, in the ensuing four years the boiling-down works mainly operated on sheep22 and throughout the 1870s stock were not boiled down at all in the north. The export of canned mean appeared a possible solution to the marketing problem, but the Australian product never really appealed to the English palate. Moreover for preserved meat to be profitable, it was necessary to obtain stock at low prices. With prices increasing canning came to a standstill in 1874. The editor of the Queenslander was one who welcomed the suspension, considering canning wasteful of stock and unsatisfactory to consumers; its only virtue in his eyes was that for removing surplus stock, it was better than boiling down.23 Some local demand for fresh meat was created in the late 1860s by the discovery of gold in various parts of the north. Among the fortunate squatters who found markets at the diggings was Robert Gray of Glendower who made small sales to the Cape diggings in 1868 and Ravenswood in 1870.24 Throughout the 1870s and 1880s additional fields were opened exposing more squatters to local markets. All properties for sale stressed
this point: Lolworth was "close to the Northern goldfields", Woodhouse's owners claimed that "over the past two years numerous and continuous drafts of fat stock have been disposed of at the diggings in the neighbourhood"; and Natal Down's also "near the northern goldfields".

The unbounded optimism which accompanied the earliest pastoralists began to abate as more and more difficulties emerged. In 1866, with the colony reeling from the effects of a financial crisis, Burke, Cook and Kennedy squatters petitioned the government for rental relief. As the price of wool and stock fell throughout the 1860s pastoralists continually appealed to the government for more secure and extended tenure. Popular consensus was that it was "absolutely necessary that pastoral tenants should be able to offer a more tangible security to capitalists than they at present possess". The severity of the situation can be gauged from Table 1: four times as many runs were abandoned in 1869 as in the previous year. New land legislation, enacted in 1869, which extended leases, reduced rental and gave pastoralists the option of buying one block of 2560 acres per run, came too late for many squatters.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastoral District</th>
<th>1866</th>
<th>1867</th>
<th>1868</th>
<th>1869</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kennedy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Kennedy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>171</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
<td><strong>370</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those pastoralists who did not abandon their runs in the late 1860s had little success in raising additional funds from banks. While at Oxford Downs Dalrymple found it impossible to get any advances whatsoever on his future clip. The removal of sheep from the eastern
watershed and the gulf country had given the area a bad reputation.

As M.M. Bennett explained:

One of the difficulties of pioneering in western Queensland was to persuade southern bankers that that part of the country consisted of something better than spear grass six feet high in which if man did not die of fever he would probably be speared by natives.31

Recounting the experiences of squatters who turned to banks for financial assistance R. Gray wrote that:

Banks and financial companies refused to lend money on northern stations and for some years for the want of capital to aid in developing this portion of the country things were almost at a standstill.32

The opening up of the Palmer goldfields in 1874 triggered a second wave of pastoral expansion.33 At the beginning of 1874, miners on the field were cut off from Cooktown. With rations in short supply one man cut up his horse on the road to the Palmer and sold the flesh for food34 but as time progressed and all food resources were depleted, several men actually died of starvation.35 With rapidly increasing herds cattlemen responded to this much publicised fact with a mass convergence on the Palmer as soon as it was possible to travel. The demand for cattle continued there with good bullocks bringing £15-£17 a head in 1875.36 The Palmer market was supplied by stations from all parts of North Queensland, even as far west as Lawn Hill near the Northern Territory border.37 It remained the principal market for North Queensland throughout the 1870s until, with population declining, prices fell to an unacceptably low level.38

Initial financing of the second wave of expansion appears to have come in part from the retained earnings of existing North Queensland squatters.39 By 1877 net profits of sales to the Palmer from one cattle station was between £7,000 and £8,000.40 Presumably the North Queensland goldfields would also have provided direct finance for the development of properties: Frank Stubley, for instance, one of Charters Towers "mundic kings"41 bought and improved the northern properties of St. Annes, St. Ronans and Evelyn in the 1870s.42 But according to one Queenslander, it was the Victorians who rediscovered
North West Queensland and put the northern industry on its feet. The earliest Victorians in the second wave of expansion invested in cattle properties but by the end of the decade they turned their attention to sheep. Several cattle properties in the Flinders were thus purchased for restocking.

By the end of 1882, when the influx of Victorian capital into the Queensland pastoral industry began to abate, British capital had become an important source of finance. Owing to a series of defaults, British foreign lending to the United States collapsed in the late 1870s, and there was a lack of investment outlets within Britain. The relative absence of demand from these two areas favoured Australia where existing Anglo-Australian land mortgage companies were making large profits.

Improvements on northern sheep stations in the 1880s were aimed at increasing yields through fencing and water conservation. Few cattle stations followed this example but most appeared to have substantial mortgages. Obviously loans were obtained to service past debts. Roger Sheaffe and Alexander Kennedy, who owned Devoncourt in 1887, obtained a mortgage of £40,000 from the Australian and New Zealand Mortgage Co. Ltd.; after bills were paid, the partnership had £10,000 left to develop the property. The easy availability of money in the 1880s may well have encouraged cattlemen to be over-optimistic. N.G. Butlin has suggested that from the mid 1880s, well before the depression of the 1890s, the industry was in serious difficulties through expansion into marginal lands and increased indebtedness.

How then did squatters manage to dispose of their cast in the 1880s? The second wave of expansion had created a demand for stores and breeders not only in North Queensland but in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. But while this helped to ease the situation in the short run, it only served to exacerbate the problem in the long term. The market was already grossly oversupplied as evidenced by the extremely low price of cattle at the end of the 1870s.
DAWN MAY

and the stocking of new country further increased the potential supply. The export of frozen meat was the only possible solution to a situation where supply was increasing much faster than demand. With runs grossly overstocked, no viable markets and the frozen meat export problem unresolved, North Queensland pastoralists once again turned to the despised boiling-down, the Townsville works reopening in 1880.49

Meanwhile squatters received a respite as the prices of cattle on the southern markets were beginning to rise in the 1880s because some southern pastoralists were switching to sheep. However until 1886 North Queensland squatters found it more profitable to send their cattle to the boiling down works in Townsville50 or to the proliferation of scattered mining and plantation settlements. The drought of 1884-1886 would also have restricted the marketing of cattle because of inability to travel. But from 1886 North Queensland cattlemen began to participate in southern markets, especially Melbourne and Adelaide. Those cattle bound for the Wodonga saleyards travelled overland to Bourke whence some were railed to Victoria. Others made the entire journey on the hoof. It was estimated that up to 1891, 50,000 cattle per annum had been dispatched from stations within 200 miles of Normanton alone.51 However the relatively high prices of the 1880s began to fall; Edward Palmer of Canobie reported that 900 bullocks did not realise more than 35s per head after all expenses, droving, commission and losses on the road. Pleuro pneumonia was an additional hazard when overlanding cattle. The disease had initially been introduced to North Queensland in 1864,52 but deaths were greater in travelling stock as a result of increased stress.53

Up to 1890 a fundamental disequilibrium existed in the northern cattle industry. Except for the five years between 1874 and 1878, when the northern population grew rapidly because of the Palmer goldrushes, the supply of cattle greatly exceeded demand. Consequently, cattle prices were extremely depressed and did not allow a sufficient margin of profit for the industry to be viable. Very
few northern squatters made a financial success of their pastoral activities in the nineteenth century and it would seem that undue effort and capital was wasted in an industry established years before it should have been. But in spite of their financial failure northern squatters were highly regarded by their contemporaries. In the view of one:

No greater pluck, determination, and self-sacrifice have been shown at Mafeking than these men displayed and be it remembered that their trials extended over as many years as those of Baden-Powell's...did months.

* * * * *

1890s to 1950s

Three major structural changes occurred in the industry in the 1890s. The first was a change in the pattern of ownership. Whereas a majority of stations in North Queensland had been operated by owner managers, separation of ownership and management occurred quite rapidly in the first half of the decade. The financial crisis of 1893 together with low cattle prices and restricted markets resulted in many large stations passing into the hands of banks and pastoral finance companies. This was particularly evident in the Gulf country, saddled with the "tyranny of distance". In 1895 a Queenslander correspondent wrote that "most of the old-time pioneer squatters have 'gone down' and...the bulk of the station properties are now in the hands of the banks." There were a few tenacious families who through sheer deprivation and with loans from relations managed to hold onto their properties. Amongst these were the Watson brothers who had restocked the abandoned Gregory Downs in 1873. Likewise Coolullah, purchased by the Power brothers in the early 1880s, had the "distinct and enviable advantage of not being controlled by a financial institution". While some station owners remained to manage their former properties, in other instances the financial institutions installed their own personnel.
The change in the nature of ownership had implications for the level of investment in the northern cattle stations. The depressed state of the economy in the 1890s made it impossible to dispose of properties acquired through foreclosure, but with larger reserves than the former owners, banks and companies were in a position to undertake more improvements. Water conservation and fencing were the most significant. Bunda Bunda station, owned by the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, was described in 1903 as "one of the best improved runs in the state". In equipping the property for sheep and cattle the bank had spared no expense. On large outside stations, boundary fencing was initially erected with the primary aim of containing stock more effectively. For instance in 1901 the manager of Lorraine station recommended to the owners that a fence be erected on the Augustus Downs boundary "as much to keep our neighbours cattle off as our own cattle on. Cattle here, unlike conditions you speak of which obtain in other parts, make in any direction - some seasons south and others north." Subdivision of properties, permitting more efficient animal husbandry, was not yet in evidence on outside stations. Although extremely costly, artesian well drillers became an increasingly familiar sight on the northern landscape from the 1890s. It was claimed in 1892 that the Gulf and western country was "rapidly becoming a network of artesian waters, fresh supplies being struck every month". In reality the Flinders sheep men were the most prominent investors in this type of water conservation. A few northern cattle stations including Compton Downs, Richmond Downs, Rocklands, Dalgonally and Fort Constantine installed bores in the 1890s but the majority of cattle stations did not follow suit for a number of years. While Rocklands had 20 bores in 1912 the owners of Augustus Downs and Fiery Downs, like many others, were still contemplating the expense. Magowra, Rosella Plains and Spring Creek were amongst the first of the more northern Gulf stations to have bores put down, prompting one northern observer to remark that "bore sinking on cattle stations in the Gulf and Etheridge districts is going to revolutionise the pastoral industry in these parts as with ample water supplies, the loss of cattle in dry seasons will be reduced to a minimum."
A second major change in the industry in the 1890s was the appearance of a new breed of owners: grazing selectors, initially given 30 year leases on areas not larger than 20,000 acres (subsequently altered to 60,000 acres). Strong popular support for closer settlement had always been evident in the colony; the 1884 Land Act was framed to that end. The first North Queensland stations in the remote areas subjected to resumption were those situated along the railway, the majority suitable for sheep. In 1886 88½ square miles was resumed from Glendower. Redcliffe, Hughenden, Tamworth, Wongalee, Telemon and Afton Downs soon afterwards attracted the attention of the dividing commissioner. In 1897 it was estimated that in the previous 18 months 50 to 60 grazing farms had been taken up along the railway line for 160 miles from Hughenden. Many of the more remote properties which were obviously cattle country did not begin receiving notices of resumption until 1913. In that year the Land Commissioner recommended substantial resumptions from cattle stations between Charters Towers and Clermont but these were not effected until 1917 owing to the scarcity of surveyors and the drought. While substantial resumptions had been made from the Burke and North Kennedy properties, very little attention was given to the Cook pastoral district; Forest Home, in 1913 was the first station to have land resumed. One Labor supporter expressed disappointment that pastoral land in the Croydon district was still in the hands of the large landholders. "What a pity it is that this country is not thrown open to the small man. We would see numerous homesteads...dotted all over the country instead of its present desolation". Similar views were expressed by Edward Palmer, an experienced northern cattleman who had lost his station Canobie to a pastoral finance company in the early 1890s. He believed that the cutting up of large stations was most desirable.

Many of the large cattle stations in the West and North-West cannot be very economically managed, on account of the extent of country to be worked over: they are far too large, and too much rent is paid on country not utilised: besides there is an annual waste through cattle straying on to neighbours' runs causing expense in mustering and returning them. Another cause of loss in increase is the long, dry period between the rains, causing breeding cattle to become
DAWN MAY

...weak and get bogged in the drying up waterholes. If runs were fenced in and of smaller area, with water more easily within reach of weak cattle, these losses would not occur. However even in the 1920s the large landowner was more characteristic of the North Queensland cattle industry.

Tension between small and large landholders was evident almost from the beginning. Many operators of big stations believed that selectors were responsible for stealing unbranded calves. Faced with the prospect of a selector as neighbour in 1920, the manager of Lorraine wrote to his superiors:

I note that it is desirable to put a substantial fence on the boundary of the resumption on the West side. I wish we could charge the incoming selectors with half the cost of it but of course they would prefer to do without it. But even before the appearance of selectors, cattle stealing was rife in the Gulf with several cases being heard in 1907/8. In one case it was alleged that the owner of Claraville station and his employees were responsible for the theft of cattle from nearby Savannah Downs while three men who had a small property in the vicinity of Van Rook were charged with stealing cattle from that station. Given the sparse nature of settlement, it was inevitable that many cases of cattle stealing went undetected. A Gulf writer was of the opinion that while the increase in small operators in the industry might result in increased duffing it should provide an incentive for larger landowners to look after their cattle better.

Closer settlement also made the large station owners less hospitable. It had been the custom of pioneer squatters to keep on good terms with travellers by giving free rations to all who passed the station. Casual labour was brought to the door free of charge at intermittent intervals; it was also in the interest of squatters not to provoke itinerants who had the opportunity of doing "incalculable damage to station men that had miles of grass...paddocks to burn, woolsheds to demolish, and gates on the main road to be left open". With closer settlement large landholders reviewed their rations policy. It was noted that:
THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY

Even at far-out back stations, where not so long ago everybody, men or beast, black or white, rich or poor, were heartily welcomed, the gates display numerous placards notifying that there is 'no thoroughfare here', 'no rations given', 'poison is laid all over the run' etc.81

A third major structural change in the industry was the successful establishment of freezing plants in North Queensland: at last cattle producers were able to enter the world market. The first northern freezing works, Queensland Meat Export Co., opened in Townsville in 1892.82 The Bowen Meat Export and Agency Co. Ltd. followed in 1896; the Burdekin Meat Works Co., previously operated as an extract and canning works, became in 1901 the third works to install refrigeration.83 The export of meat received a boost from the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act of 1893. Under this Act a fund was raised by means of a tax on stock and advances were made to existing and projected meat freezing plants. In 1894 four North Queensland works received grants from the meat fund: the Queensland Meat Export Co., Townsville, Bowen Meat Export and Agency Co. Ltd., Mareeba Meat Preserving and Export Co. and the Cardwell Meat Preserving Co. Ltd.84 However freezing did not provide a complete solution for North Queensland squatters' problems. British demand greatly preferred Argentinian chilled meat, a commodity which the Australian producers were technically unable to provide until 1934. Moreover exceedingly poor prices for frozen meat were offered in the 1890s on the London market. Evidence from a joint committee enquiry in 1895 confirmed that exporting frozen meat to London was unprofitable. It was shown that 389 cows treated at Townsville and shipped to the United Kingdom incurred a total loss of £72.5.6; added to this were the costs associated with raising and transporting the cattle to the port.85

Coinciding with these three structural changes was the fact that stock numbers were severely depleted in the 1890s: initially from the effects of ticks and subsequently from the long drought of 1898-1902. The cattle tick (Boophilus microplus) entered Queensland from the Northern Territory in 1891. Within five years it had spread
throughout North Queensland wreaking havoc on the northern herds. In the Cairns district mortality averaged 40 percent but on individual northern stations losses were frequently much higher. J.H.S. Barnes noted on passing through Wando Vale that the cattle had almost gone with only 400 calves branded compared with the usual 4000. In an attempt to contain the spread of ticks, strict quarantine measures were imposed. In 1894 the whole of the Gulf country and parts of Cape York Peninsula west of the 144th meridian and north of the 21st parallel were placed in quarantine. This step was taken when the seriousness of red water fever and its association with cattle ticks were recognised. Given the low price for frozen meat and the inability to take cattle into uninfected southern areas, northern pastoralists were once again in dire straits. A deputation of Burke pastoralists who waited on the Minister for Lands claimed that in 1896 all markets were practically closed to them: "The herds were disseminated and those herds that were clean might as well be in Fiji as in their isolated condition caused by the tick pest." Those cattle which withstood the onslaught appeared to display an immunity. In 1899 a Land Commissioner reported that:

Having travelled through the infested parts of the North, hearing statements etc. and from general observations, I am of the opinion that the enormous losses have not in any way been exaggerated by the lessees in the past, and that fully 60 per cent of the herds have succumbed to the disease. Most of the remaining cattle north of Bowen are now apparently immune but deaths are still occurring between Bowen and Rockhampton.

Whilst not reaching the extent of the initial outbreak, redwater fever attacks occurred at regular intervals. Large northern landowners were especially dilatory in dipping. The Northern Deputy Chief Inspector of Stock reported in 1916 that dipping on small holdings in Queensland has been carried on more or less systematically for about two decades, but the majority of stockowners on large unfenced holdings still hesitated to dip their herds regularly and systematically.

The most glaring example of utter neglect is to be found in the Normanton Stock District which is about 50,000 square miles in extent and according to the stock returns carries roughly 342,000 cattle. The whole area
Old meatworks at Normanton
[ *N.G. Register*, 7 April 1919 ]

Branding calves at Chadshunt
[ *N.G. Register*, 20 February 1921 ]
The North Queensland Beef Cattle Industry

is grossly tick infested, and the total number of dips erected in the vast district is 13, some of them are never used, while the remainder are only occasionally put into commission.91

The Croydon Mining News reported that "many practical men believe that ticks are necessary to keep up the immunity as no one can tell how long the immunity lasts. The present immunity is obtained from ticks getting on calves from birth up."92 When in 1904 it became mandatory to dip all cattle travelling from an infested area,93 cattlemen objected, particularly if the cattle were on their way to northern meatworks. One observer believed that it was "patent to everyone versed in cattle that the depreciation in the condition and quality of the meat caused by undue handling and consequent upsetting of the temperament of the cattle will be a serious loss to the owner."94

In fact within a few years northwestern graziers were sending undipped cattle to market. Reporting on this one official noted:

The most serious dissemination of ticks by travelling cattle is observed in connection with cattle travelling from the Gulf districts, and I regret to say that the Department's effort to prevent the distribution of ticks by Gulf cattle are much less effective than they were some 7 or 8 years ago. At that time, cattle travelling by the various routes were dipped either at Quamby, Sedan or Taldora. During the past year only Sedan Dip has been used, and cattle travelling by the other routes have mostly escaped dipping, or in a few instances have been ineffectively dipped and have distributed ticks freely along what should be clean country.95

While all northern stations were affected by the drought at the end of the century, some areas suffered more than others. Around Hughenden, with "not a vestige of grass to be seen", the results were devastating. Those lucky enough to find land for agistment moved their stock out of the area while the more affluent graziers such as the Ramsay brothers of Conooroo purchased cattle stations including Burleigh96 and Charlotte Plains97 as relief country. In a bid to feed the stock that remained, numerous scrub cutters were employed. Nevertheless losses were high. In 1900 the Land Commissioner for the area reported that one third of the cattle and almost one half of the sheep had perished during the year.98 The Charters Towers district was another to be badly affected. Some
stations including *Lolworth* were abandoned while other stations agisted their stock for long periods. To the south west, *Aberfoyle* fared badly with the former substantial homestead falling into decay. At *Yacamunda* only 680 bullocks could be salvaged from a herd of 20,000. North of Julia Creek, *Dalgonally* station had to remove 7,000 cattle to a station near Normanton with many dying on the road. Meanwhile the cattle country in the Woolgar district was in "a worse condition than ever known in the history of settlement". Undoubtedly the drought set back the cause of closer settlement by many years. In 1901 only 6 percent of available land was selected and the Land Commissioner was of the opinion that demand would be dormant for a considerable time. Edmund Jowett a prominent pastoralist believed that:

...the experience of the last six years has shown that pastoral occupation of Queensland can only be conducted on a large scale. That is, not only on a large area of country in one locality, but on runs in different districts, so that if there is drought in one area, stock may be removed wholesale to another run.

The scarcity of cattle at the end of the drought sent stock prices spiralling. At this stage the Gulf cattlemen's fortunes began to change; while the rest of the country faced the prospect of restocking, north western pastoralists had quite substantial herds. Indeed a list of cattle on various Gulf stations revealed that at the beginning of 1903, 56 stations had 684,000 cattle among them. In that area cattle had weathered the effects of ticks earlier than elsewhere and there had been several good seasons, but for several years graziers had been unable to get surplus stock through the drought stricken areas to market. When stock routes reopened, large numbers of cattle were taken from the Gulf in order to restock stations in the west and south. For instance the entire draft from Rocklands station for several years after the drought was purchased by Sidney Kidman for restocking his properties. In addition, fat stock markets in Sydney, Adelaide, Broken Hill and Perth had to be supplied. Popular opinion was that "the big drought was certainly a godsend to stations in the far north". Approximately 50,000 cattle
were treated at the three remaining northern meatworks in 1903; together with cattle overlanded or sold to butchers, it was estimated that returns to the cattlemen in the Gulf would be "over half a million sterling". Remembering the hardships endured by most pioneer squatters a correspondent wrote thus to the *North Queensland Register*:

> How it would warm the hearts of men such as J. Allingham of Hillgrove, W. Hann of Maryvale, J. Robinson of Roxborough, John Anning of Charlotte Plains, W. Anning of Chudleigh, J. Fulford of Springfield, W. Mytton of Wando Vale, J.B. Thompson of Fairlight...and many other good old pioneers to be now alive and well and see how the Price of good fat bullocks has at last risen to something near paying point.

However southern demand raised prices beyond a viable level for meat exporters; the Manager of North Queensland Meat Export Co. complained that "years ago we had no markets and plenty of stock. Today we have plenty of markets and no stock". The editor of the *North Queensland Register* was of the opinion that:

> It is regrettable...that the cattle which are going away on the hoof were not finally dealt with in North Queensland but the producer is deserving of most consideration, and the sales made in the Gulf the last year or so have given a stability to the industry and a profit to the producer which will result in big station improvements, and an increased production. The exodus to the South is a passing as well as a paying phase of the industry.

In 1903, difficulty in procuring stock forced the Queensland Meat Export Agency and Co. to purchase a chain of Gulf stations including *Carpentaria Downs, Miranda Downs* and *Magowra* from O'Brien, Cobbold and Co. These stations were ideally situated for the company's proposed freezing and meat preserving works at Karumba, but *Miranda Downs* was subsequently sold to another meat exporter, William Angliss in 1916, during a second period of vertical integration in the industry. The acquisition of the Burdekin works by Birt and Co. in 1913 saw that firm purchase three local stations. In 1917 Bergl and Co., owners of the Bowen meat works, purchased *Longton* station to
"secure the stock". More recently Borthwicks have acquired 20 percent of the shares in Rocklands station which straddles the Northern Territory Queensland border.

Other parties showed considerable interest in northern cattle stations. Those banks and pastoral finance companies which had acquired properties as a result of foreclosure in the 1890s were now in a position to dispose of any unwanted holdings, but decided to retain them. For instance Queensland National Bank Limited set up a separate company, Queensland National Pastoral Co. Ltd. to handle their properties "thus creating an exceedingly sound investment company to develop the valuable freehold and leasehold lands and stock connected therewith". Syndicates were also formed to secure runs; one of the most prominent was the Augustus Downs Pastoral Co. Ltd. whose subscribers included Sidney Kidman, A. Hay, S. Burdekin, F.A. Brodie, A.S. Kidman, George Barron Rochdale and James Alison. With companies holding stations in different locations the separation of breeding and fattening in different areas first appeared in the north. For example when QME and A. acquired the Gulf stations it was envisaged that Carpentaria Downs would be used as a fattening depot for Miranda Downs, Forest Home and Magowra.

Southern markets continued to attract North Queensland cattle until the end of 1908 when a sensational reduction in the price of fat cattle in Sydney halted further consignments. Moreover, with stock routes restricted by fencing and closer settlement, overlanding fat cattle increasingly risked loss of condition. As a result, the northern meat works once again became the major means of disposing of the northern cast. Indicative of rapidly declining prices, two additional meat preserving establishments were able to reopen: Torrens Creek in 1910 and Biboohra in 1912. The meatworks now had a virtual monopoly on northern cattle and their cavalier attitude towards cattlemen was a source of considerable annoyance. For example A.M.P. Thompson, chairman of the Mt. Emu Pastoral Co. told the Royal Commission on the Meat Industry that meatworks would take only 4,000...
of the 6,500 cattle which the company had on offer.\textsuperscript{127} Graziers were forced to dispose of the balance as stores if indeed buyers could be found. Even the meat preserving works could afford to be selective. A northern correspondent complained that NQME Co. was "pretty hard to please in quality 'We want young fresh oxen' is the reply when aged cattle are offered".\textsuperscript{128} Growers also complained of collusion between meatworks to keep prices down. Whereas A.J. Cotton had been able to obtain £8 for an export bullock in 1908, offers declined progressively until 1912 when the ruling rate offered by northern works was down to £5.12.6.\textsuperscript{129} To justify the lower prices some works managers claimed that there had been a deterioration in stock due to a number of factors: the best country in North Queensland had been converted to sheep, the effects of ticks had left cattle inferior, the cows normally culled had been used as breeders because of great losses during the drought and there was a need for new blood in the herds. The Royal Commission found that only in certain areas, around the Georgetown goldfields and areas recently switching to dairy cattle, could the claim be substantiated.\textsuperscript{130} When, in 1913 a subsidiary of the American consortium Swift Limited purchased the NQME works in Townsville it was heartily lauded by northern pastoralists. The President of the Central and North Queensland Pastoralists' Association believed that:

American competition will have the effect of putting the meat industry on a better basis than it has hitherto occupied, its effects will be modernized methods... (and) large investment of capital in the cattle branch of the industry in improving the quality of stock.\textsuperscript{131}

Meanwhile with the sheep industry entering a period of increasing prosperity, many smaller cattle owners switched to sheep as a solution,\textsuperscript{132} but the prevalence of dingoes forced many to revert back to cattle after a few years.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, meat prices rose quickly in response to world food shortages, generating optimism in the industry again. Beef sold at 50 shillings per 100 pound: "slightly different to some 20 years ago when a pastoralist would have been in danger of
a heart attack from too much joy, were he offered 50 shillings a head instead of 50 shillings per 100 pounds. The period 1914 to 1920 was in general one of prosperity for northern cattlemen. With 190,000 cattle treated by northern works, Townsville was the chief Australian meat exporting town in 1916. Graziers were not without their problems, however, during this relatively prosperous period. Considerable industrial unrest was experienced at the two Townsville meatworks from the end of 1918 to September 1919, a large number of North Queensland cattle which could not be treated in Townsville were forced to travel south. The ramifications of the 1919 strike were still evident in 1920: overseas vessels were reluctant to call at the port having experienced loading difficulties the previous year. With freezing chambers packed to capacity meatworks had to curtail the killing season in 1920.

North Queensland cattlegrowers also believed that during the period they had been unfairly treated by the government. The price for cattle was largely determined by the prevailing price in London. In 1917 the Queensland government legislated to ensure that a certain amount of meat treated at the export works was retained at a lower price for home consumption. Being more dependent on meatworks than other areas, North Queensland cattlemen believed that they were being subjected to discrimination. The editor of the *North Queensland Register* obviously agreed and called for action.

There are four North Queensland constituents in which cattle owners have the majority of votes, viz, Kennedy, Cook, Burke and Eacham...[they] should use their voting power to relieve themselves of the burden which the Government, in seizing 10,000 tons of North Queensland beef a year, has placed upon them. The seizure is at 15/8d per pound below the market (Imperial) value and means a direct tax in cash on the cattle-owners of North Queensland of over £150,000.

In 1920 considerable hostility was also generated by the government's decision to redetermine the rents on runs, decided by the Land Court. The increases asked for ranged from 100 to 200 per cent. Pastoralists scathingly referred to the new legislation as the
Another problem which re-emerged in the 1920s was cattle stealing. In north west Queensland, especially around Cloncurry, it was particularly prevalent; one correspondent likened it to "an industry". Another wrote that "It is alleged that in Cloncurry there is an organised system of stealing and disposing of cattle and that this organisation is so widespread and impudent in its operations that those who oppose it are severely dealt with, mainly by the wholesale poisoning of their stock. In fact the system is akin to terrorism". To cope with the problem the Burke and North Gregory Graziers' Association was formed in 1920 and by February the following year it had been instrumental in having 64 prosecutions made. However stealing persisted with 400 cattle being stolen from Saxby Downs in 1922. Stations in other areas had different methods of coping with the problem. For instance at Chudleigh Park, north of Hughenden, the owners paid rent on 400 square miles of unusable country to prevent cattle rustlers getting too close to the station cattle.

The collapse of the beef export trade in 1921 saw the North Queensland cattle industry enter a long and serious depression from which it did not emerge until 1939. Few stations were profitable during the period. Canobie, for instance showed a loss every year between 1924 and 1938. No longer receiving preferential treatment from Britain, Australian beef was forced to compete on the open market. One government official attributed its lack of success to the relatively poor quality of northern beef.

The grading of meat into classes which is now in vogue at the meatworks and which is essential to placing a prime article upon the European market to compete with American exports has dealt a crushing blow to the Gulf pastoralist. The demand is for prime young beef, and the lands of the Gulf do not mature their stock as quickly as the inland country. The condition of a Gulf beast is soft and will not carry long distances on the hoof without wasting, so it is very difficult to land Gulf fat stock at the coastal meatworks in prime condition.
While much of what he reported was correct, the problem did not rest solely with the quality of northern cattle. As R. Grant points out:

During the war period and for a short time thereafter, the exportable surplus of Australian meat was purchased by the Imperial Government, but when this arrangement was terminated, the industry received a severe blow by the release of large quantities of meat which had been held in cold store for years as supplies for the Allied armies. Much of the meat deteriorated owing to the effects of long storage, and its sale had a disastrous effect on the frozen-beef market. Following on this came the vastly increased production of South American countries whose advantage in geographical position allowed them to supply beef in the chilled instead of frozen state.

The chief international outlet for North Queensland frozen meat had always been London. While overseas prices plummeted in 1921, they remained high on the southern Australian markets. However the Navigation Act of 1921 prevented international vessels being used to convey local goods; coastal traders which plied between states were not equipped to handle significant amounts of frozen meat. As a consequence, North Queensland returns were very much below those of other states. For instance in 1926 graziers received only 20 shillings per 100 pounds while beef was selling at 40 shillings in Sydney, 47s.6d. per 100 pounds in Melbourne and 60 shillings in Adelaide.

Accompanying the decline in prices was an inevitable curtailment of expenditure on improvements, creating considerable unemployment in the Australian outback. "More swagmen have recently passed through Croydon in search of work than have been seen for years", wrote one correspondent. An air of pessimism pervaded the whole northern cattle industry. On the eve of the Royal Commission into the Beef Cattle Industry in 1928, many growers had come to believe that a prosperous cattle industry in North Queensland was a thing of the past. Costs of production had far outpaced returns, the Royal Commission finding that as:

the average price realised for frozen beef on the overseas market for the period 1922-27 was substantially higher than that of 1909-1914 when production of cattle was profitable, the conclusion to draw is that, during recent years, the
Sticking to it at Chadshunt
[N.Q. Register, 28 February 1921]
increased expenditure of production, raligeage, treatment, and shipment has not only absorbed the higher value of the profit of the industry, representing a direct loss to the producer.  

Those who were in a position to switch to sheep did so. However not all country was suitable for conversion and improvements were restricted by lack of capital.

One of the most outstanding aspects of this period was the lack of unity in the industry. The Meat Council was set up in 1923 to assist with marketing beef but from the beginning northern cattlemen believed it to be grossly ineffective. A.H.W. Cunningham complained that:

The Meat Council was devoting more attention to the interest of those who already have access to the Brisbane and Sydney stock markets, than it is to the welfare of the Central and Northern Division of Queensland upon whom has fallen the burden of exporting at a loss.

The isolation of northern production was attributed to this and similar organisations. "For some unexplained reason the Queensland Cattle Council refuses to invade the 'sacred right' of Southern beef producers to their own market", wrote one disgruntled observer. An irate Richard Anning called for the dismissal of the Meat Council when it became known that the Director of Navigation had power to issue permits for the transport of frozen meat from Queensland to southern ports. He demanded to know:

did the famous Australian Meat Council know of the existence of the permits, if it didn't it should be sacked, and if it did it should still be sacked for keeping the fact dark.

At the same time a rift had also developed between the cattle and sheep interests in the United Graziers Association. In 1922 a separate cattle organisation, the Queensland Cattle Growers Association was formed to cater solely for cattlemen. Under the direction of R.C. Philp this organisation attempted to handle the problem of low prices by establishing co-operative works; it also advocated acquiring wholesale markets and distribution houses in London and other overseas countries. Meanwhile in 1924 cattlemen in the far north had decided to strike out on their own in
a bid to realise a reasonable price for stock. The possibility of forming a northern branch of the Cattlegrowers Association was rejected in favour of a more union oriented identity. In fact the body titled itself the Gulf Cattle Producers' Union and considered that "even if we [only] form a sort of brotherhood amongst the cattle men it is a step in the right direction and some will reap the benefit."\[155\] Disunity amongst members forced the body to disband in 1929 and a majority of the members were persuaded to amalgamate with the United Graziers Association.\[156\] Premier McCormack deplored the lack of organisation in the cattle industry which he believed displayed no evidence of co-operation at all.\[157\]

In 1928 North Queensland frozen and chilled meat was grudgingly admitted to the southern markets. In Victoria, legislation required that the northern product be appropriately labelled.\[158\] However owing to the prolonged drought of the 1920s fat cattle were in short supply at this time. Indications from Georgetown, Croydon, Normanton and Burketown areas were that there were probably less than 10,000 bullocks of fattening age available.\[159\] In part this was due to the area undergoing a transition from breeding and fattening to breeding alone. There was a growing awareness that because of deterioration in native grasses, much of the Gulf was no longer fattening country. Consequently it became the practice on some stations to transfer males to southern fattening depots when old enough to withstand the hardships of travel.\[160\] A considerable aid in the transfer of stock between stations was the extensive amount of railway construction which had taken place culminating in 1924 with completion of the link between Cairns and Brisbane.\[161\] Also this permitted northern fat cattle to be marketed in Brisbane, where better prices could be secured, but many graziers were deterred by the disadvantages: added cost, loss of condition in cattle during the sometimes slow journey and the added bruising of cattle which then attracted lower prices.

During the interwar period northern stock were exposed to three additional diseases. Having watched the march of the buffalo fly
Musterers at Rocklands
[N.Q. Register. 4 June 1928]
across the Northern Territory, northwest pastoralists geared themselves for the onslaught which occurred in 1928. Whilst it was to prove another major disability for graziers to contend with, its spread was not as rapid as the tick outbreak of the 1890s. Pegleg first appeared in Northern herds in 1929; tests indicated that it was due to phosphate deficiency. It was reported that on Millungera Station:

Practically the whole herd commenced to lose weight from August...the Government Veterinary Surgeon diagnosed the trouble as "pegleg" a malady resulting from malnutrition. He recommended feeding Nauru Phosphate and salt in an endeavour to replace deficiencies in the grasses. In May 1936 a large number of Gulf cattle were affected by ephemeral fever or "3 day sickness", but mortality was practically nil and a further widespread outbreak did not occur until 1955.

All Queensland cattle graziers suffered badly from the low prices from 1921 but northern cattlemen were the hardest hit. It can be seen from Graph 1 that the prices received by a group of cattle properties in the Burdekin area did not rise substantially until 1942. Some relief was afforded by the Cattle Relief Act of 1923, under which the rents of cattle holdings were reassessed by the Land Commissioner for a special slump period of five years made retrospective to 1 July 1921. Reduced rentals remained in force until 1936.

Meanwhile important developments in chilling techniques were made in the early 1930s. In 1933 and 1934 most Queensland works installed chilling facilities while shipping companies undertook the necessary structural alterations to vessels. However prices for chilled meat were often low:

Indeed, from 1935 onwards Australian chilled commanded lower prices than that of any other country, except sometimes Rhodesia. In these circumstances at least one exporter, QME and A. Co. found that chilled beef was not always profitable. This situation, of course, reflected the deep-seated weaknesses of the Australian industry. Graziers could not supply enough cattle of "chiller" quality, so that shipments often included coarse, heavy quarters from old cattle, exporters, could not manage regular supplies, and grading was poor.
With the depressed nature of the industry in the interwar period, little was done to improve the herds with the notable exception of an experiment with Zebu cattle. It was obvious that the English breeds of cattle were not well adapted to the severe tropical climate. On the recommendation of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, a syndicate composed of Queensland Stations Ltd., Winter-Irving and Alison, C.W. Wright and Meredith, Menzies Pty. Ltd. decided to import Zebu cattle from the United States. It was hoped that the infusion of Zebu blood into English strains of cattle existing in the North would give them the necessary resistance and stamina to overcome the adverse tropical conditions. Millungera Station (Meredith Menzies Pty. Ltd.) contributed £600 to the scheme receiving in return two bulls in 1933. By 1940 the station had 912 Zebu and Zebu cross cattle on the books. In 1945 the manager was able to report:

The Zebu experiment has been successful in that the hybrid does rather better than British breeds, weights and gradings are better and at times they can fatten a year younger. The outstanding disability is that they are wild and hard to handle and need smaller paddocks. The expense in providing additional paddocks could not be justified unless an extension of the leases can be obtained, the main lease expiring in 1951.

Obviously unsuccessful, the pure bred Zebu bulls were sold the following year to Atkinson and the remainder of the Zebu crosses merged with the general herd.

With the outbreak of World War II there was again a rapid escalation in demand for beef. Meat as well as other primary production became subject to Commonwealth control under the National Securities Act. All surplus meat available for export was sold under yearly contract to the United Kingdom. Along with the suspension of chilling in 1940, this meant that Australian producers directed their attention to quantity rather than quality as the incentive to produce choice beef for export no longer existed. Moreover a severe shortage of labour in the north, especially after 1941, had an adverse effect on station management, operations being handicapped by the lack of improvements. In 1944 a contract was made with the
Graph 168

Average price realized for first grade bullocks by a group of cattle properties in the Burdekin area of Queensland

1927 to 1957

Shillings per 100 lb. dressed weight

- Actual price realized
- Price excluding deficiency payments
The above graph shows cattle of all kinds in Queensland each year, and, to a different scale, the number of cattle slaughtered for home consumption and export, plus net outward border crossings, roughly indicating the productivity of the cattle industry. In calculating the number of cattle slaughtered, nine calves have been taken as equal to one head of large stock.

(By courtesy of Government Statistician.)
United Kingdom whereby a market was assured for all classes of Australian meat until 1948 and this was extended to 1951 when a new 15 Year Meat Agreement was made between the British and Australian governments.

In summary, then, between 1890 and 1950 the poor results in the beef cattle industry were due to its haphazard functioning. The Royal Commission on Abattoirs and Meatworks of 1945 found that the Queensland cattle industry had made no progress in the previous thirty years and, in many respects, had regressed. In fact it was not until 1953 that the herds surpassed the 1894 level. The erratic fluctuations in numbers can be detected in graph 2. Reduction in the size of stations due to resumptions had not resulted in better managed properties. Whilst the industry had experienced some extremely profitable years, overall the unprofitable ones predominated. During these periods beef prices were so low that there was little surplus for improvements such as internal fencing which permitted better herd management. Because of this the area, especially in the Gulf region, experienced deterioration in natural pastures resulting in significant areas reverting to a breeding only role. Mortality had risen considerably compared with the pre 1890 rate, owing to poor management practices and the introduction of several new diseases which necessitated more frequent handling of stock. This in turn added to production costs and caused cattle to lose condition. Even in the good years when profits were available for improvements, it was not always possible to implement them because of the shortage of labour and material. This was particularly evident during the Second World War.

External factors also operated against the cattleman as North Queensland was dependent on an unstable export market. Moreover, in the international arena Australia was forced to compete with countries such as Argentina which could produce better quality chilled and frozen meat at lower prices. J.H. Kelly accurately summed up the situation in 1952 when he noted that:

The history of the beef cattle industry in the North has been largely one of struggle against bankruptcy by the smaller holders and of small dividends or no dividends at all, for the shareholders of some of the big company holdings of the very large areas.
In his view this had bred an outlook of caution, even pessimism. 178

1950s onwards 179

Although the cattle industry was in a moribund state at the close of the War, things were beginning to change by the early 1950s. Virtually all cattle producers who appeared before the Royal Commission on Pastoral Land Settlement in 1951 were emphatic that numbers of cattle and turnoff could be markedly increased by the provision of more paddocks, ringbarking and water points. 180 With the conclusion of the 15 Year Meat Agreement growers were assured of good beef prices irrespective of market trends. This generated the optimism and confidence necessary to embark upon developmental work. Between 1952 and 1957, over £30 million was invested by private producers throughout Queensland. 181 A survey undertaken at the end of this period revealed that in the gulf and peninsula regions 82 percent of producers had increased turn-off and 41 percent were able to market cattle at a younger age. 182 Not all of this resulted from voluntary actions by lessees as the Queensland government had begun, at last, to insist on a good standard of structural improvements as a condition of pastoral leases. 183 In addition the government itself was taking a more active role in the industry. The 1960s and 1970s were characterised by a number of innovations including a higher degree of cattle control, the provision of beef roads, increased emphasis on pasture management and the establishment of better adapted breeds such as Brahmin & Brahmin Cross including Santa Gertrudis. Although undoubtedly there is room for further improvement it is clear that from the 1950s cattle raising throughout most parts 184 of North Queensland has undergone a transformation.
REFERENCES


5. A detailed account of squatters in this category can be found in D. May, From Bush to Station: Aboriginal Labour in the North Queensland Pastoral Industry, 1861-1897, Townsville, 1983, p.11.


8. One of the factors which contributed to the persistence of this inefficient system was that land legislators failed to encourage improvements as a condition of holding a lease until 1927. One agricultural economist believes that, most of the difficulties of beef production in remote northern Australia in the early 1950s could be traced to this practice instituted by the earliest pastoralists J.H. Kelly, Report on the Beef Cattle Industry in Northern Australia. Canberra, 1952, p.51.

9. Kamilaroi - a slab house with thatched roof and flagged floor, Queenslander, 11 January 1879, p.46; Elvira's homestead was built entirely of tea tree bark, Queenslander, 18 January 1879, p.77; at Lawn Hill there was an iron house with a rough sapling fence, Queenslander. 9 November 1878, p.185.


14. P. Somer to Colonial Secretary, 14 October 1869, *Q.S.A. COL/A134 69/4272*.


17. *Queenslander*, 5 May 1866, p.8.


19. The tallow sold in Sydney for 46s. per cwt. and the hides netted an average of 16s. each, giving a profit of £5 per head after deducting expenses. *Port Denison Times*, 14 July 1866. (Hereafter PDT)


22. 6,196 boiled in 1867, 6,117 in 1863, 34,488 in 1869 and 19,699 in 1870. Reports of Registrar General.

23. *Queenslander*, 14 February, 1874, p.4.


25. *Queenslander*, 11 April 1874.


30. Dalrymple was a North Queensland explorer, government official and pastoralist. Bolton writes that "If anyone deserved to be called the father of North Queensland it was Dalrymple". *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.15.
34. *Queenslander*, 21 February 1874.
35. Ibid., 7 March 1874, p.4.
36. Ibid., 17 July 1875, p.9.
37. 200 fats sent to the Palmer in 1878. *Queenslander*, 9 November 1878, p.185.
38. Ibid., 11 January 1879, p.38; 10 April 1880, p.467.
39. Many squatters from the Kennedy district took up additional leases in the Burke district. See May, *From Bush to Station*, pp.20-1.
41. So called because he made a lot of money out of the gold bearing stone below the watertable. Stubley was the major syndicate member in the two biggest mines in Charters Towers in the early 1870s.
42. *Queenslander*, 23 August 1879, p.249; 29 July 1882, p.131.
45. May, *From Bush to Station*, pp.12-3; 16-7.
48. Inkerman, Leichhardt Downs, Woodstock and Jarvisfield, all properties in the estate of R. Towns were sold to the North Australian Pastoral Company. It was claimed that the cattle from these stations were required for stocking western country. *Queenslander* 1 December 1877, p.29.
Pleuro pneumonia was finally eradicated from North Queensland in 1960 after a stringent inoculation campaign. QCL, 30 September 1965, p.1.


Queenslander, 2 June 1900, p.1048.
Mafeking was a small South African town besieged by a Boer force early in the South African War. Its relief in May 1900 was the occasion of mass public rejoicing in Australia as well as in Britain. (See the article by Joan Neal in this volume.) Colonel R. Baden-Powell, who commanded the garrison, later founded the Boy Scout movement.

New South Wales and Victoria were imposing and increasing border taxes.

Queenslander, 25 May 1895, p.971.

North Queensland Register, 18 September 1899. (Hereafter NQR)

Cotton, *With the Big Herds*.

NQR, 15 February 1904, p.45.

Banks sometimes had a detrimental effect on properties by pressing for unnecessary sales to clear mortgages.

NQR, 15 June 1903 Supplement.

J. Kikkaldy, Manager to Pastoral Superintendent A.J.S. Bank Limited, Lorraine Station letter book 18 October 1901.

Queenslander, 26 November 1892, p.1052.

NQR, 28 October 1912.

Ibid., 20 May 1912, p.3.

Ibid., 2 February 1914, p.33.
Believing the country to be only suitable for cattle, the lessees of Woodbine, a block off Redcliffe, stocked the run with cattle in 1896. However low prices soon forced the selectors to switch to sheep. "After Messrs. Savage Brothers had broken the back of opposition to sheep on their class of country, a very decided rush set in and many thousands of acres in the neighbourhood were selected for sheep". Dalgety Review, 1 April, 1912, p.64.


Annual Reports Department of Public Lands, QVP, 1888, 1889.

NQR, 6 October 1897.

Ibid., 31 December 1917.

The resumption was actually due in 1904, QPP 1913, Vol. 2, Annual Report Department of Public Lands. Until the land was actually put up for selection the original lessee could obtain an Occupation Licence giving temporary tenure to the unused but unresumed portion of the run.

Croydon Mining News, 17 March 1911. (Hereafter CMN)

Queenslander. 2 January 1897, p.35.

J. Kirkaldy to Chairman of Directors, Lorraine Station Letterbook, 3 November 1920. The division of Lorraine originally took place in 1899 when 2944 square miles was resumed. However the owners, the A.J.S. Bank exercised depasturing rights on resumed parts of the run the following year. In 1908 a portion of the property was thrown open for selection at the Burketown Lands Office, E.P. Wells being the only applicant. (Lorraine Run file, Q.S.A., LAN/AF55)

CMN, 24 April 1908.

Ibid., 12 April 1907.

Ibid., 15 October 1904. Cattle stealing has a long history in the north with intermittent bouts occurring from the 1870s. In 1879 27 stations formed the North Queensland Cattle Stealing Prevention Association offering a reward of £200 for the capture and conviction of cattle thieves.

Palmer, Early Days in North Queensland.

NQR, 30 January 1899, p.39.
Under the guidance of Sir Thomas McIlwraith WME and A. Co.
was floated in 1890 with a second works being located in
Brisbane. Poole Island was actually the first station to be
erected in North Queensland but in 1884 the works sustained
extensive damage from a cyclone while the first shipment
of frozen meat was being loaded. Queenslander, 2 February
1884, p.226.

NQR, 2 September 1901, p.26. In addition boiling down plants
had been established at Torrens Creek, Normanton and
Burketown in 1892 and at Cardwell and Mareeba a few years
later. See May, From Bush to Station for a list of proposals
and initiatives of N.Q. pastoralists to deal with marketing
problems between 1889-1896. At Alligator Creek, near
Townsville, the old boiling down works of the 1880s re­
opened as a meat extract company in 1890. Bolton, A Thousand
Miles Away, p.216.


Ibid., 1896, Vol. 4.

Queenslander, 9 May 1896 p.868.

Diary of J.H.S. Barnes Entry 1 May 1897 in Barnes Papers
held in John Oxley Library.

Bureau of Agricultural Economics, The Economic Importance of
Cattle Tick in Australia, Canberra, 1959, p.63.

Reported in Queenslander, 10 October 1896, p.677.

NQR, 11 December 1899, p.35.

Annual Report of Department of Agriculture and Stock, QPP,

CMN, 17 July 1908.

Queensland Government Gazette, 15 August 1904.

NQR, 16 January 1905, p.44.

Annual Report Department of Agriculture and Stock 1916,

NQR, 13 May 1901.

Ibid., 12 May 1900 p.47.

THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY


100. *NQR*, 21 April, 1902, p.35; 14 March 1904, p.36.


102. Just prior to the drought the owners had refused an offer from QME and A. Co., Townsville of £4 per head for 2,500 bullocks and £2 for 1,000 cows. *Queensland Country Life*, 21 January 1960, p.10. (Hereafter QCL)

103. *NQR*, 15 June 1903 supplement.


108. Scarcity of fat cattle and the difficulty in travelling stock through arid stock routes resulted in most boiling down and extract works closing by 1902. The illfated Hughenden works erected by Bergl in 1898 only operated for one season. At that time the Burketown works were offering such 'absurdly low prices' that growers in the Normanton/Croydon areas opted to take their cattle to Cardwell. *Lorraine* station Letterbook 12 April 1900.

109. *NQR*, 22 September 1902, p.34.


112. In 1897 cattle were fetching £2 and in 1903 three times that figure.

113. *NQR*, 7 April 1902.


116. This project was dependent on the continued dredging of the Norman River so that ships would be able to come alongside the company's wharves. In 1901 QME and A. Co. had purchased the Burketown plant which only operated as a canning and extract works, *NQR*, 16 November 1903, p.56.


120. This occurred in 1938. *QCL* 2 May 1968.

121. Chairman's Annual Report - Reprinted in *CMN*, 16 September 1915.


125. *NQR*, 1 September 1913, p.15; *Dalgety Review*, 1 April 1910.

126. *NQR*, 27 May 1912. NQME works had re-opened in 1905 preserving and extract making but at no time in the ensuing seven years did the company work at anywhere near full capacity. Royal Commission on Meat Industry. *QPP*, Vol.2 1913, p.536.


135. *NQR*, 5 April 1920 p.61. Only 16,500 cattle were treated in 1919 at QME, Townsville compared with 81,570 in 1916 and 22,781 at Alligator Creek compared with 55,000 in 1916.

THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY

137. Ibid., 23 September 1920, p.5.


139. NQR, 23 August 1920, p.72.

140. Pastoral Review, 16 August 1920, p.537.

141. NQR, 7 February 1921, p.78.

142. Ibid., 18 September 1922, p.54.


147. NQR, 7 June 1926. In London meat was selling at under 40 shillings.

148. Ibid., 22 August 1921, p.32.


151. NQR, 11 February 1924, p.59.

152. Ibid., 14 July 1924, p.31.

153. Ibid., 29 March 1926, p.98.

154. Ibid., 16 July 1923, p.73.

155. Ibid., 25 February, 1924; 28 April 1924; 25 May 1925; 20 July 1925. The intention was to eventually secure the Bibbohra meatworks as a pastoralists' concern "running it on much the same lines as Henry Ford [ran] his works". (Gulf News, 20 July 1931 – letter to Ed. from G.J. McIver.)

156. NQR, 1 February 1929; 28 February 1929.
157. Ibid., 26 September 1927, p.69.
158. Ibid., 3 September 1928, p.74.
159. Ibid., 12 November 1928, p.100.
160. Australian National University, Archives of Business and Labour, Australian Estates Co. Ltd. Records, 158/190, Manager's Annual Report for Millungera Station.
162. Australian National University, Archives of Business and Labour, Australian Estates Co. Ltd. Records, 158/189, Manager's Annual Report on Millungera Station.
164. QCL, 10 November 1955, p.1.
167. Less systematic experiments were carried out in NQ from 1910 when William McDowall of Christmas Creek purchased two bulls from the Melbourne zoo. Cross bred progeny were subsequently sold to various NQ stations. W.J.A. Payne, Cattle Production in the Tropics, Vol. 1, London, 1970, pp.58-9.
170. Ibid.
172. Ibid., 158/206, Manager's Annual Report on Millungera Station.
THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY

174. Ibid.

175. Royal Commission on Abattoirs and Meatworks, QPP, 1945-6, pp.821-931.

176. This was most forcibly asserted in the Royal Commission on Meatworks and Abattoirs, QPP, 1945-6.

177. Pre 1890 the normal mortality rate was around 5 percent, in the second well over 10 percent. Statistics presented in evidence from two large gulf properties indicated that from 1925 to 1950 the number of cattle lost through death was 50 percent greater than the number marketed in that period. Royal Commission on Pastoral Land Settlement, QPP, 1951-2, Session 2 Vol. 2.


179. In stark contrast with the earlier periods, the post World War II industry has been subjected to considerable analysis. The most prolific writer on the subject is J.H. Kelly who was engaged in continuous economic surveys of the northern beef industry between 1948 and 1965. Other writers to make significant contributions have been B.R. Davidson, R.A. Patterson and W.A. Beattie.


183. Under Part 4, Section 5 of the Lands Act Amendment Act of 1927 lessees could be granted concessions such as an extension of lease of a promise of no resumption for a specific period on condition that certain improvements were carried out. However in the early days, it often happened that having acquired the desired concessions lessees were unable to carry out the developmental work because of the shortage of labour.

184. Cape York Peninsula has always been the most backward in the northern beef industry.