The Young Dick

by

WILFRED FOWLER

[This article is the second written for Queensland Heritage by Wilfred Fowler. The first one, published in two parts* dealt with the Pacific Island labour vessel “Stanley”; more particularly with the 1883 voyage of that vessel which was marked by the burning of huts and store-houses on the Lauglan Islands when a German trader was accused of persuading some islanders to go back on their undertaking to accompany the “Stanley” to Queensland as recruits; and with the wrecking of the “Stanley” on the Indispensable Reef south of the Solomon group on 1 July 1883, after which some of the ship’s company and the kanaka recruits spent an enforced eight weeks on the Reef, until rescued by another vessel.

The author, in this second article, takes as his subject the ship “Young Dick”, whose career as a Pacific Island labour vessel was somewhat briefer than that of the “Stanley”. Her first voyage in the labour trade (here recounted) began on 22 July 1884. During the next two years she was involved in several stirring adventures, and a few days after the 2nd anniversary of her first clearance for the Islands, she left Dungeness on the Queensland coast with islanders on board to be repatriated to New Britain and New Ireland; she was never seen again.

An article such as the one here presented is of significance, not only for the interest and excitement which is always to be found in tales of men who venture into savage lands at the risk of their lives, but also because the story of the “Young Dick” is another episode in the saga of inter-racial contact and conflict which has characterized the South-West Pacific area over the past 200 years. Although the definitive history of the Pacific Island labour trade remains to be written, Mr Fowler’s studies of the labour ships “Stanley” and “Young Dick” make important contributions to this engrossing aspect of South-West Pacific history.

* “McMurdo of the schooner ‘Stanley’”, Queensland Heritage, vol. 1 nos 8-9 (May, Nov 1968).]
Burton-upon-Stather stands on the brow of a hill in "the Northern Division of the wapentake of Manley, parts of Lindsey, county of Lincoln". At the foot of the hill, where the river Trent flows on into the Humber, there was a wharf, or staith, commonly called Stather. It was here in 1869 that a shipwright named Wray built the schooner "Young Dick" for Messrs. Cass & Company of nearby Goole. She was reckoned to be of 162 tons, was 106 feet long, about 24 feet broad and 14 feet in depth. The "Young Dick" was employed in coastal trade round Britain and across the North Sea in trade with the continent. Her owners changed from time to time as the years passed; in 1858 they were recorded as Messrs. Bennet and Jackson and her port of registration, which had formerly been Goole, became Wellington, New Zealand.

We do not know what brought the vessel out to Australasia, but we do know that on 20 May 1884 John Hugh Rogers, master mariner, of Maryborough, Queensland, bought thirty-two shares from John Jackson and thirty-two from George Greenwood. As the "Young Dick" was a British ship, the ownership of which is divided into sixty-four shares, Rogers thus became the sole owner, and was so described in Lloyd's Register. The Maryborough firm of Noakes & Co. was described as "managing owner", but this may have meant no more than that this company acted as agent for the ship.

Of Rogers we know very little. He was an Irishman, a bachelor, and he followed an occupation which was probably traditional in the family. His widowed mother, his sister and fellow-mariner brother lived at Rutland Island, parish of Temple-crone, county of Donegal. Rogers was to be master of the ship from this period (May 1884) until both he and she were lost off the Queensland coast in July 1886.

Two months after Rogers became her owner, the "Young Dick" began her maiden voyage in the labour trade when she sailed for the New Hebrides from Maryborough on 22 July 1884 with Rogers in command and Thomas Barry as Government Agent. She had on board thirty-three return labourers and one "passenger forward"—an Italian working his passage. The ship's Articles showed that Edward Austin, a newly-married man 25 years of age, signed on as boatswain. Just a year before, Austin had been an able seaman aboard the schooner "Stanley" when she was wrecked on the southern spur of the Indispensable Reef.

A digression here about Thomas Barry may partly set the scene for what was to follow. Barry was on the list of supernumerary government agents—not on the permanent staff. Four weeks before he embarked aboard the "Young Dick" he had returned to Brisbane from the New Hebrides on board the schooner "Emily". While in the New Hebrides he and the master of the "Emily", Captain McDougall, received a request from George de Lautour who had sailed from Brisbane aboard the schooner "Emily". While in the New Hebrides he and the master of the "Emily", Captain McDougall, received a request from George de Lautour who had sailed from Brisbane aboard the schooner "Emily", Captain McDougall, to transfer his people to this vessel from the wreck of the "Emily". de Lautour's reputation in the labour trade was very good. His fellow-mariner brother lived at Rutland Island, parish of Temple-crone, county of Donegal. Rogers was to be master of the ship from this period (May 1884) until both he and she were lost off the Queensland coast in July 1886.

De Lautour a Frenchman, was one of the most picturesque of the sailors. He was 46 years of age, signed on as boatswain. Just a year before, Austin had been an able seaman aboard the schooner "Stanley" when she was wrecked on the southern spur of the Indispensable Reef. A digression here about Thomas Barry may partly set the scene for what was to follow. Barry was on the list of supernumerary government agents—not on the permanent staff. Four weeks before he embarked aboard the "Young Dick" he had returned to Brisbane from the New Hebrides on board the schooner "Emily". While in the New Hebrides he and the master of the "Emily", Captain McDougall, received a request from George de Lautour who had sailed from Brisbane aboard the schooner "Emily", Captain McDougall, to transfer his people to this vessel from the wreck of the "Emily". de Lautour’s reply to Barry conceded nothing by way of compensation. de Lautour then demanded an apology but for his trouble he received another abusive telegram with injuries added to insult by way of a delivery charge of six shillings and nine pence.

It was then that he wrote drawing the attention of the Colonial Secretary to the situation which had developed between him and Barry.

I beg to state that when picked up off the island of Palmaa [presumably Paama, or Pauma, in the New Hebrides] by the O-Land labor Sch. "Emily" I had then 20 return laborers on board the "Ernestine" which vessel had been disabled by a hurricane I was myself dangerously ill also a number of my return laborers were very ill, Mr. Barry was the Govt. Agent on board the "Emily" and on several occasions whilst I was on board as a passenger, he was very drunk and made himself very objectionable to every one on board, both in his language and manner. I had several times to tell him to remember his position on board I also heard the Captain remonstrate with him on several occasions. . . . I refused to stop in the ship with him. Shortly after my return to Queensland Mr. Barry returned from the islands and sent me some most abusive telegrams, trying to extort money, I had no wish to get Mr. Barry into trouble, but I was at last compelled to report the matter . . . .

. . . . As I believe Mr. Barry is away from the colony it is only fair that an inquiry should be held on his return. In the meantime I would humbly submit that an unfortunate difference which I happen to have with an officer of the Government may not be used to my detriment?

De Lautour’s reputation in the labour trade was very good and it seems likely, therefore, that his complaints against Barry had substance.

Some months later when Barry was Government Agent in the schooner "Borough Belle", Captain Robert Pearn, return labourers were transferred to this vessel from the wreck of the "Emily" in Malo pass, New Hebrides. Barry took it upon himself to salvage what he could from the wreck and sold it on commission to persons in the New Hebrides. Official opinion on this action was divided; no one approved it but Sir Samuel Griffith took the view that there were no grounds for criminal proceedings.

What is known of Barry suggests that he may have been a heavy drinker, lacking in good judgement and prone to erratic and extravagant behaviour.

When the "Young Dick" was under tow down river from Maryborough on 22 July 1884, the master, John Rogers, a florid red-headed man, and the mate George Bell were both drunk. There was a scuffle between them, and Austin, the boatswain, took Bell away because, he said later, he was so helpless that he feared the captain would do him injury. For the "Emily"—at that time de Lautour was very ill and believed himself to be dying. During the brief period on board the "Emily" de Lautour recovered sufficiently to be drawn into a violent quarrel with Barry and chose to be put ashore at the island of Aoba where he spent two months and recovered his health before he was picked up by the British sloop H.M.S. "Miranda". He received a telegram from Barry when he got back to Brisbane and this read as follows:

You mongrel if you do not pay me the two pounds you borrowed before landing at Aoba, I will advertise you in tomorrow’s Brisbane papers, you ungrateful skunk.

De Lautour’s reply to Barry conceded nothing by way of abuse.

You never had two pounds to lend who wore poor Captain McDougall’s [sic] clothes think of your poor mother I do not want to expose you do you want to borrow five pounds.

A colleague attempted mediation between them but he failed because Barry was not amenable. De Lautour then demanded an apology but for his trouble he received another abusive telegram with injury added to insult by way of a delivery charge of six shillings and nine pence.

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De Lautour, a Frenchman, was one of the most picturesque of the government agents in the service of the Pacific Island Branch of the Immigration Department. He was so concerned about the treatment of Pacific Island labourers in the Colony that he wrote a long and outspoken letter to the Queensland Leader in March 1884 condemning the way patients were treated in the Polynesian Islanders Hospital at Mackay. Yet on Aore Island, near Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides, where he settled in the late 1880s, he erected a sign on his plantation stating: "Dogs and Niggers are forbidden to enter the Portals of those Gates. Any Dogs or Niggers found therein will suffer the Penalty of Death." D. Scaff. "Dogs and Niggers are forbidden to enter the Portals of those Gates. Any Dogs or Niggers found therein will suffer the Penalty of Death."


De Lautour claimed to be a kinsman of Lord Loftus, Governor of N.S.W. See also E. H. Byrne, Resident Surgeon, Kanaka Hospital, Mackay to Under Col. Secretary, 6 Mar 1884, Q.S.A. COL/A 398, in-letter 5704 of 1884.
his interference Rogers abused him and then Austin went to Barry and declared that the voyage had started so badly that he wished to be put ashore while the vessel was still in the river. Barry laughed and brushed the request aside. Nearly all the ship’s company were more or less drunk—the Kanaka boat crews were passing bottles around between themselves; two of them became so obstreperous that Barry told Austin to put them in irons.

Austin’s presentiments did not fail him. During the voyage from Woody Island to the New Hebrides there were frequent quarrels and raised voices. In breach of the ship’s Articles—‘No spirits allowed’—and contrary to Queensland Regulation no. 18, there were grog issues to both white and black members of the ship’s company on Saturdays if not more often. Austin’s general disquiet was increased by the contemptuous attitude of Barry towards him. After the “Young Dick” had anchored for a few days in Chaffin Bay off Aoba, or Lepers Island as it was sometimes called, Barry told Rogers that Austin was incompetent. Rogers then relieved Austin of recruiting and took over the work himself. This was humiliating to Austin and, of course, it meant the loss of £4 per month over his ordinary pay.

The rate of recruiting certainly increased after Rogers began to go in with the boats and do the work. When the supply seemed to have dried up they moved south through the group, landing return labourers at Pentecost [Raga] and Ambrym Islands, in the New Hebrides, and adding to the number of recruits.

On 23 August the “Young Dick” was brought to anchor at Ibo on the north west coast of Epi Island. Here they found at anchor the “Agnes Edgell”, a German vessel in the Samoan trade; visitors from her crossed over and were received by Rogers. It appeared to George Bell, the mate, and to Austin that they were not welcome—the two of them with Carl Sicca—the forward passenger, went off in one of “Young Dick”s boats and crossed to the “Agnes Edgell” where the German mate and second mate treated them to gin and lager beer. Boats came and went and there were parties on both ships. Bell was later to describe the goings-on as ‘a Saturday night’s jollification’. But it is doubtful whether he and Austin were really very jolly that night—they seemed to have shared bitter feelings towards Rogers and Barry. When they left the “Agnes Edgell” with Sicca it was something after half past eleven. What they said to each other as they approached the “Young Dick” can be no more than a matter for speculation; there is a chance, however, that they agreed that it was time they had things out with Rogers about Barry; and Bell might have consented to put in a good word for Austin. But before they reached the “Young Dick” they met a boat of the “Agnes Edgell” coming away. In response to a hail they went alongside and a drunken trader named Peter Cullen”—known as ‘Brocky Peter’ in the Queensland labour trade—was heaved into the stern of their boat. They went on and came alongside the “Young Dick”; Bell, Austin and the Italian, Sicca, climbed aboard. Austin said later that Rogers called to Cullen to come aboard and have a drink—Rogers denied this, possibly in an attempt to support the fiction of ‘No spirits’ aboard his vessel.

Two of Cullen’s boys got into the boat and pulled away for the shore with their drunken master. Sicca went forward to the forecastle. Rogers was standing alone with his back to the bulwarks on the port quarter. Bell crossed the deck and spoke to him about Barry, the Government Agent—Austin, as though he were persona non grata with Rogers, stood a little apart from them. It was then after midnight and dark on deck. Bell appeared to have failed in whatever he was attempting to do—he turned away from Rogers and said to Austin, “Our company’s not appreciated here.” He moved away but Austin pushed forward and confronted Rogers.

“I don’t want to talk to you,” Rogers said. “Go away.”

“The Government Agent’s been too hard on me,” said Austin. Rogers raised his voice, “You’re a useless bugger and no more fit to recruit than a child.”

“I didn’t sign as recruiter. I signed as boatswain to go in the boats when required.”

“I wish to Christ I had signed you on as recruiter in the Articles.”

“You’ve not given me a fair show.”

“Clear off you son of a whore,” Rogers raised his hand and with a push sent Austin reeling. “You’re a whore like your wife and quite incompetent to recruit.”

Austin’s hand closed on a belaying pin and he stepped forward and struck Rogers a blow on the side of his head. He raised the belaying pin again but Rogers parried the second blow with his right hand and then closed with him and they fell wrestling on the deck. The only question in doubt about these exchanges was the sequence of the events. It was to be asked whether Austin’s assault followed or preceded the gross abuse levelled at him by Rogers. All this was to be raised later; at that moment there was pandemonium on the deck of the “Young Dick”. Rogers shouted, “Mr Bell, Mr Bell, this man has done for me.” Bell who was getting himself a drink of water came and helped Rogers to his feet and then saw profuse bleeding from his head. He took the belaying pin away from Austin. “Get away out of it,” he said. “You might have killed him.”

Bell helped Rogers aft to his cabin. Austin moved forward and went down below to the forecastle. Rogers soon recovered from the first effect of the assault. He walked forward shouting “Where’s that bastard of a boatswain?” He sang out down the forecastle and woke up the sleeping hands but it was dark and Robert Mann the carpenter called back “He’s not down here.” Mann then came up on deck to discover the cause of the commotion. When he went down again he found the lamp had been lighted and he saw Austin.

“What’s the row about?” he asked.

“Don’t say I’m here,” Austin said. “I’ve had a row with the captain and went for him with a belaying pin—I want no more trouble, don’t say I’m here.”

At that moment Bell came down in the forecastle. “Come on,” he said, and without a word Austin went aft with him. Mann followed them. Rogers was in his cabin leaning over a basin and bleeding from a wound at the side of his head. Barry, the Government Agent, had just returned from the “Agnes Edgell” and was standing there when Bell appeared with Austin. It is not clear what powers he thought he was exercising when he gave a peremptory order to Bell to chain Austin hands and legs to the main mast. Bell fastened Austin’s hands to the pump and his feet to the cable. In the meantime Mann was examining Rogers’ injury. The wound was about two inches long—a contused gaping wound with a ragged edge. Mann was supposed to have spent some time as a medical student in London. He regarded Rogers’ bleeding head with a show of professional concern. He decided against stitching the wound—he thought it better to draw it together with plaster.

Rogers grew very indignant about Austin’s conduct while Mann was cutting away his hair.
“It was cowardly of the boatswain to strike me in the dark,” he said. “I don’t want to get him into trouble with the authorities, I’d just like to have a fair fight with him.”

Barry, whose failure as an effective government agent and lack of judgement must have contributed to the conditions which led to disorder aboard the “Young Dick”, became officious. He formally notified Rogers that he found it impossible to perform his duties because of the frequent altercations aboard the vessel. He ordered him to go to Port Sandwich, Malekula, where a man-o’-war was at anchor.

3.

H.M.S. “Miranda” was a composite screw sloop of 1130 tons. Her armaments were six guns—two 7 inch rifle muzzle loaders and four 64 pounders. She had a ship’s company of 140 officers and ratings. Commander Dyke Acland was not only in command of this vessel—in addition to the particular and general duties incorporated in sailing orders, investigating outrages in the islands, visiting trading and mission stations, supervising the actions of labour vessels and so on, he was a Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific with a range of judicial powers.

When the “Young Dick” sailed in to Port Sandwich on Sunday morning 24 August 1884 and Barry went aboard “Miranda” and made his report, Dyke Acland could then have set up a court and heard a charge against Austin. Instead he ordered Lieutenant Lionel Tufnell to carry out an inquiry. On the outcome of this he would decide his next step. He sent the ship’s surgeon, a man whose name also happened to be Barry, to report on Rogers’ injury.

Dyke Acland then took statements from Rogers, Bell, Mann, Walker, the cook and steward, Sicca, the forward passenger, Austin and Barry. Austin’s assault on Rogers was in no kind of doubt—but Dyke Acland’s questions brought out a wealth of evidence of spirits aboard the vessel and of grog issues to native boat crews.

The ship’s surgeon reported to Commander Dyke Acland: "I have attended John H. Rogers Captain of Labour Schooner “Young Dick” and found him suffering from a contused Scalp wound situated over the left Parietal bone and one inch and a quarter in length and extending to the bone. The wound is a dangerous one and evidently inflicted by a heavy blunt instrument.

Dyke Acland confirmed the material points in the statements taken by Lieutenant Tufnell. After consideration of the state of affairs which then appeared to have existed aboard the “Young Dick” he wrote to Rogers: "In consequence of the want of discipline on board the labour vessel “Young Dick”, of the gross assault made upon you by Edward Austen, Boatswain, of the said vessel, of the infringement of the Ships Articles in which it states that “No spirits allowed” and in consequence of the infringement of Article 18 Queensland Regulations in which it states that no grog is to be issued to the natives. It is my direction that you land all the return labour now on board, and then return direct to Maryborough, you will then prefer charges against Edward Austen, Boatswain, I have sent two letters, one addressed to Commodore Erskine, the other addressed to the Immigration Agent Maryborough which I request that you will forward by the first opportunity. You may recruit at the places where the returns are landed, but as it is advisable that an enquiry should be held as soon as possible you are not to go to any other places.

By the exercise of powers conferred upon him by the Western Pacific Orders-in-Council, Dyke Acland could have heard formal criminal proceedings against Austin. It is not so easy to see where he derived his authority to order Rogers to return to Maryborough and prefer charges against Austin. It is likely that he depended on general provisions in one of the acts.

The letter he wrote to the Immigration Agent, Maryborough, which he requested Rogers to deliver, read as follows: "I have the honor to inform you that the labour vessel “Young Dick” arrived here yesterday morning.

The Government Agent came on board and reported that the Boatswain was in irons in consequence of a gross assault on the Master.

I sent an Officer on board to investigate the case, and have had statement of the Master, Mate, Boatswain, and some of the crew, verified on oath in my presence.

The result of investigation discloses such a want of discipline on board the ship, that I decided to send her to Queensland in order that the charges and counter-charges may be investigated and the offenders dealt with according to law.

The remaining return islanders on board the “Young Dick” were landed. On 3 September, with twenty-six recruits on board, the vessel left the Banks Islands to the north of the New Hebrides and arrived off Woody Island on 9 September. Her return after only fifty days out caused speculation in Maryborough which the reticence of those aboard did nothing to dispel.

The vessel was towed up river next day, Wednesday 10 September, and Austin was charged and confined in the police station lock-up. On Thursday 11 September he was brought before H. R. Buttanshaw, Police Magistrate, who charged that he the said Edward Austin on the 23rd day of August 1884 on board the British Ship Young Dick on the high sea near April [Epi] unlawfully and maliciously did inflict upon one John Hugh Rogers grievous bodily harm with an instrument called a belaying pin.

Inspector Lloyd appeared for the prosecution and Mr J. M’Grath for Austin. On the application of the police Austin was remanded on bail for twenty-four hours. The committal proceedings began next day (Friday 12 September) with Mr T. Moreton instructed by the police appearing for the prosecution, and were completed next day. Barry as Government Agent would presumably have been a key witness, but he was not called to give evidence. Austin called no witnesses and reserved his defence. He was committed for trial at the next sitting of the Circuit Court, to be held at Maryborough on Thursday 25 September. He was allowed bail of £20 with two sureties of £20 each.

There was of course no answer to the charge but M’Grath did his best for Austin at his trial before Sir Charles Lilley, the Chief Justice. By cross examination he got Crown witnesses to agree that Austin was a good seaman and normally a well-behaved man who would not be easily provoked to violence. He created an impression that the assault had occurred as an incident in generally disorderly behaviour and that Austin had been provoked by grossly insulting language.

The jury after an absence of ten minutes brought in a verdict of “guilty”. The Chief Justice said that Austin had probably been severely provoked and that he was treating him mercifully. He sentenced him to six months hard labour in Brisbane gaol.

Austin’s trouble might have been avoided had the Government Agent, Thomas Barry, been a more responsible officer and by the example of his own behaviour discouraged the backbiting and drunkenness which characterized the cruise. And he could have been expected to take action on the issue of grog to the native boat crews. Nevertheless he evidently retained a good opinion of himself, for a couple of months later he was writing to the Chief Inspector of Pacific Islanders asking support to an application for transfer from the supernumerary list to the permanent staff of Government Agents.

No official notice appears to have been taken of the breaches of Ship’s Articles and Regulations concerning spirits and grog issues and Captain Rogers escaped any kind of censure. On 25 September, as soon as he could after giving evidence at Austin’s trial, he was on his way down river with Edward Battersby, Government Agent, two return islanders for Aoba and licences to
recruit 120 islanders for employers in the districts of Maryborough and Bundaberg. The "Young Dick" made Anoityam at the southern extreme of the New Hebrides on 14 October. Five days later on 19 October at Epi the first recruits came aboard. Recruiting went on right through the islands until 1 January 1885 when the total number of 101 was reached at Espiritu Santo. A course for home was shaped on 4 January. Indian Head on the east of Fraser Island was sighted on 10 January—two days later the "Young Dick" anchored in Hervey Bay and the following day went up river to Maryborough. The cruise was described as uneventful but for an incident on 6 November when the mutilated remains of the trader Peter Cullen were found and buried on Lenore [Lenua], an island about half a mile to the south of Malekula. Not long before, George Wright, Government Agent aboard the Queensland schooner "Albatross", recorded complaints against Cullen alleging that he had taken women against their will, shot pigs belonging to the local inhabitants and shot dead some men who had opposed him.

After only two weeks in port the "Young Dick" went down river again on 31 January 1885 on her third cruise to the New Hebrides. Rogers returned with 94 islanders recruited from eleven different islands in the group. The only matters of note were two occasions when the boats were fired on from the shore—one at Port Sandwich, Malekula during the afternoon of 10 March and once during the morning of Sunday 26 April. Murray, the Government Agent, reported that the islanders had in no way been provoked—as a gesture their fire was returned on both occasions but they were nearly beyond range.

4.

Rogers had three more successful cruises in the "Young Dick"; at £20 for each islander he brought to Queensland and £6 for each he returned he made very good money for himself. One of these cruises was to the New Hebrides, but in November 1885 he returned from a short cruise in the Solomons with a full ship of 120 recruits, and just before Christmas he sailed again for the Solomons and was back in Maryborough on 4 March 1886 with another full ship. On 7 April he sailed from Brisbane to the Solomons with Charles Marr as his mate and John Hornidge as second mate and recruiter. The Government Agent bore the aristocratic name of Charles Home Popham Popham; he was one of the establishment of permanent officers and a man of exceptional character.

The "Young Dick" made her first landfall on 24 April on the island of Guadalcanal. Recruiting was not promising and Rogers took the vessel round Cape Zeelee (Nialahau) at the southern extremity of Maramasike (which forms the "detached foot" of Malaita) past the Melanesian Mission station at Saa to Mappo or Roa Bay. Six men were recruited on 30 April; next day there were two more. A man named Rapi who had learned some English during a period of three years labouring in Fiji acted as interpreter for Hornidge, the recruiter. Rapi was paid off and put ashore on Saturday afternoon, but Hornidge returned to the schooner and reported that bushmen were coming down to the coast and advised Rogers to return to the anchorage in Roa Bay so that he could continue recruiting next day.

On the morning of Sunday 2 May at quarter past six the two boats went in. Hornidge was in the leading boat with a seaman named Donnelly. Two other seamen, Thomas Crittenden and Alfred Lovett, were in the covering boat. The two boats were pulled round the bay and then to the village of Roa. The recruiting boat was backed in and the covering boat stood off. The interpreter Rapi came down to the waterside and invited Hornidge to go up to the village—recruits were coming, he said. Hornidge dropped down on the sand and walked up the beach talking to Rapi—a second man joined them who, like Rapi, carried a long-handled tomahawk. Hornidge asked how soon the recruits were likely to come—he was told that they would soon appear. Hornidge said he would go back to the boat to wait. As he turned to go, Rapi and the other man swung their tomahawks at him and knocked him down. Hornidge got up and immediately knelt down again by two more blows. He got up again and drew his revolver; his assailants made off. In spite of grievous injuries he fired after them and got himself painfully back to the boat. The crew at once pulled out to the "Young Dick" and helped him aboard. At 10 a.m. Rogers got the schooner under weigh and sailed eight miles or so northward to Port Adam (Manoato) where two off-lying islands (Halelei and Mary) provided shelter for about four miles along the coast. Rogers rounded the islands and came into the sheltered water by the middle entrance. They anchored with the Fiji labour schooner "Meg Merillies" lying close to. Bevan, her Government Agent, came aboard and helped Popham dress Hornidge's wounds. Next day Rogers went a few miles to the northern extremity of Port Adam and got eight recruits. Three days later on 5 May the 2120 ton screw corvette H.M.S. "Opal", under command of Captain Brooke R.N., arrived at Port Adam and found the "Young Dick" and "Meg Merillies" at anchor.

Rogers ordered the signal "in want of medical assistance". Staff-Surgeon Brereton went aboard at once, and in the meantime, Popham went aboard "Opal" and reported the murderous attack on Hornidge. The Reverend Richard Comins of the Melanesian Mission, Saa, was a guest on board and he offered at once to send some of his people to Roa to find out what was behind the attack on Hornidge. Staff-Surgeon Brereton returned and reported on the injuries:

He was suffering from four wounds, which were evidently [inflicted] with a small axe or tomahawk. They were as follows:—A wound across the nape of the neck 2 in. long, and so deep as to expose the vertebrae. Secondly, a wound on the back of the right shoulder 3 in. long and about 1½ in. deep. Thirdly, a wound the same length as the last through the muscles of the back on the left side, almost exposing the ribs; and lastly on the right side of the spine a scrape about 8 in. long, half an in. deep at either end, but very shallow in the middle.

Brereton got permission to move Hornidge to "Opal" where he was to receive careful attention until he was transferred to another man-o'-war at Dinner Island (Samarai) in Papua and landed at Townsville several weeks later.

Mr Comins, the missionary, reported that people from the mission station at Saa had been to Roa and seen the chief, a man named Tarakoke, and Rapi who struck the first blow at Hornidge. Rapi said that he had been in ill-health, and despite Rapi's report after his return from Fiji he had been taunted by his people with having been too friendly with white men who, four years earlier, had kidnapped their former chief, a man named Mahu, who had since died in Fiji. Radi yielded to the pressure of his countrymen and had deposed Hornidge ashore, then attempted to murder him in retaliation for the wrong done their chief. There was no possibility of Radi being surrendered by the Roa people—the chief Tarakoke declined the invitation to board "Opal" and explain the situation to Captain Brooke.

5.

Captain Brooke in a report to Rear-Admiral Tryon, Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Station, wrote:

6. After carefully weighing and considering the facts of this case, I could not but believe that the attempt on this man's life was one of the most treacherous and cruel nature. The man Radi had been at Fiji for three years, spoke English, and had been three days on board the "Young Dick" as interpreter, and was evidently only waiting his chance to kill a white man to get a head, for the reason given in Mr. Comins' letter. By his friendliness to the man Hornidge, he unfortunately put him off his guard, and enticed him a few yards from the boat. I feel sure that there was no provocation given at the time.
7. Taking all these facts into careful consideration, I came to the conclusion that this was a case that it was necessary to inflict punishment by an act of war; that it was impossible to expect, under the circumstances, to have it tried at any time by any civilized tribunal, and that it was of a nature to demand punishment. Accordingly, after returning Mr. Comins and his native boat’s crew back to Saa, I weighed on the morning of the 8th May from Port Adam, taking the schooner “Young Dick” in tow, and anchored both vessels in the bay opposite Tara-koke’s village. I considered by having the schooner with me it would impress on the natives around more forcibly the object of my visit.

8. The country around all this part of Malaya [Malaita] is one dense, high and thick forest, and no house or village could be seen from the ship; but I had the position of the village where this tribe lived clearly pointed out by some recruits on board the “Young Dick”. I also got a good description from the native crew of Mr. Comins’ boat.

I feel sure I hit upon the right spot, and fired some well-directed shell at the place, and as the country was so impenetrable, and neither canoes or cocoa-nuts to be seen, I considered it prudent not to land any men, but thought that this mode of punishing them would meet the case. On communicating afterwards at Saa (where I took Mr. Comins on board, as I did not consider it safe to leave him there), I heard that the visit of the man-of-war, and her subsequent movements, so soon after the attack on this man, has impressed and astonished the natives all round very much.

Nineteen shells were fired from “Opal” at the high wooded land above Roas Bay. The effect of punitive action of this kind was almost invariably derided by men in the Queensland labour trade. It is not easy to see, however, why the lives of servicemen should be put at risk by landing and operations in difficult country because, often contrary to firm advice, men chose to expose themselves to known dangers in commercial enterprise; or, contrary to advice, they went into Double Bay but got no recruits. On 19 May they moved six miles along the coast to Sinarango; Sinarango, sometimes spelt Serago, or Port Diamond as it was later named, is almost completely landlocked by high wooded hills. The entrance is one third of a mile wide between two steep cliffs about 300 feet above high water. A fringing reef and some rocks offer hazards. Rogers got the sun in a favourable position and navigated by eye as they went in. They anchored 150 yards from the waterside and Rogers, now working as the recruiter, went in with a seaman named Toohie. The seamen Lovett and Donnelly followed in the covering boat. Rogers talked to some of the men he found on the beach but he got no recruits that day. The boats returned about half past five. While they had been away, thirty or so men and youths had swum out to the ship; they appeared relaxed and well-disposed. There were still a few of them there when Rogers returned but most had swum back to the shore.

After breakfast next morning, Tuesday 20 May at half past nine, the boats went in again. Rain was falling and Popham who might have been expected to go in the boats remained aboard the “Young Dick”. With him were the mate Marr, the carpenter Bean, the cook and steward Merlin, Crittenden, able seaman, Lagerblom, able seaman and sailmaker, and Bash of the boats’ crew who had been injured a few days before by an arrow. There were in addition fourteen recruits, the product of nearly three weeks along the coast from Roas Bay.

Half an hour later, after the boats left, Rogers called a meeting ten o’clock, Marr saw a canoe carrying six men come out from the shore. They all climbed aboard—Marr recognized some as among those who had been aboard the previous day. One of them said, “One boy wanna go long Mallybulla.” Marr went round to the cabin of the Government Agent. “There’s a boy who wants to sign,” he said. Popham was sitting on the sofa in his cabin reading a novel. “Fetch him round,” he said.

Marr joined the natives on deck again. The man who had first spoken to him said, “Big fella master belong me fella bime by come to take pay for boy.” Marr looked in at Popham again. “The chief is coming to take the trade for the boy.” Popham nodded and continued to read.

The deck-house of the “Young Dick” was divided into three compartments running across the after deck with a narrow gangway on each side. The cabins of the captain and Government Agent formed the forward section; the dining saloon, covered overhead but with open sides, with its table took up the central section; the after section consisted of the mate’s cabin and the boatswain’s cabin used as the trade room during recruiting. The three cabins and the trade room opened on to the dining saloon space.

Marr looked towards the shore—fifteen to twenty men were swimming out to the ship. He watched for a moment or two and then went to the trade room and laid out trade goods on the table in readiness for bargaining with the chief.

More natives were swimming out to the ship and there were others in small catamarans. The talkative man and three others who had gone ashore in a canoe for the chief now returned and climbed aboard.

“All right,” Marr said to him “dis fella come now and make paper.” He wanted him to go through the motions of entering into formal agreement before the Government Agent. He took the man and the youth who wanted to recruit and left them at the door of the Government Agent’s cabin. He went to the dining saloon where trade goods were spread out on the table. The chief and several of his people were there already. Merlin, the cook, and Bean, the carpenter, were also there. Marr pointed at the Articles on the table. “Chips,” he said to Bean, “look out for the trade.” The talkative man moved away from the Government Agent’s cabin, came past the captain’s cabin round the table to Marr. “Big fella master belong me fella must have three tomahawks,” he said. This was unreasonable. Marr closed the door of the boatswain’s cabin, which contained the stocks of tradegoods. He stood leaning against the upright in the passage before the rooms watching the trade on the table and the islanders crowding round. If Marr said or did anything else, he never admitted to it. Perhaps there was no simple explanation...
Malaita Island, Solomon Group.

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for what happened next. The chief suddenly raised his voice in an angry shout and grabbed Marr by the wrist of his left arm and then clutched his arm further up and tugged; another islander clutched his right arm. The chief bit into the forefinger of Marr's left hand. Marr freed his right arm and punched the chief in the face. Pandemonium of grunts and shrieks broke out and there was a sickening crash of blows. Marr heard Popham cry, “Murder! Murder!” above the uproar. With a tremendous physical effort Marr grabbed back into the doorway of his room with the chief and the other man holding on his left arm, with his right arm he reached across his bunk and got hold of his revolver. He shot the two men ed was about to fire a third time but someone wrenched the revolver out of his hand. He drew back into his room again and picked up and loaded his Snider and fired through the half-open door at a man coming towards him. The man rushed on deck and jumped overboard. Marr loaded his Snider again but the room darkened and as he turned away from the door he saw a man obscuring the side window-light trying to swing a tomahawk at him. Before he could fire the man drew away out of sight. Marr became very alarmed at his position when he saw he had only one spare Snider cartridge in the pen recess in his cabin desk. He peeped out through the door and then darted across the passage to the boatswain’s cabin for more cartridges. He partly closed the door and took up a position to fire through the gap. A man armed with a tomahawk moved along the rail on the port side. Marr fired; he could not eject the empty cartridge case when he wanted to reload.

6.

The seaman Crittenden was sleeping out his watch below when Rogers and the two boats left the “Young Dick” that morning. About half past eleven, clad only in a singlet, he came up and saw four naked men on the starboard side crowding Lagerblom, the sail-maker. He went back to the forecastle and got his revolver. When he came up again he did not see Lagerblom or any other white man. He moved aft along the port side; when he reached the galley one of the intruders sprang out and tried to tomahawk him. Crittenden shot him and moved further aft towards the Government Agent’s cabin. Soon he heard savage cries, the sound of scuffling and the thud of blows. A crowd of naked men appeared and came at him. He fired his revolver four times: one man fell, others drew back as though wounded. In a momentary lull Crittenden turned and ran forward, went down through the forecastle scuttle, pulled on trousers, took his Snider and filled his pockets with cartridges and came up on deck again. He climbed the port rigging as far as the foreyard and sat there—above he saw two recruits clinging for safety.

Crittenden looked down on frenzied men clambering aboard, jumping overboard and milling about the after deck. He fired at all he could see—twenty odd cartridges in not much more than five minutes. The intruders began to crowd under the awning aft to get out of sight. There were no longer many natives on deck but two canoes and a number of small catar-mans lay alongside when Crittenden had two cartridges left in his pocket and decided to come down. Some recruits had now ventured up from the hold and stood about the forward hatch. Bash, the injured boatman, appeared with a Snider. Crittenden motioned to them to escort him when he went aft. He got on top of the deck-house. He shot one man of three he saw darting about—the other two went overboard and got away.

An air of temporary quiet came over the vessel. Crittenden sang out to Marr, “Come out, they’ve gone.” Marr was working with his knife trying to pry out the cartridge shell from the breech of the Snider.

“Is that you Tom?” he called.

“Come out, the deck’s clear.” Marr pulled open the door of the boatswain’s cabin and came out. Crittenden dropped down from the top of the deck-house. The bodies of Bean, the carpenter, and of Merlin, the cook, lay in the dining saloon with brain tissue spread over their battered heads. The sailmaker, Lagerblom, had tried to find refuge in the captain’s cabin and had evidently resisted his attackers. His left arm was severed, one side of his skull was sliced away exposing his brains, another blow had broken his jaw, and his back was badly slashed. Popham’s dead body lay stretched out on its back in his cabin with a labour agreement form in a pocket at the side. The lower half of his face was smashed in and the cabin floor was littered with his teeth. Crittenden said that at first he saw signs of life in the four men, but in three of them it could have barely been more than a flicker. Marr corroborated what he said about Lagerblom who lived for about an hour and repeatedly tried to speak about something.

Marr and Crittenden continued a search. The bodies of three natives lay on the starboard side and there were two others on the port side; a sixth body lay near the galley—one of the recruits was among the dead.

Most of the assaulting horde had now withdrawn and returned to the land but the two medium-sized canoes and a few cata-mans still lay alongside, their sullen occupants in no hurry to go. The recruits armed with bows and arrows and Bash with his Snider were told to keep off anyone who might try to climb aboard. “I hope the boats are all right,” Marr said. He went into the deck-house for his binoculars. The curtain over the doorway of the Government Agent’s cabin was drawn back. Marr glanced at Popham’s dead body—then he observed movement and saw a man with a tomahawk crouching behind the curtain. He got hold of him but the man’s body was greasy with sweat and he pulled away.

Marr called to Crittenden, “There’s one still here.”

Crittenden came in with his Snider.

“Where is he?” he asked.

The man had moved away from the curtain.

“He’s standing behind Popham’s greatcoat,” Marr replied.

“Stand back,” Crittenden said. He raised his Snider and shot the man, through the coat.

They came out on deck.

“Signal the boats to come back at once,” Marr said.

Crittenden went up the mast and made the ensign, union down, fast to the bight truck. Marr placed Bash at the starboard cathead, gave him some cartridges and told him to fire at intervals to attract attention.

Marr scanned the large landlocked expanse of shimmering water. After ten minutes or so he lowered his glasses.

“They’re coming,” he said.

As the boats drew near Marr and Crittenden stood forward on the starboard side. When he got within hailing distance, Rogers shouted, “What’s wrong?”

“We’re the only whitesmen left,” Marr shouted back.

Rogers was shocked into silence when he climbed aboard and saw the shambles. Marr reported to him what had happened and then took control. The deck and cabins were scrubbed down. The bodies of the four white men were sewn in canvas, weighted and buried in deep water. The bodies of the natives were heaved overboard. They got the “Young Dick” under weigh with a breeze off the land at two o’clock in the morning of Friday 21 May. Rogers lay in a state of nervous prostration and the burden of working the short-handed schooner fell upon Marr. She arrived off Woody Island on Tuesday, 1 June, and entered the river that night. News of the outrage reached Maryborough from the Electric Telegraph Station and a reporter from the Maryborough Chronicle was waiting when the vessel came up to town late in the afternoon of 2 June. He must have worked for most of the night, for the Chronicle next morning,
3 June, gave the news nearly three full-length columns and presented a report which even in the light of subsequent formal enquiries cannot be seriously faulted as to content.

The report began:

The arrival of the labor schooner Young Dick at Maryborough yesterday afternoon placed us in possession of details of one of the most eventful voyages yet recorded in the annals of the Polynesian traffic, and perhaps the bloodiest tragedy yet associated with the South Seas. The details given below describe a murderous and unprovoked attack by a horde of fifty armed savages on the vessel when half the crew were absent, a heroic defence of life and property by the remaining half, followed by the routling [sic routing] of the enemy, but not before the after deck of the little vessel was strewn with the butchered bodies of the Government Agent, Mr. C. H. Popham, three of the ship's crew, one Polynesian recruit, and the corpses of five of the attacking savages who were shot down in the mellee. Besides these ten victims of a desperate fight which lasted but a few minutes, several other savages were shot and fell into the sea to die, while many more received bullet wounds of probably a fatal nature.

Dealing with the main incidents of the massacre the journalist wrote:

A loud and piercing yell was instantly replied to by a hellish shriek from the crowd of dusky naked savages who thronged the deck space aft, and instantly violent hands were laid on the Europeans. Tomahawks appeared as if produced by magic. Marr was seized by the King and two others, one of whom took the intended victim's thumb in his teeth and nearly bit it off.

The early part of the account deals with the part played by Marr in the defence of the ship, but it soon goes on to deal with Crittenden, who was made into a hero.

Crittenden, who was awakened from sleep by the savage yelling, ran, clothed only in a light singlet, on deck. The first spectacle which he witnessed was Lagerblom, the sailmaker, struggling violently with half-a-dozen naked savages on the starboard side of the main hatch. Crittenden immediately returned to the forecastle for his revolver, jumped on deck again, ran aft, and found himself also the object of a general attack. He fired several shots with telling effect, the recipients of the bullets leaping overboard as soon as they were struck. A couple of natives clutched his singlet, but that gave way, and his naked body affording no grip, Crittenden freed himself and making a leap into the forecastle, put on his trousers, filled his pockets with cartridges, took a snider rifle, and returned pluckily to the combat. Reaching the deck, he conceived the idea of conducting operations from the superior vantage afforded by the topsail yard, and hastily making his way up thither, he coolly sat down and opened fire on the seething, screeching mob of brutal devils who were rushing hither and thither on the deck below: here chopping the prostrate Lagerblom out of all recognition; there doing the same to a courageous recruit who, having learnt something better than native treachery during a long sojourn at Fiji, was gallantly struggling to defend the ship and his shipmates, and laying down his life therefor; and farther aft, rushing hither and thither looking for whitemen to slay, or valuables to annex. The recipients of the bullets leaping overboard as soon as they were struck. A couple of natives clutched his singlet, but that gave way, and his naked body affording no grip, Crittenden freed himself and making a leap into the forecastle, put on his trousers, filled his pockets with cartridges, took a snider rifle, and returned pluckily to the combat. Reaching the deck, he conceived the idea of conducting operations from the superior vantage afforded by the topsail yard, and hastily making his way up thither, he coolly sat down and opened fire on the seething, screeching mob of brutal devils who were rushing hither and thither on the deck below; here chopping the prostrate Lagerblom out of all recognition; there doing the same to a courageous recruit who, having learnt something better than native treachery during a long sojourn at Fiji, was gallantly struggling to defend the ship and his shipmates, and laying down his life therefor; and farther aft, rushing hither and thither looking for whitemen to slay, or valuables to annex. Shot after shot came from the foretopsail-yard with unerring aim, now directed at some especially prominent slayer on deck, now piercing a canoe alongside and carrying dismay into the savage ranks. Fifteen bullets from the intrepid Crittenden's rifle found their billets, and the savage enemy came to the conclusion that Jack aloft was too much for them, so with yells of disappointment and fear, they went helter skelter over the sides, and with their numberless wounded, hastened ashore. With only two cartridges left Crittenden descended and warily proceeded along the top of the deckhouse aft to see if any of the enemy were in ambush in its recesses. For a moment Crittenden experienced the strange sensation which a man must feel when he finds himself Alone in the face of death. Below him and around him lay the bleeding corpses of his shipmates and no living creature with a white skin visible [sic]. But a voice from the mate's cabin reassured, and Crittenden hailed it with the remark that the deck was clear, Marr whose rifle, by the way had some minutes before this become injured and useless, emerged from his retreat. Though only two revolvers, those of Marr and Popham, and Rogers's Snider were carried off, speculation on the motives for the murderous assault did not go far beyond plunder, though there were always those who attributed it to natural savagery.

People recalled the loss of the 200-ton Maryborough brig "Janet Stewart," Captain Samuel Thomas, pillaged and burned out off the north east coast of Malaita in 1882 in which outrage the Government Agent William Lockhead lost his life. And there were records of many attacks on individual white men, firing on boats, and such like. But there were some who wondered if the assault was by way of revenge for the injury done by the ship's company of the Maryborough schooner "Alfred Vittery", Captain Boore, in 1883 when two Malaita men were shot in the hold of the vessel because they showed a disposition to fight and resist being taken away. The two men, wounded but not dead, had been dragged on to the deck, summarily executed, and their bodies committed to the deep. The affair was too brutal and ghastly to have been soon forgotten.

The Colonial Government showed immediate concern when the facts about the "Young Dick" became known. In a memorandum dated 3 June Sir Samuel Griffith directed the Police Magistrate at Maryborough to hold an enquiry. Mr. H. R. Buttanshaw, the magistrate, began hearing evidence at the Court House, Maryborough on Saturday 5 June. Some measure of his difficulties is recorded in a note he made on Monday, 7 June:

"Charles Henry Marr being called is too drunk to give evidence. Alfred Lovitt, James Tooke, and Thomas Donnelly are called, but do not appear."

Rogers had made his statement on Saturday. After the failure of Marr and the absence of the three seamen, Crittenden was called and had plenty to say. Marr sobered up and appeared on Tuesday 8 June. He made a very full statement. Some of the boats' crew and several of the recruits were called and examined and their evidence largely corroborated what the white men had said. Buttanshaw completed his enquiry that day and on 11 June submitted a brief report to Sir Samuel Griffith, the Chief Secretary:

I have the honor to forward, under separate enclosure, depositions with exhibits connected with inquiry held here in to an attack made by natives of Sinarago [sic] Malaya [Malaita] on the crew of the "Young Dick," recruiting vessel.

During this attack the Government Agent, with three of the European crew and one recruit, were killed, and the vessel nearly taken.

I cannot discover that any provocation was given to the natives.

According to the evidence the attack was a preconcerted one, not the result of sudden excitement. I gather from the private memo. of the Government Agent that the natives of Malaya were uniformly hostile.

Though the fears of, at least, some of the crew seem to have been pretty loudly expressed, there seems to have been no precaution taken. Even during the absence of the boats natives in large numbers were allowed on board.
Griffith passed the papers to the Administrator of Queensland Sir A. H. Palmer and he in turn referred them to Rear-Adm
Tryon, the Commander-in-Chief, leaving him to take such action as he deemed expedient. The Colonial Government appears to have seen no need for further action on its part.

Rear-Adm Tryon consulted Captain Brooke of H.M.S. “Opal” and from him received a statement of what he thought: finding it necessary to take action in the case of the attempted murder of J. Hornidge, boatswain of the schooner “Young Dick”, at Roas Bay, east coast of Malaya, on 9 May last. It contained references to the circumstances of the schooners “Young Dick” and “Meg Merrilies” to leave the island for a time and not recruit there for the present. Their answer was—that it was the best recruiting ground, that all was quiet, and the Captain of “Meg Merrilies” also said, that he knew the natives well all round, and felt quite safe.

With regard to the attacks made by natives on the “Young Dick”, after she parted company with H.M.S. “Opal,” on 9th May last, I am decidedly of opinion that these outrages were not caused by retaliation or inadequacy (which has been implied) of the punishment inflicted by my orders on chief Tarakoke and his tribe for the attempted murder of Hornidge, at Roas Bay, for these reasons: I was given to understand, and there is no doubt, that tribal warfare exists in a great degree on Malaya Island, and one tribe has no sympathy for the other; and besides, I question whether the news of the action of the “Opal,” on 9th May last, would have reached the spot described in evidence of Captain Rogers and survivors of “Young Dick,” where this late attack occurred.

In this evidence there is a circumstance, to my mind, that wants more fully clearing up. In Charles Marr’s statement, when the chief gave a yell and caught hold of him by the wrist, had he (Charles Marr) in any way provoked him, either by threats or otherwise, with the exception of refusing the three extra tomahawks? Also, knowing the schooner was short-handed at the time, was any extra look-out kept and any precaution taken to prevent the natives coming on board in numbers and with arms?

Tryon later wrote to the Assistant High Commissioner. He presented a case for not taking punitive action against the Sinarango people but was willing to hear Thurston’s views. He makes a point and asks a question:

9. It appears to me, sad and distressing as this case is, those in the schooner taking their lives in their own hands in defiance of warning, and also of apprehension that within all reason should have been awakened by previous and recent experience, voluntarily withdrawn themselves from the protection of laws of their own country, and for purposes of their own put themselves carelessly in the power of natives, who on their part were also incited in pursuit of gain to obtain it at any cost. It is probable that the whole of the natives on that part of the island would have done the same if they could, and if an opportunity was afforded.

10. The question now is, what should be done? I see no clear evidence to establish that the natives premeditated the attack. There is some to lead me to suppose it might have been effected on the spur of the moment.

Uneasiness was clearly felt over several matters arising out of the “Young Dick” affair. During his enquiry Buttanshaw wanted to know why Popham, the Government Agent, did not go in with the boats during recruiting along the north east coast of Malaya. There was a half-hearted suggestion that he was unwell but no witnesses troubles to maintain this. It is possible that he was lazy and did not perform his routine duties as conscientious as he might have done. But of greater importance, of course, was the absence of even rudimentary safeguards against attack which, in retrospect, seem to amount to culpable negligence. And the Navy, at least, had doubts of what happened between Marr and the chief when Marr closed the trade room door and told the chief he could not have three tomahawks. Hasty and ill-judged action could have sparked off the explosion which followed.

A late word, too late to be of any significance, came from Captain Tonarios of the schooner “Fearless” which returned to Maryborough via Mackay on 27 September after recruiting in the Solomons. The “Fearless” visited the scene of the massacre and Tonarios said he found the natives there very communicative. According to him they said the assault was planned by men who had done a stint of labouring in Queensland and that they were mainly “bush men” who had suffered at the hands of Marr and Crittenden. “Salt water” people said they had lost only two of their number.

The number of Sinarango people shot dead, wounded or drowned, when the “Young Dick” was assaulted was probably not as great as supposed but it was enough to arouse an obsessive hankering for vengeance. The chiefs and people of Sinarango offered a reward of 100,000 porpoise teeth for the capture of a ship and a smaller sum for the head of a white man. Towards the end of the year 1888 people of Manaoba towards the north east extreme of Malatau lured ashore the Government Agent (T. S. Armstrong) of the Bundaberger schooner “Ariel”, Captain W. T. Wawn, by asking for medical help. He was struck down and decapitated and the Manaoba people took his head down the coast in a war canoe to Sinarango and claimed their reward.

On 3 July 1886, a month from the day the “Young Dick” came up river, she left again to call at Dungeness, at the mouth of the Herbert River, about fifty miles north west of Townsville. Rogers had recovered from the shock which had temporarily affected him and had secured the profitable commission to take on board and land 113 returned islanders in New Britain and New Ireland. With two rejects, a criminal and a runaway who had long been awaiting repatriation, the number was raised to 117. The voyage was interesting as being the first with 'returns' for New Britain and New Ireland. These men had been recruited during a period when serious abuses were known to have occurred; some, perhaps many, had left their homes without any clear idea of where they were going; some may have been taken against their will. But now they had finished three years’ work in Queensland and were returning home with their boxes of trade goods by way of reward.

James Fowles was appointed Government Agent for the voyage. Fowles had written to the Chief Clerk in Brisbane of the Pacific Island Labour Branch (A. Woodward) and Woodward soon afterwards addressed a note to the Under Colonial Secretary which read

By the untimely death of Mr Popham, the number of agents has been reduced to nine. Should the Minister see fit to fill the vacancy, the appointment could not be conferred upon anyone more worthy of it than Mr Fowles. He has always done his work well since he was first employed in Dec ‘84 and he stands first on the list of Supernumerary agents.

Fowles was a good looking young man with an agreeable personality who had given up a promising career in the Post & Telegraph Department to join the service. He became the first native-born Queenslander to be appointed to the permanent staff of Government Agents. His first assignment after his appointment was to the “Young Dick”.

When the “Young Dick” moored off Dungeness, the Queensland labour schooner “Flora”, Captain Donald McDougall or MacDougall, was lying close to with recruits from the Solomon Islands. Douglas Rannie, the Government Agent of the “Flora”, had been pulled up the Herbert River as far as Halifax in the ship’s dinghy. There he caught the locomotive which ran between the
The “Young Dick” put to sea on the morning of 15 July. Captain Rogers proposed passing through the Barrier Reef north east from Dungeness near Bramble Reef. Rannie went out with Fowles as far as the Fairway Buoy. There was not much wind but rain was falling and the sky was overcast and threatening. Before the pilot Maxwell left with Rannie he advised Rogers to anchor under the Great Palm Island for the night and wait for the weather to clear. As the pilot boat sheered off from the ship’s side the “Young Dick” dipped her ensign three times— Rannie waved a hand and the return islanders and the ship’s company cheered as the vessel sailed on.

At the beginning of July 1886, Lieutenant-Commander T. F. Pullen, commanding H.M.S. “Lark”, which had been employed in survey work off Port Moresby, decided to put in at Cooktown on account of the poor health of some of his ship’s company; in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment. Survey work of the kind “Lark” had been doing, in particular, the ship’s surgeon was in need of hospital treatment.

On orders from Brisbane the “Eileen” went out with a picked crew to make a thorough search. The Postmaster at Ingham, anxious for action but helpless himself, recommended that a small steamer be sent up from Townsville to make a search along the Barrier Reef east or east-north-east of Dungeness.

At the end of August a Mr C. St. J. David, a partner in Brown and David, civil engineers and architects of Brisbane, wrote to the Colonial Government on behalf of Mrs Fowles, the mother of James Fowles, Government Agent aboard the “Young Dick”. He thought a new search should be made.

Sir Samuel Griffith noted that a further search was to be made by the pilot cutter from Cardwell. Ten days later the Collector of Customs, Brisbane received a telegram from the sub-collector, Cardwell. Wilbain the coxswain of the pilot cutter had returned after an exhaustive search in the locality of Bramble Reef and northward to a distance of forty miles—there was no trace of survivors. Wilbain reported that Alexander Carstairs, beche-de-mer fisherman of Brook Island, had told him that between 14 July and 19 July he had seen a vessel having many people aboard come sailing towards him, then at a fishing ground near Brittomart Reef. The vessel kept beating about apparently looking for an opening in the Barrier Reef east of Kennedy Island.

Carstairs and his party had been fishing almost continuously between Kennedy Shoal and Brittomart Reef since 19 July but had seen no sign of a wreck. Carstairs, who probably knew...
that part of the Barrier Reef better than any other man, said that if the vessel he saw had been wrecked, it would have been on the outer edge of the reef. This confirmed what had become widely accepted as the fate of the "Young Dick". There were no survivors nor were any bodies ever recovered.

A telegram from the sub-collector of Customs, Ingham, dated 15 October was of no more than passing interest. He reported that Maxwell, the Dungeness pilot, had picked up a board extensively displaying the skill and talent of some unknown seaman artist who had decorated the forecastle bulkhead of the "Young Dick".

On 13 November Captain Clayton, the Senior Officer of the Northern Division of the Australian Station observed in a routine report he made to Rear-Admiral Tryon, Commander-in-Chief I believe the "Young Dick," at the time of her loss on the Barrier Reef, had returned labourers on board. Unless the Queensland Government see that the regular compensation is paid for the men lost their non-return will surely lead to retaliation. If honestly paid at the proper villages I do not think there will be further trouble.

On 10 January 1887 Admiral Tryon wrote to Sir Anthony Musgrave the Governor pointing out the dangers to unsuspecting white visitors if something were not done to prepare the communities to which the lost men belonged for bad news. Sir Samuel Griffith minuted to the Governor that if the vessel he saw had been wrecked, it would have been under the command of Captain Evans. The returned Islanders by the "Young Dick" with such particulars as were available as to the Barrier Reef, had returned labourers on board. Unless the Queensland Government see that the regular compensation is paid for the men lost their non-return will surely lead to retaliation. If honestly paid at the proper villages I do not think there will be further trouble.

This was initialled on 17 January. More than a month later the Governor received a letter from the Imperial German Commissioner at Matupi in New Britain.

The natives of the Archipelago have the custom, in such and similar cases to hold the white men in general responsible and to take vengeance on any settler or ship at the first opportunity for the death of their relations, unless a compensation is given to them, to atone for it and to secure, according to their belief, the peace of the deceased souls.

The German planters in Samoa returning labourers to the Archipelago have to pay for every missing person the full amount of wages earned in merchandise to his nearest relations or his tribe.

In view of the foregoing I should be glad if Your Excellency would give this matter due consideration and devise such means as will be deemed best adaptable to compensate and pacify the friends and kinsmen [sic] of those lost.

The Governor referred the letter to the Acting Chief Secretary, James Dickson and asked for the advice of ministers. The papers were returned with the minute and the list compiled on Griffith's orders showed that the one hundred and seventeen islanders who perished were shipped in 1883 mostly from New Britain and New Ireland, seventy-one by the "Hopeful", forty-two by the "Lord of the Isles", three by the "Jessie Kelly", and one by the "Lochiel". The "Hopeful" had arrived in May 1883 under the command of Captain Briggs, the "Lord of the Isles" in July 1883 under the command of Captain Hawkins, the "Jessie Kelly" in June and September 1883 under the command of Captain Bowers and the "Lochiel" in September 1883 under the command of Captain Evans. The fears expressed about the consequences of the loss of these men were not apparently justified.

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5. Colonial Secretary's Office in-letter no. 3330 of 1884 [Q.S.A. COL/A 389].
6. Colonial Secretary's Office in-letter no. 8944 of 1884 [Q.S.A. COL/A 410].
7. George de Lautour to Colonial Secretary, 19 Dec 1884, ibid.
10. Ibid.
15. Depositions taken at the committal proceedings before H. R. Buttanshaw, P. M. Maryborough, 12-13 Sep 1884 and presented at the trial in the Circuit Court, Maryborough, 25 Sep 1884 [Q.S.A. CCT 3B/N 28].
17. Ibid.
19. Chief Clerk, Pacific Island Labour Branch, to Under Colonial Secretary, 27 Jan 1885 [Q.S.A. COL/A 413, in-letter no. 590 of 1885].
20. Chief Clerk, Pacific Island Labour Branch, to Immigration Agent, 20 May 1885 [Q.S.A. COL/A 424, in-letter no. 3623 of 1885].
21. Government Agent's log, schooner "Young Dick", 2 May 1886; enclosure no. 1 in Captain Brooke's despatch of 8 May 1886 to Rear-Admiral Tryon, printed in "Correspondence respecting Outrages by Natives on British Subjects, and other matters which have been under inquiry during the year 1886 . . ." [Q.S.A. GOV/N 5, page 113].
22. Staff-Surgeon W. R. Berretzen to Captain A. T. Brooke of H.M.S. "Opal", 7 May 1886; enclosure no. 6 in Captain Brooke's despatch of 8 May 1886 to Rear-Admiral Tryon [Q.S.A. GOV/N 5, page 114].
23. R. B. Comins to Captain A. T. Brooke, 7 May 1886; enclosure no. 5 in Captain Brooke's despatch of 8 May 1886 to Rear-Admiral Tryon [Q.S.A. GOV/N 5, page 114].
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26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Maryborough Chronicle, 3 June 1886.
33. Rear-Admiral Tryon to J. B. Thurston, Assistant High Commissioner, Fiji, 3 July 1886 [Q.S.A. GOV/N 5, pp. 122-123].
34. Maryborough Chronicle, 28 Sep 1886.
36. Arthur Woodward, Pacific Island Labour Branch to Under Colonial Secretary, 8 June 1886 [Q.S.A. COL/A 468, in-letter no. 4371 of 1886].
38. Ibid.
39. The Brisbane Courier, 26 July 1886; enclosure in A. Woodward's despatch of 6 Aug 1886 to the Under Colonial Secretary [Q.S.A. COL/A 491, in-letter no. 1535 of 1887].
40. The Brisbane Courier, 31 July - 6 Aug 1886 [Q.S.A. COL/A 491, in-letter no. 1535 of 1887].
42. C. St. John David to W. H. Ryder, Under Colonial Secretary, 31 Aug 1886 [Q.S.A. COL/A 491, in-letter no. 1535 of 1887].
43. Maryborough Chronicle, 13 Sep 1886.
44. See, however, a statement made in H. Holthouse. — *Cannibal cargoes*. Adelaide, Rigby, 1969, p. 219. Holthouse says a raft drifted ashore at Hinchenbrook [sic] island and was found by Aborigines. It had had two black men on board, one of whom died almost at once, and the other escaped into the scrub, where he died shortly afterwards. The implication is that these men and their raft came from the “Young Dick”. No authority is given.
45. Pennefather to Under Secretary, Treasury, 15 Oct 1886. [Q.S.A. COL/A 491, in-letter 1535 of 1887].
46. Captain F. S. Clayton to Rear-Admiral Tryon, 13 Nov 1886 [Q.S.A. GOV/N 5, page 146].
47. Sir S. W. Griffith's minute of 17 Jan 1887 on Rear-Admiral Tryon's despatch of 10 Jan 1887 to Sir A. Musgrave [Q.S.A. GOV/N 4, ff. 1-2].
48. G. Oertzen, Imperial German Commissioner, Matupi, to Sir A. Musgrave, 18 Jan 1887 [Q.S.A. GOV/N 4, ff. 83-4].
49. James Dickson's minute of 23 Feb 1887 on Oertzen's despatch of 18 Jan 1887 to Sir A. Musgrave [Q.S.A. GOV/N 4, folio 83].
50. List of islanders aboard the “Young Dick” when she was lost, compiled by A. Woodward, Pacific Island Labour Branch, 11 Jan 1887 [Q.S.A. COL/A 491, in-letter no. 1535 of 1887].