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PART TWO

QUEENSLAND'S EXPANDING FRONTIERS

THE STORY OF A CENTURY OF PROGRESS

"And now, Gentlemen, let me announce a fact which I know you will all hear with delight—Queensland, the name selected for this new Colony, was entirely the happy thought and inspiration of Her Majesty herself! Other designations had been suggested to Her; but the Queen spontaneously determined to confer Her own Royal Title on this new province of Her Empire. It should assuredly then be the constant aim of us all to show ourselves not undeserving of this signal mark of the favour and sympathy of our Sovereign."

From the Reply of SIR GEORGE BOWEN, K.C.M.G., first Governor of Queensland, to the Address of Welcome by the people of Queensland, 12 December 1859.
Text Figure 11 (a, b, c, d, e, f).

(a) "New South Wales" and New Holland in 1788.

(b) AUSTRALIA in 1830.

(c) AUSTRALIA in 1853.

(d) Abortive Boundaries.

(e) AUSTRALIA in 1859.

(f) AUSTRALIA in 1863.
CHAPTER XV

ESTABLISHING TITLE EFFECTIVELY

The Geographical Frontier

At the date of the first settlement under Governor Phillip, “New South Wales” extended from the north tip of Cape York peninsula (Queensland) to the south toe of Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) and, westerly, to the 135th meridian of east longitude. West of this any land was called “New Holland” and an inchoate title, in virtue of its discoverers, might have been claimed by the Dutch: it was, therefore, deliberately not annexed. Moreover, it was not certain whether there was a strait or perhaps a series of rivers in the bottom of the Gulf of Carpentaria continuing through an inland sea to the south, somewhere between the eastern end of the Great Australian bight and the western shore of Van Diemen’s Land. That southern stretch of Australia’s coastline was still entirely unknown.

Flinders’ voyages completely established the coastline (1798-1803) and in 1825 Van Diemen’s Land was separated from “New South Wales” and became a separate colony. It was not officially named “Tasmania” till 1853, though the name “Australia” was adopted for the whole continent in 1824.

For “fear of the French” the boundary of “New South Wales” was shifted westward in 1824-27 to 129° E. and all Australia was annexed in 1829, any claim of any other nation whatsoever being dismissed. Western Australia thus originated in 1829. (See Text Fig. 11(b)—“Australia in 1830.”)

In 1836, South Australia was cut out of “New South Wales” and in 1851, Victoria. Wedged between the mainland colonies of Western and South Australia was a long tongue of land from “New South Wales,” and when Queensland was separated in 1859, the northern piece of “New South Wales” (710,040 sq. miles in area) was cut from its parent colony and left isolated. (See Text Fig. 11(c).) Though technically part of that colony, it was no longer in geographical contact with any effectively governed area of it, and the question arose: Was it to be added to South Australia or Queensland, which both now bordered it, or to be made a separate colony? It was as large as France and Germany combined; its capacities and nature were unknown; it appeared incapable, on
consideration of a separate political existence; but—it was no time to leave any land apparently without any established framework of local administration. Finally, the Imperial Government, upon whom it might be thrown in default of a willing owner, had no desire to be burdened with an unexplored and unprofitable area for remote control, when active colonies were operating round it on three sides, and its naked fourth side was the sea-boundary between Australia and Indonesia. The Imperial Government, indeed, after the establishment of responsible self-government in most of Australia (1855-59) was withdrawing from the control of local affairs as rapidly as possible.

Queensland recognised the importance of securing part of the southern shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria, including the “only good harbour there” (see page 85) upon Sweer’s Island; and A. C. Gregory, the explorer who was also, at that time, Surveyor-General for Queensland, pointed out that the boundary at 141° E. longitude excluded Queensland from the “Plains of Promise,” described from the north by Stokes and from the east and south by Leichhardt. (See pages 86 and 123.)

There had been various proposals to establish new colonies from the time of Dr. Lang’s four eastern sections (see page 101), up to Gregory’s time.

Gladstone’s colony of “North Australia” had proved abortive in 1847, just as Lang’s “Cooksland” had. Gregory now proposed that Queensland should push its boundary westward as mentioned above, and that from a point about midway along the south shore of the Gulf, a new Colony of “Albert” (a convict colony, perhaps) should stretch west to the de Grey River, with a capital on the Victoria River, roughly its coastal midpoint. The Duke of Newcastle, for Great Britain, readily assented, provided Queensland would assume responsibility for the baby colony until it could stand on its own feet, and run unaided. Queensland viewed this proviso with consternation; Western Australia, which stood to lose a large amount of unused land, seemed doubtful whether to assent, dissent, or ignore the proposal; South Australia was up in arms at the suggestion of the transfer to Queensland of land newly explored by McDouall Stuart (though one might have raised, in this regard, Gregory’s much superior claims as the explorer of much of the area involved).

While the matter was being debated, McDouall Stuart returned from his last overland trip (Adelaide to Port Darwin) on 17 December 1862, with a report that glorified the area and inflamed South Australia’s itch for possession.

Already in 1862 Queensland’s boundary (on a request of the Parliament of Queensland in 1860) had been moved westward to the 138th parallel of east longitude, thus annexing to Queensland, without obligation, 120,000 sq. miles which include part of the Barkly Tableland, a fine belt of fat pastures, and the Burketown and Mt. Isa areas, the last being the site of remarkably rich mineral deposits unsuspected at that time. This was in compensation for the grant to South Australia of a narrow strip of about 70,000 sq. miles between that colony and Western Australia which proved to be less both in value and extent.

What is now the “Northern Territory” remained, and Dr. Sir Charles Nicholson, the Speaker of the Queensland Parliament, suggested in July 1862 that it be annexed “temporarily” to Queensland. Again the Colonial Office countered with the provision that the colony taking it over must be prepared to undertake the financial responsibility involved. In August 1862 it was obvious that it would be necessary to adopt some measures promptly to confer protection and to ensure and enforce order among the squatters who were infiltrating the area in advance of settlement.

There was a reluctance on the part of the Colonial Office to undertake the “expense, risk and inconvenience” of establishing a “tropical colony.” They therefore welcomed the eager application of Sir Dominick Daly, Governor of South Australia, following his receipt of the reports of Stuart. He asserted that the pastoral and other possibilities of the areas were so important and so well recognised that “applications have been forwarded to my Government by stockholders of this province with a view to secure the earliest claims to parts of the pastoral lands which have thus recently been made known on the Victoria River and (in) Arnhem’s Land.”

It was soon announced (26 May 1863) that letters patent would issue, annexing the Territory to South Australia “until we think fit to make other disposition thereof”; and Queensland’s application for a similar “temporary” administrative control was overpassed, without undue heart-burning on the part of this cautious colony.

South Australia at once arranged to set up an official cadre to undertake control, and, after the usual process of trial and error (101) at the Victoria River (Gregory’s suggested site for a capital, and Escape Cliffs at Adam’s Bay (where a fiasco led to the recall of Finnis, the first Government Resident), a site on Pt. Darwin was selected and a township called Palmerston was surveyed. The name, however, never gained popular usage: “Port Darwin” it remained, and, when in 1911 the Territory was ceded by South Australia to Victoria River and (in) Arnhem’s Land.”

(101) The Pt. Essington site (1838-49) to which the Bathurst Is. station had been removed—the north-central point of the coast of the Territory—was abandoned in 1849-50 and was not further considered, perhaps for that reason. It had many points to commend it.
the Commonwealth, it was formally renamed “Darwin.” South Australia’s outstanding achievement was the construction of the overland telegraph line from the Adelaide end to Darwin (completed in 1872), thus linking Australia by its connection with the submarine cable to Banjoewangi in Indonesia, and so to Singapore and thence to all the East. The colony of South Australia bore the cost of administration of the Northern Territory for forty-eight years, building up a debt, ultimately, of £3,431,000 on projects that languished for lack of capital, lack of interest and lack of willing or efficient labour.

The Commonwealth, as the price of the cession, took over the debt, and further agreed to complete the railway line from Oodnadatta in South Australia to Darwin itself. Parts of the railway from the south, north to Alice Springs, and from the north 311 miles south (to Birdum), exist, but the promise was never honoured. Linkage from Queensland, through Camooweal, to connect and open up the Barkly Tableland, and the vast ore deposits of the area, never attracted anything but marginal attention from Canberra, until World War II demonstrated their poverty of planning.

In the urgent moment of imminent disaster, after the bombing of Darwin and Broome by the Japanese in the first quarter of 1942, frantic efforts (largely American-aided) established highways along both routes in a few months. The mineral discoveries at Mt. Isa and Mary Kathleen (in Queensland), and Rum Jungle and elsewhere (in the Northern Territory and northern South Australia), have attracted English and American capital, which may serve to redress the balance in these areas, where the problems of the pioneers of to-day are as critical as were those of their forefathers of a century ago, when “outback” Queensland was within a hundred miles of Brisbane, and the “far north” of South Australia was the head of Spencer’s Gulf!

Queensland was the last “New Colony” to be established in Australia; it is a century since it was proclaimed on 10 December 1859: the clamour for “New States” has risen at intervals to an occasional crescendo and never wholly dies, but this has never affected the imperturbable urbanity of the representatives of the six foundation States of the Commonwealth.

Frustrated Again in the Tropics

One territorial adventure on the part of Queensland profoundly upset the urbanity of the British Colonial Office, however, in 1883. This was the annexation of all New Guinea except that claimed by the Dutch—a statesmanlike concept that proved abortive. Various
“That Great Britain is the nation best fitted for the work of colonising New Guinea; and that the annexation of the territory not yet occupied by a foreign power is desirable in the interests of the whole Empire, as well as that of Her Majesty's Australian dominions—especially in view of the recent establishment of steam communication between the colonies, the East, and the Mother Country, by way of Torres Straits.”

These mail steamers were the result, almost solely, of the efforts of the Government of Queensland. Torres Straits seemed destined to become one of the world's great maritime highways. Though public opinion in Australia was strongly in favour of annexation the Governors of New South Wales and Victoria reported adversely. The Government of New South Wales, however, rejected the view of its Governor and urged the immediate annexation:

"not only of the magnificent island of New Guinea but of the islands of New Britain, New Ireland, and the chain of islands to the north-east and east of New Guinea from Bougainville Is. to San Cristoval, the south-easternmost of the Solomon Group; the group of the New Hebrides, including Espiritu Santo, Malicolo and Sandwich; with the smaller adjoining islands; and the Marshall, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, to all of which the traffic from the port of Sydney extends."

This was going to extremes, perhaps, but there was, indeed, proceeding a definite race for spheres of influence in the Pacific. France had annexed Tahiti, New Caledonia, and also the Loyalty Islands (which British missionaries had pacified*); Germany was hungrily watching for opportunity and was obviously interested in New Guinea; others—even Russia—were rumoured to be seeking areas of control among the uncommitted and anarchic native races.

Lord Carnarvon was adamant, however, and with some reason: Reluctantly and under great pressure from Australia and New Zealand Great Britain had established a protectorate over Fiji, but the colonies had refused to contribute towards maintaining a High Commissioner for the Pacific and this was keenly resented by the Home Government. Carnarvon had said:

"It must be obvious that the future of these islands is of the most direct and material importance to the Colonies of Australasia, while it would be impossible for a very large proportion of the taxpayers of this country (United Kingdom) to understand on what principle they should bear while the Colonies immediately concerned should be exempted from the burden of any expenditure that may be incurred in connection with such places.” He was quite justified in that attitude. (102)

He did not shut the door against annexation, but he flatly refused to annex and to bear the costs also. On the other hand, he did not

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* On an official visit there in 1929, the Editor was provided with an interpreter to question natives and translate their answers from the native tongue into French. The interpretation proved unnecessary—the language was “pidgin” English.


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SIR GEORGE FERGUSON BOWEN
(First Governor of Queensland)

PLATE XXIX. (Courtesy Parliamentary Library.)
The first Banknote printed by the Bank of New South Wales in Queensland. It was printed on 1 May 1852 and is signed by two local Directors of the Bank, Mr. R. J. Coley and Mr. D. C. McConnell.

(Courtesy of the Bank of New South Wales.)

The first of the Queensland Treasury Notes.

(Courtesy of the Dept. of the Treasury, Qld.)
propose to admit the Colonies to any control of the government of
any area annexed, believing the benefits of trade and protection
they would secure would be a sufficient reward for their subsidies.

Events provoked the issue—white men entered New Guinea as
traders, gold-seekers, and missionaries. There were murders,
reprisals, “blackbirding” and other incidents; the Police Magistrate
at Thursday Island was made a deputy commissioner under the
High Commissioner for the Pacific (in Fiji), which, perhaps, halved
his loyalties but did not affect his actual powers, since the High
Commissioner had no legal status in New Guinea. Suddenly, it was
decided to send a warship to Pt. Moresby—the first active interven-
tion by the United Kingdom, and H.M.S. “Sappho” arrived there
17 June 1878. The government of Queensland had not awaited action
by England, but had already (21 November 1877) sent H. M.
Chester to report and to discuss matters with W. B. Ingham, who
occupied an anomalous position as “confidential agent” at Port
Moresby, maintaining order; requiring persons purchasing land
from natives to register the same with him and reporting on mining,
agriculture, etc. The High Commissioner in distant Fiji naturally
resented these inroads upon his purported authority and vigorously
criticised Queensland. He said:

“It is clear from Mr. Ingham’s report . . . that a practical though
informal assumption of control over the country is going on. He
holds courts; he punishes natives; he parades an armed force; he
registers land titles. . . . These proceedings can have but one issue;
and the sooner all these matters are taken in hand in a regular manner
the less will be the ultimate embarrassment and expense.”

The question languished, the colonies made no offer of funds to
meet the costs of establishing a government there, and there was a
lull of several years.

At the end of 1882, however, F. P. Labilliere revived his earlier
suggestion of immediate action to forestall Germany, whose trading
companies were expanding rapidly, and were being secretly encour-
aged by the German government. Lord Derby, who was now the
Minister (for the “Liberal” government in power), saw no reason
to suspect that Germany proposed to steal a march on the British—
indeed, that simple bovine soul asked Bismarck, the “Iron Chan-
cellor,” whether he was being two-faced, and was suitably soothed
with sugared assurances. He was, therefore, faintly contemptuous of
the representations which Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the Premier of
Queensland, put forward, as matters of extreme urgency, on 26
February 1883, asserting that things had changed very greatly in
five years; that Torres Straits was now an international highway of
commerce largely as the result of the enterprise of Queensland which
had extended telegraphic communication to Thursday Island; estab-
lished a regular mail service with India and so to Europe and a mail service into the Gulf as far as Normanton by steamer; and had ordered a gunboat to be stationed in the north and in contact with the British naval and coaling depot near Thursday Island. (It was also proposed at that time to link the Gulf by railroad at Point Parker, with Brisbane.) Finally, Sir Thomas added “. . . in the event of the Imperial Government deciding upon the annexation of New Guinea to Queensland, this Government would be prepared to recommend Parliament to grant the necessary appropriation for defraying the cost of settlement, and maintaining, if necessary, an armed force for the defence of the settlers—in this way meeting the objection which more than any other, seems to have determined Her Majesty’s Government against taking action in the matter at the period of the previous correspondence.” He telegraphed corresponding instructions the same day to the Agent-General for Queensland (T. Archer) and asked for a cabled response.

On 15 March 1883, pending a reply, and knowing that the German corvette “Carola” was on the point of leaving Sydney to annex various islands (she actually left on 18 March), the Executive Council of Queensland agreed to send an officer to New Guinea to annex as soon as authority was granted, but on 20th, hearing that the “Carola” had sailed north, H. M. Chester was ordered to man the “Pearl,” and to establish a preferential claim to New Guinea. On 3 April 1883 he arrived at Port Moresby and, next day, formally proclaimed:

“I, Henry Majoribanks Chester, resident magistrate at Thursday Island in the Colony of Queensland, acting under instructions from the Government of the said Colony, do hereby take possession of all that portion of New Guinea and the islands and islets adjacent thereto, lying between the 141st and 155th meridians of East Longitude, in the name and on behalf of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors. In token whereof, I have hoisted and saluted the British flag at Port Moresby, in New Guinea, this fourth day of April, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and eighty-three. God Save the Queen!

The cat was definitely among the pigeons: Lord Derby, a lion in the study, a mouse in international contacts, angrily demanded a ‘telegraphic explanation’; Bismarck, shrewdly estimating the situation, prepared to annex the north of New Guinea and the adjacent great islands of New Britain and New Ireland (“the Bismarck Archipelago”) and the Solomon Islands, if Great Britain wavered; the Royal Colonial Institute and the Agent-Generals of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia strongly supported Queensland’s action and begged England to confirm it; the newspapers generally felt that: “it is not likely that the Home Government will order the flag, once hoisted, to be hauled down”; and Derby himself told Archer that the British Cabinet “would doubtless wish to arrange the matter in accordance with the wishes of the Colonies.”

Every second or third generation, an apologetic policy of appease-ment rots the fabric of the nation’s aspirations; it was disguised as “liberalism” a century ago; and “socialism,” “anti-imperialism,” or some other “ism” in our time, in the supposed service of co-existence; but, in reality, it is the policy of surrender natural to inept men without the courage to lead.

The “Little Englanders” of 1883 showed that total disregard of the loyalty due to their colonial colleagues and to their local experience, and, on the other hand, that anxious servility to safeguard the dignity of foreign governments, that characterise this phase of inferiority.

Lord Derby, with the breath of Bismarck on his neck, said in the House of Lords on 2 July 1883 that it would be apparent that: “. . . our responsibilities are already heavy enough; that our possessions, scattered as they are, over every part of the world, are sufficient to require the utmost care and vigilance, and that it is not desirable to increase either the one or the other . . . It cannot be denied that questions of this kind are questions on which the Imperial government ought to have, as it actually has, a controlling power . . . If, therefore, the Queensland authorities did not apply for leave it can only be in consequence of their entertaining decided and, perhaps, reasonable apprehension that the sanction they asked for, would not be granted . . . In the case in question, the government of Queensland had no legal authority to make the annexation and legally, the action of the Governor of Queensland . . . has left things where they were.”

The deliberate suppression by Derby of the fact that Queensland had applied for leave most urgently, and had asked for a reply by cable but had waited for it in vain, has made this incident a matter for contempt, but it did not alter the situation—the annexation was disallowed and Mr. Gladstone, of the “North Australia” fiasco, was, appropriately enough, the person who announced this decision to the House of Commons and the nation, the same day.

Lord Derby’s synthetic surprise and indignation at Queensland’s action were quite unjustifiable: Sir Thomas McLlwraith’s urgent cable accompanying the request for permission to annex (26 Feb. 1883) had concluded: “Queensland will bear expense of Government and take formal possession on receipt of Imperial authority by cable.” Derby had not given permission to annex, but he had sent no direction to refrain from annexation which was effected on 4 April 1883. The disallowance of 2 July 1883 was received in Australia with astonishment and indignation, which rose to fury when it appeared, as it soon did, that Bismarck, who had outwitted Derby in negotiations regarding vast territories in the south of the African continent, had outwitted him, too, regarding New Guinea.

Within a few months Derby was desperately trying to “save face” by establishing a protectorate over the south coast of South-East New Guinea, to offset the suave representations by Germany that “the wish of the Australian colonies to settle on the side of New Guinea
opposite to Australia... was perfectly natural... but... there are parts of the wild country on the north... which might be a field for German enterprise.

Strangely enough, this was to lead to the federation of the Australian colonies as a Commonwealth!

The Annexation of British New Guinea; the Vindication of Queensland; and the Genesis of the Commonwealth of Australia:

In the course of discussion, Lord Derby had voiced a suggestion—doubtless originating from some abler mind—that was to enliven what had been for many years a half-formed objective. He said:

"If the Australian people desire an extension beyond their present limits, the most practical step that they could take, and one which will most facilitate any operation of that kind and diminish, in the greatest degree, the responsibilities of the Mother Country, would be the confederation of those colonies in one united whole, which would be powerful enough to undertake and to carry through tasks for which no one colony is at present sufficient."

It was the first seed of federation that survived the stony soil of intercolonial jealousies and it was Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the Premier of Queensland, who was to plant it, in the following year.

From the defeat and frustration of Queensland's aspirations in the tropics grew the ultimate annexation of Papua (British New Guinea 1883); the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia by the Federation of the colonies (1901); and, thirty years, almost to the day, after Germany was informed (September 1884) of the establishment of a protectorate over South-East New Guinea, the capture of German New Guinea (the north-east section) by the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (September 1914).

Trivial incidents often have great and unexpected sequels.

Queensland had no intention of abandoning her ambitions in New Guinea. If Derby now desired Australia to speak with a single voice on subjects of diplomatic significance, perhaps that could be arranged. The New Guinea incident illustrated the need and provided the justification for Federation. A fortnight after the rejection of his annexation (17 July 1883) the Executive Council of Queensland considered a memorandum in which, inter alia, recognising that the colonies could not federate without the consent of the Imperial Government, McIlwraith said:

"I suggest that a convention of delegates should be held to discuss the basis upon which a federal government could be constituted... a form of government" (similar to that of Canada) "adapted to the special requirements of Australia would give life to national aspirations here, without repressing the autonomous governments of the respective colonies," and, that the united voice of the colonies should ask the Imperial authorities "to move in the direction of providing for a form of federal government suitable for the Australian Colonies."

The Council circularized the Colonies, and they met in Sydney on 28 November 1883.

Meanwhile Sir Thomas McIlwraith had insisted that the Premier of Victoria (Mr. J. Service) should convene the conference, and the latter finally consented to do so, though he said (truly enough) that the honour rightly belonged to Sir Thomas.

In his preliminary circulars Mr. Service, opening the matter, said:

"At the special request of Sir Thomas McIlwraith, Premier of Queensland, I have consented to act in the capacity of convener of the proposed assembly," and later, inviting delegates, to the convention, added: "which Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the Premier of Queensland, proposed should be held, to discuss the two questions of annexation of adjacent islands and the federation of the Australian colonies." (103)

The convention emphatically urged Lord Derby to revise his decision concerning New Guinea, and stated that any further acquisition of dominion in the Pacific south of the Equator, by any foreign power, would be "highly detrimental to the safety and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia, and injurious to the interests of the Empire." It advocated the annexation of all Eastern New Guinea; and negotiation with France to obtain control of the New Hebrides; while to meet the one matter that seemed to interest Derby, it proposed a fair and reasonable allocation of costs among the colonies. It strongly protested, also, against the establishment of further colonies of convicts near these shores in the New Hebrides or New Guinea (as was contemplated by France—274 convicts were known to have escaped from New Caledonia to Australia between 1874 and 1883, besides those unrecorded, and France in July 1883 refused to apply for extradition of escapees). Finally, it recommended the creation of a Federal Council for Australasia, which was ultimately the basis for the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901.

British New Guinea (Papua)

As a preliminary to a reversal of his decision of 2 July 1883, Derby now proposed that there should be "a High Commissioner, or at least a Deputy Commissioner, with large powers of independent action, stationed on or near the eastern coast of New Guinea," and

(103) McIlwraith knew that Service was much more popular at the Imperial Ministry for the Colonies than he was. Sir John Quick and Sir Robert Garran in their commentary on the Commonwealth Constitution show the usual bedazzlement of the Victorian looking north into the sunglare. They wrote: "The Executive Council of Queensland on July 17, 1883, resolved that the Home Government should be invited to move in the direction of a federal union. What was wanted, however, was not Imperial action, but Australian action; and Mr. James Service... took the more practical step of urging an inter-colonial conference." This sneer is wholly unjustified and inexcusable. The distinguished jurists must have been aware that no federation was possible without an act of the Imperial parliament. McIlwraith lost office on 9 Nov. 1883 and the new Premier S. W. (later Sir Samuel) Griffith represented Queensland at the Conference three weeks later.
that immediate steps that way would be taken “if one or more colonies will secure to Her Majesty’s Government a sum of (say) £15,000 during the year ending 1 June 1885.” To make a long story shorter, Queensland and Victoria were each prepared to guarantee the whole amount and said so. At this moment, Germany (8 August 1884) confessed coyly to an interest in New Guinea, and Lord Granville was inept enough to answer that British authority would shortly be extended to New Guinea but only to that part “which specially interests the Australian colonies.” A belated attempt to extend the area north was met by a diplomatic protest on 29 September. On 8 October, Derby surrendered again, and withdrew altogether from the fertile north and north-east coasts. His “hesitation waltz” was repeated at this side and both Commodore Erskine at Sydney and Mr. H. H. Romilly at Cooktown were advised to take steps to annex the south coast. Romilly did so on 23 October 1884; Erskine arriving at Port Moresby on 2 November 1884, and finding himself forestalled, repeated the proclamation on 6th; and did so at eight other places along the coast, returning to Sydney on 2 December.

On 6 December, Erskine was instructed to go back and annex the d’Entrecasteaux Gp., an afterthought of Derby’s dilatory mind. The Germans, meanwhile, with the “Elizabeth,” “Marie” and “Hyaene,” were busily planting their flag all over the north coast and the widespread archipelago as far as the Solomon Is., and made their claim good, in spite of urgent telegrams from London on 21 and 22 December to Erskine, to proclaim a protectorate as far north as the Huon Gulf and to include the Louisiades and Woodlark Is. The telegram ended with the words: “Despatch is necessary,” which caused sardonic laughter in Sydney and Brisbane. Derby’s pusillanimous and vacillating policy had aroused a general scorn both of his force and his sincerity, and Germany naturally enough took advantage of his weakness.

Lord Granville, for Derby, hastened to assure Bismarck that, in extending the area of the British protectorate northerly, there had been no wish to encroach “beyond the German boundary” (!) and eagerly added (16 March 1885) that the United Kingdom would be content to come south to 8° S., instead of 7° S. On 25 April he humbly pointed out that the new line he proposed would give Germany 67,000 square miles of territory and the United Kingdom 63,000 and Bismarck, doubtless secretly astonished at this easy increment, acquiesced. Thus was established “Deutsch Neu-Guinea”, which, in World War I, was captured by Australian troops and, later, allotted by the League of Nations to Australia under mandate.

In World War II, it was overrun by the Japanese, was the scene of various barbaric atrocities, and was recaptured by Australian-American troops. It was allotted again to Australia as a “trust territory” by the United Nations after the war, and is now (1959) administered in conjunction with the Territory of Papua jointly, as the “Territory of Papua and New Guinea.”

The great island of New Guinea after 1884-5 consisted, therefore, of three large sections: Dutch New Guinea (West Irian), the western half; and, on the east, the north-east sector with its great archipelago—German New Guinea (Deutsch Neu-Guinea); and British New Guinea (Papua) with its south-easterly chains of islands as far as Woodlark Island.

British New Guinea, once established as a protectorate, required a government. On 20 November 1884, Major-General (later Sir) Peter H. Scratchley was appointed as Special Commissioner and arrived at Port Moresby, after various delays, on 22 August 1885.‡ (Derby had also asked Queensland to assist in receiving offenders for trial and punishment.) All Australia was delighted to hear about that time that Derby had been succeeded by Colonel Stanley who, on 14 August 1885, addressed to all the Governors of the Australian colonies the following telegram:

“Her Majesty’s Government willing proclaim Queen’s sovereignty and to contribute to cost of New Guinea, if colonies agree to following arrangement: Colonies to contribute 15,000 per annum, and provide any further expenditure they may approve. Imperial contribution will be gift of suitable ship, costing, delivered at New Guinea, not less than £18,000. This offer made in full confidence your Government will, as soon as possible, obtain from Legislature, Act to secure permanently, annual proportion. On proclamation of sovereignty, Scratchley would have full Legislative powers and control over all nationalities.”

On 30 March 1886, S. W. Griffith proposed (on Queensland’s behalf) to the other Australian colonies that Queensland, because of its geographical proximity to New Guinea, should be entrusted with the necessary authority to supervise the expenditure of funds provided by all, and to see that the administration was conducted on principles approved by all. New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland agreed each to find £5,000 per annum, Queensland guaranteeing the whole sum.

At the Colonial Conference of 1887 a Draft Bill was adopted which embodied this arrangement for ten years. The actual administration of British New Guinea was left to the Government of Queensland; the administrator was to be guided by instructions he would receive from the Governor of Queensland (in Council) who had the power to disallow any item of proposed expenditure from submitted

‡ Scratchley made vigorous investigations and inspections, contracted the epidemic disease of that fever-ridden land, and died on the way to Sydney 2 December 1885. He was succeeded by John Douglas of Thursday Is.
estimates, etc. An appeal was to lie in civil cases (over £100) and in criminal cases (involving over three months' imprisonment) to the Supreme Court of Queensland. The arrangements made were probably unique, and, in fact, doubts were expressed (but were dispelled) as to their legality. The first administrator was William (later Sir William) MacGregor, M.D., C.M.G., of Fiji, whose commission was dated 9 June 1888.

He arrived at Port Moresby on 4 September 1888 and there, in the presence of Captain D. H. Bosanquet, who was later to become Governor of South Australia, McGregor (who was later to become Governor of Queensland) read the letters patent, and his Commission before the officers and men of H.M.S. "Opal," the European residents and 200 natives, and announced the establishment of the sovereignty of the Queen over "British New Guinea." (104)

It remained virtually a colony of the Colony of Queensland until Federation, after which, like the Northern Territory, it passed to the Commonwealth as a "territory"—the Territory of Papua.

As previously mentioned, the Territory of Papua (a possession) and the hybrid area of former German New Guinea (the trust Territory of New Guinea) are now administered as one, by the Commonwealth Department of Territories, Canberra, A.C.T.

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(104) The boundary of Dutch New Guinea was the 141st meridian of East Longitude: to have a better line defined geographically and to give Dutch officials access to territory occupied by dangerous tribes otherwise protected by difficult country; and, for the British, uninterrupted access to the upper waters of the Fly River. McGregor and the Dutch Resident at Ternate (Dutch East Indies) together proposed a modification of the frontier, which was adopted by the home Governments concerned on 1 July 1895 and has been unchanged since.