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ROCKHAMPTON DIVISION

Along the central coast, with an area of 39,051 square miles, and a population of 91,520 (47,285 males and 44,235 females), is the Rockhampton Division.

Primary industries in the Division account for almost 7 per cent. of the State’s primary production. This includes almost 17 per cent. of the mining production of the State, 11 per cent. of the dairy produce, 6 per cent. of the pastoral activities, and just over 3 per cent. of the agriculture.

The chief centre of agriculture is Banana Shire, with approximately 50 per cent., and Monto Shire, with 21 per cent. of the area under crop. (It is in this area that 81 per cent. of the Queensland cotton crop is picked.)

In recent years wheat has become an established crop, particularly in the Shires of Banana, Monto, and Taroom, the production representing over 3 per cent. of the State crop.

Other assets include 17 per cent. of the beef herds of the State, but the small percentage of sheep (0.5 per cent. of the State figure) reduces the pastoral section to the 7 per cent. mentioned above.

Coal production, to which the Callide open-cut is the largest contributor, is almost 17 per cent. of the State total, and the value of minerals (gold and copper in particular) represents 18 per cent. of the State total. The division produces just under 6 per cent. of the State’s factory wealth.

THE CITY OF ROCKHAMPTON

The only city in the area is Rockhampton (pop. 42,900). The economic capital of Central Queensland, it is situated thirty-eight miles up the Fitzroy River and lies just within the Tropic of Capricorn. The Canoona gold rush of 1858, although a failure, brought the first substantial addition to the population. In 1860 the municipality of Rockhampton was proclaimed. (The name suggested itself to Land Commissioner W. K. Wiseman and Charles Archer from the chain of rocks above the town reach, and Hampton, the
English village where Wiseman was born.) The discovery of gold and copper at Peak Downs in 1861 gave further impetus to Rockhampton’s development. Meanwhile, the permanent settlement of this vast and rich pastoral territory went steadily on as flocks and herds multiplied and were pushed west and still further west, over ranges and across wide plains, stretching for hundreds of miles. Rockhampton became the natural outlet of an enormous pastoral and agricultural region, producing cattle, sheep, pigs, grain, cotton, fodder, and fruit. Extensive mineral resources were revealed. Canoona, the first gold discovery, was followed by many others until the discovery of Mt. Morgan in 1882 brought world fame. Extensive coalfields lie within comparatively short distance of the city. These include the famous Blair Athol, Callide, Bluff, Baralaba and Styx fields. To the west lie the gem fields of Anakie.

The Fitzroy River is navigable for all coastal shipping, and regular shipping services from southern ports and overseas vessels reach Port Alma through which most of the export trade of the district flows.

Rockhampton’s greatest single enterprise is the Central Queensland Meat Export Co. Pty. Ltd.’s works at Lake’s Creek, one of the largest meat exporting and processing works in Australasia. The works, established in 1871, cover a large area and extend for half a mile on the northern bank of the Fitzroy River.

The Koomagal fruit cannery processes pineapples and papaws grown in the district. Other industrial activities include the Glenmore cotton gin and brickyard, pottery, engineering, soap, and concrete tile works, and factories for the manufacture of furniture, bacon and hams, ice cream and biscuits.

THE TOWN OF GLADSTONE

Gladstone (pop. 7,000) is the only municipality in the Rockhampton division. On the shores of Port Curtis, a land-locked harbour of great expanse and deep water, it is 328 miles north of Brisbane and 70 miles south of Rockhampton. Gladstone was declared a municipality in 1863. There are many fine cattle properties in the district.

In the late ’Sixties and ’Seventies there was considerable mining activity; gold was discovered at Calliope, Raglan, Cania, Kroombit. Copper mining on a large scale was carried on for many years at Many Peaks, sixty miles up the Boyne Valley. To-day, the grazing and dairying industries, with some farming, employ about 40 per cent. of the district’s working population, and support a large meatworks and butter factory in the town itself. The Gladstone meatworks (Swift Australian Co. Pty. Ltd.) employs more than 800 hands. The Port Curtis Co-operative Dairy Association Ltd. has butter factories at Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay, and centres in the Upper Burnett and Dawson Valley. Sawmilling is also an important industry.

SHIRES

There are eleven shires in the Rockhampton division.

MOUNT MORGAN (195 sq. miles, pop. 5,000). The headquarters of the shire are at Mount Morgan, noted for the famous gold and copper mine of Mount Morgan Ltd., which employs 82 per cent. of the working men of the shire. Mount Morgan on the Dee River, is twenty-three miles south-west of Rockhampton with which it is linked by rail. Cracoe, a township in the division, is second only to Mt. Morgan in gold production.

LIVINGSTONE (4,930 sq. miles, pop. 7,170). The principal activities in the shire are grazing, agriculture, fruitgrowing, including pineapples for canning, and coal mining (at Ogmore). Yeppoon, a noted seaside resort, is also the centre and railhead of the fruit-growing districts of Byfield and Fernborough.

BROADSOUND (7,140 sq. miles, pop. 1,550). St. Lawrence is the principal township. Before construction of the North Coast railway it was a coaching centre for north, south, and west, and much busier than it is to-day. There were then, several hotels, a meatworks and a brickworks. Recently Zebu cattle were introduced by the late C. W. Wright, owner of Waverley Station.

TAROOM (6,950 sq. miles, pop. 2,500) is a thriving cattle area, with sheep rearing carried on in dog-netted, cleared areas. Wandoan has the largest soldier settlement area in the State. Dairying and grain growing are also major industries.

BANANA Shire (5,995 sq. miles, pop. 3,700) has its centre at Biloela.

CENTRAL-WESTERN DIVISION

Situated roughly in the centre of the State, the Central-western Division occupies an area of 71,160 square miles, and supports a population of 22,890 (12,971 males and 9,919 females). Although primarily a pastoral division, the post-war period has seen attempts at agriculture in the area.

In 1948-49 the Queensland-British Food Corporation introduced large-scale sorghum cropping to the division, producing 58 per cent. (1,250,000 bushels) of the State crop during 1949-50 and reaching a peak in 1950-51 with 1,281,000 bushels (35 per cent. of the State figure). Since the cessation of activities of the Q.B.F.C. the sorghum production for the area now stands at 5 per cent. of the total for the State. Wheat production has also received an impetus following the lead set by the Q.B.F.C.

Although it may appear insignificant compared with the State, or even the Downs Division total, the Central West now averages about
6,000 acres per year under this crop. The pastoral industry makes the largest contribution to the wealth of the area. Sheep flocks in the area amount to almost 22 per cent. of the State total, while beef cattle numbers represent over 11 per cent. Seven per cent. of Queensland's coal production is also won in this division, the source being the Blair Athol district which possesses two large open-cut mines.

*The area has five towns with a population of 1,000 or over, all of which are of importance in supplying the pastoral districts, and providing them with rail links to Rockhampton. Barcaldine and Blackall are centres of the sheep district along the west of the division. Longreach and Emerald provide for sheep and cattle districts respectively; and Clermont caters for the cattle country of the Belyando Shire as well as the Blair Athol coal district.*

**THE SHIRE AND TOWN OF LONGREACH**

Longreach (9,080 sq. miles pop. 4,400) has the town of Longreach as the centre of the shire; it stands on the Thomson River, 428 miles from Rockhampton, and is named after a reach in the Thomson River. Longreach began, like many other Western towns, as a camping ground for teamsters who carried supplies to the stations and hauled their wool, meat, and tallow to the coast. It was connected by railway with Rockhampton in 1892. Longreach pioneered civil aviation in Australia through the well-known Qantas Imperial Airways, now an international organisation.

**OTHER SHIRES**

In addition to Longreach, there are ten other shires in the Division.

Barcaldine is centre of the Barcaldine Shire (3,255 sq. miles, pop. 2,300). It is on the main western line, 361 miles west of Rockhampton. Barcaldine, which was built on the old Barcaldine Downs Station (taken up in the early 'Sixties by Cameron and Crombie) came into being when the final thirty-two miles of railway from the Alice River to Barcaldine was opened on 8 November 1886. In 1891 Barcaldine was the principal centre of the great shearsers' strike.

Blackall (6,295 sq. miles, pop. 2,900). The town of Blackall is on a branch line from Jericho (360 miles from Rockhampton), which has its terminus at Yaraka. The town is situated on the Barcoo River, seventy-two miles from Jericho and is the centre of an extensive sheep-growing region.

Emerald (4,345 sq. miles, pop. 2,700). The town of Emerald, 166 miles west of Rockhampton on the central railway, is an important railway junction with branch lines to Capella, Clermont, and Blair Athol in the north-west and Springsure in the south. Sheep, cattle, and horses are the mainstay of the district, which, however, has a considerable agricultural potential.

Emerald is built on portion of the original Emerald Downs run which was taken up in the 'Sixties. In 1948 and subsequent years, Cullin-la-Ringo (119,000 acres), with other vast properties in the Capella-Emerald district, was the scene of a gigantic experiment by the Queensland-British Food Corporation in the growing of grain sorghum and pig raising. The scheme was terminated in 1953.

Peak Downs (3,090 sq. miles, pop. 900). The centre of the shire is Clermont, on Sandy Creek, 239 miles by rail from Rockhampton and 74 miles from Emerald. It grew as a township on Hood's Lagoon on old Retro Station in 1862.

The name Clermont was taken from Clermont in France, the birthplace of Oscar de Satge. Gold and copper were discovered in 1862 and Clermont, Copperfield, and other places in the Peak Downs region became for some years prosperous mining towns. Extensive coal deposits are located at Blair Athol, twelve miles from Clermont. Clermont was still a canvas town in 1863 when John T. Griffin was appointed Gold Commissioner for the Peak Downs mining district. Some years later, Griffin murdered (at the Mackenzie crossing) two troopers of the Clermont gold escort who were carrying notes and bullion. He was convicted of the offence, and was hanged at Rockhampton.

BAUHINIA (9,795 sq. miles, pop. 1,700). Its centre is Springsure, 207 miles by rail west of Rockhampton and 603 miles from Brisbane. Its history dates back to 1854 and the district contains many well-known pastoral properties, including Rainworth, Orion Downs, and Meteor Downs.

ARAMAC (8,970 sq. miles, pop. 1,610). The principal centre is Aramac township, which takes its name from an abbreviation of the name of the then Colonial Treasurer, later Premier, Sir R. R. Mackenzie.

The Aramac Council, as the result of a poll in February 1909, decided to construct its own railway from Barcaldine, a distance of forty miles, and borrowed £80,000 for materials, locomotives, and rolling stock. Construction of the line took two years and it was officially opened on 2 July 1913 at a cost of £1,800 per mile. The undertaking, known as the Aramac tramway, is unique in being the only privately operated railway in Queensland. In 1958 the Council carried out a big reconstruction programme, rebuilding bridges, resleepering, and purchasing a diesel locomotive.

**FAR WESTERN DIVISION**

Along the central-western border region, with an area of 108,875 square miles, lies the Far Western Division, supporting a population of 5,500 (3,436 males and 2,064 females). With one person to almost 20 square miles, this is the most sparsely populated area in the State.

This typical western division is wholly dependent on the pastoral industry for its wealth. Just over 10 per cent. of Queensland's sheep total is found in this area, while the beef cattle represent 6 per cent. of the State figure. The emphasis on beef cattle is more noticeable in the western part of the division (e.g. Diamantina Shire possesses no sheep at all) and particularly in the Channel Country—the stockfattening area.

The only town of any size in the division is Winton, in WINTON Shire (20,780 sq. miles, pop. 2,600). Being on the rail link between
the central and northern lines, it provides access to both Rock-
hampton and Townsville for the cattle and sheep districts it serves.

Winton is situated 110 miles by railway north-west of Longreach, and
537 miles from Rockhampton. It is the focal point of the great
western stations founded in the late 'Sixties and early 'Seventies of
last century—INDEX, Elderslie, Kynuna, Oondooroo, Manuka,
Sesbania, Cork and Warnambool. A township began at Pelican
Waterholes in 1875. In 1880 the name was changed to Winton. It
was at Robert McPherson's Dagworth Station, 80 miles from Win-
ton, that A. B. ("Banjo") Paterson in 1895 wrote "Waltzing
Matilda," which has become an unofficial Australian national anthem
and has the distinction of having (with so many other works) been
pirated in U.S.A.

MACKAY DIVISION

On the central coastal section of the State is the Mackay Division,
with a population of 44,700 (23,997 males and 20,703 females) and
the smallest area of any division—7,302 square miles. From this
area is derived just under 5 per cent. in value of Queensland's
primary production.

By far the most important contribution is from sugar, which
represents 32 per cent. of the State's area planted, and about 25
per cent. of the crop. The division possesses eight sugar mills,
strategically situated, and there are 1,300 sugar farmers in the
district.

The only other major item is beef cattle (notably in Nebo Shire),
representing just over 2 per cent. of the State figure. Secondary
industries of the Division (to which the sugar mills make a con-
siderable contribution) are responsible for over 3 per cent. of the
State's value of secondary production.

THE CITY OF MACKAY

Mackay, a beautiful and well-planned city, with wide tree-shaded
streets, is the centre of the largest sugar-growing region in the
Commonwealth, and stands on the banks of the Pioneer River,
598 miles north of Brisbane by rail. Including North Mackay, it
has a population of 18,500. The river was discovered by Captain
John Mackay in 1860.

In 1864 John Spiller planted the first crop of cane on the north
side of the river and, in 1867, erected a small wooden mill, driven by
a horse. He manufactured the first sugar produced in the Mackay
district by boiling the juice in a copper boiler. In 1868, J. E. Davidson
and T. H. Fitzgerald built an iron mill at Alexandria. Their crop
produced 110 tons of sugar. This was the real beginning of the
industry in Mackay.

In the 'Eighties there was an enormous development of the sugar
industry, many plantations and mills being established. Sugar was
formerly transported by lighters to coastal and oversea ships which
anchored at Flat Top Island. The construction of a deep water harbour
three miles north of the city was completed in 1941. The harbour is
equipped with bulk loading facilities for raw sugar. To-day it is the
port through which all the sugar produced by the Mackay district is
shipped. In a normal year over two million tons, or one-fourth of the
State's sugar output, is produced in the Mackay district.

Some of the finest beef cattle in Queensland are bred and reared
in the Mackay hinterland. Fat cattle raising and dairying are sec-
dary only to sugar cultivation. Tropical fruit-growing, fishing, coal
mining, and tourism are other firmly established industries.

In 1869 Mackay was proclaimed a municipality.

SHIRES

There are five shires in the Mackay Division. Principal town of
the SARINA Shire (510 sq. miles, pop. 4,000) is Sarina, twenty-
three miles by road from Mackay and on the main North Coast
railway, the "Sunshine Route." In 1880 the town, then known as
Plane Creek, formed part of Henry Bell's cattle station. In 1895
the Plane Creek sugar mill was erected at Sarina; this mill, and the
power alcohol distillery of the Australian National Power Alcohol
Company, are the main industries of the town. The distillery was the
first to be built in Australia (1927).

PROSERPINE Shire (1,020 sq. miles, pop. 4,300) has Proserpine
as its principal town, on the Proserpine River, between Bowen and
Mackay, 673 miles north of Brisbane. There is a sugar mill which
was acquired by the growers in 1931. Proserpine is the stepping-off
station for the island tourist resorts of Whitsunday Passage.

TOWNSVILLE DIVISION

Another eastern coastal division is Townsville, which covers an
area of 39,505 square miles, and supports a population of 78,750
(41,361 males and 37,389 females). The coastal plain is essentially
an agricultural area, the principal crop being sugar.

The division possesses four sugar mills, and although it covers
only 10 per cent. of the State area under cane, represents approxi-
mately 15 per cent. of the harvested crop. In the western areas the
beef cattle industry predominates, the herds grazed being 8 per cent.
of the State figure. The Collinsville area coalfields produce 10 per
cent. of Queensland's coal production. In the field of manufacture,
the division produces over 5 per cent. of the total value of secondary
production.

The cities in the division are Townsville and Charters Towers.

THE CITY OF TOWNSVILLE

Townsville, with a population of 43,000 (at 30 June 1957), is the
largest city in North Queensland, the State's second seaport, and the
economic capital of a vast region of pastoral, mineral and agricultural

country extending to the Northern Territory border.

It is situated on the shores of Cleveland Bay (named by Cook who

sailed into the Bay on 6 June 1770), at the mouth of the Ross River

(named for Andrew Ross), and is 832 miles north of Brisbane by

rail. Townsville is named after Captain Robert Towns, pastoralist and

and commercial magnate, who died in Sydney in 1873, but its true founder

was John Melton Black, general manager for Towns, who owned large

stations in North Queensland, including Inkerman, Woodstock, Victoria

and Carpentaria Downs. Towns had instructed Black to find a more

convenient site than Bowen for a port for the northern pastoralists.

In 1864 he built a wharf and woolstore. At the first sale of allot-

ments in the new township in July 1865, Black bought up several of

the best sites and fenced in an area of land at Ross River for a

boiling-down works. It became the forerunner of the present Ross

River meatworks, the first freezing works to be established in Queens-

land. By the end of 1866, less than three years after the arrival of

Ball and Reid, Townsville was a considerable township, with two banks,

several hotels and stores, and a newspaper.

Towns paid his only visit to the township in 1866.

Townsville was proclaimed a port of entry on 10 October 1865.

It had no natural advantages as a port and for many years ships

anchored in the lee of Magnetic Island and discharged their cargoes

into lighters. A fine, protected harbour is now provided by two

breakwaters enclosing an area of 150 acres.

Townsville is the outlet for sugar from the Burdekin River and

other districts, cattle from the Gulf Country, sheep and wool from

the north-western downs, and silver, lead, copper, and zinc from Mt.

Isa, 600 miles away. Cattle are treated for export at the large meat-

works at Ross River and Alligator Creek.

Important railway workshops are located at Townsville, and there

are several large industrial and manufacturing establishments, including

foundries and cement works. A large copper refinery for the treat-

ment of copper from Mt. Isa Mines Ltd. is being constructed to begin

operation in 1959.

During the Second World War, Townsville was a garrison town.

The magnificent aerodrome at Garbutt served many hundreds of war

planes. Many thousands of Australian and American troops were

camped in or near the city. Planes, engaged in the Battle of the Coral

Sea, shuttled to and from Townsville.

Townsville is connected by rail with Brisbane on the Sunshine

Route and is the terminal port for the Great Northern Railway

which runs westward through Charters Towers, Hughenden and

Cloncurry to Mt. Isa and other western centres.

THE CITY OF CHARTERS TOWERS

Charters Towers owes its foundation to the discovery of gold in

1871 and was named after W. S. Charters, the mining warden at

Ravenswood. In its golden days the city had a population of 30,000.

Several stations had been taken up in the Charters Towers district

before the discovery of gold, and the city stands on portion of old

Burdekin Downs Station. For thirty years Charters Towers was the

boom mining city of Queensland, reaching the peak of its fame in the

'Nineties. It was given the affectionate title of "The World" by its

proud citizens. The stampers thundered day and night grinding the

quartz to powder. It has been claimed that when the railway gates at

Queenston were closed to permit a train to go through, the ore drays

backed-up until they reached to the top of Gill Street, about half a

mile distant. During the lifetime of the field, gold valued at over £30

million was produced.

Charters Towers was created a municipality on 21 June 1877. In

1900 it was classed as the second city in Queensland. From 1906 to

1909, the field gradually declined in importance, but the "Towers"

has achieved success as a pastoral centre. Dairying, citrus fruits,

and tobacco growing are other industries. The city is also an impor-

tant educational centre, no fewer than six denominational schools

being established there, as well as the State High School and

primary schools.

Only four other centres in the division possess populations of

1,000 or over. Two of these are Ayr and Home Hill, which are "twin

towns," situated on opposite sides of the Burdekin River, now

spanned by the modern high-level bridge. These are milling centres

for the surrounding sugar districts. Other towns are Collinsville,

the centre of the coalfields and site of the State-operated coalmine,

and Bowen, with its meatworks and port, as well as the State's only

saltworks.

Ayr, named by Sir Thomas McIlwraith after his Scottish birth-

place, is on the north bank of the Burdekin River, fifty miles south

from Townsville and 782 miles north of Brisbane. The sugar

industry in the Lower Burdekin and Ayr district began in 1879.

There are three large sugar mills in the district, Pioneer (near Bran-

don), Kalamia (near Ayr), and Inkerman (near Home Hill). Home

Hill has grown rapidly since the Inkerman mill was erected in 1914.

Both Ayr and Home Hill are in the AYR Shire (1,930 sq. miles,
pop. 16,000).

Although sugar is the main product of the district, stock raising

and fattening, and the production of pineapples, potatoes, and

vegetables are important agricultural activities. The district owes much

of its prosperity to John Drysdale, an engineer, who came to the

Burdekin delta in 1887. He extended and improved the irrigation

system installed by his brother in 1884, and was the first to exploit

with success the spear system. A fine clock tower in the main street

of Ayr perpetuates his memory.

Settlement on the southern side of the Burdekin where the Inker-

man sugar mill was erected, in 1914, by Pioneer Sugar Mills Pty. Ltd.,
developed considerably after the Crown resumed portion of the Inker-

man Estate in 1910 and threw it open for selection. Thus the town of

Home Hill, only six miles from its larger and older twin, Ayr, came

into existence.
 Bowen (pop. 3,600), named after Queensland’s first Governor, is located on the shores of Port Denison, 713 miles north of Brisbane by rail. The harbour was discovered by Captain H. D. Sinclair on 27 September 1859, and the town was established on 12 April 1861. Bowen is an important shipping centre.

Bowen mangoes and tomatoes are celebrated products. Up to 800,000 cases of vegetables and fruit are exported annually; the area produces 30 per cent. of the total Queensland tomato crop and 80 per cent. of Queensland’s tomato exports. A State coal mine is operated at Collinsville, fifty miles by rail from Bowen, and a meatworks is established at Merinda, four miles from Bowen. A salt works provides 13,000 to 14,000 tons of salt annually by solar evaporation. A coke works produces 30,000 tons of coke yearly from Collinsville coal, mainly for Mt. Isa mines.

WANGARATTA (8,650 sq. miles, 5,000) has its shire headquarters in Bowen. In 1910 the Councils of Bowen and Wangaratta built, with loan money, the railway between Bowen and Proserpine which has since been taken over by the Government, and is part of the North Coast railway.

Cattle raising was originally the main industry of the district, but its roads were used by the teams of horses and bullocks to bring the wool from Bowen Downs and other Central Queensland stations to the port at Bowen. The gold from Ravenswood was also brought to Bowen over a bridge (long since disappeared), across the Burdekin at its junction with the Bogie River.

CAIRNS DIVISION

Cairns Division, with an area of 27,961 square miles and a population of 95,670 (53,005 males and 42,665 females) is situated on the eastern coast at the base of Cape York Peninsula. With more than 21 per cent. of the State’s agricultural production, the division is second only to the Downs Division.

Along the coastal strip it has 38 per cent. of the State’s sugar cultivation, producing about 41 per cent. of the State crop. Ten central mills are situated at strategic points along the coastal plain.

The plateau west of the coastal plain (in particular the Atherton Tableland) are also centres of extensive cropping. It is here that 54 per cent. of the State’s tobacco crop is produced, almost 16 per cent. of the peanuts, and, roughly, 26 per cent. of the maize.

The timber industry of the Cairns Division represents approximately 19 per cent. of the value of Queensland’s forestry production, and includes some of the finest cabinet timbers produced in Australia, viz. Queensland walnut, maple, silkwood, black bean, silky oak and silver ash. The division also produces almost 3 per cent. of the value of Queensland’s manufactured products.

Cairns, the northern terminus of the coastal railway, is the only city of the area.

BOWEN

THE CITY OF CAIRNS

Cairns (pop. 23,000) began as a Customs collection outpost eighty-three years ago. Following the discovery of gold on the Hodgkinson River by Mulligan’s party in 1876, mining townships of hundreds of tents and bark huts sprang into existence, the largest being Thornborough and Kingsborough.

It was soon realised that a port closer than Cooktown was needed. The trail was blazed in October 1876, when a pack-horse track was opened to Trinity Bay by William Smith and James Doyle, and on 1 November 1876 the Government established a settlement on the bay as a port for the Hodgkinson goldfield, which stretched from south of the Walsh River for more than sixty miles north to the Mitchell. The name of Cairns was given to the new settlement, after Queensland’s third governor, William Wellington Cairns.

The infant settlement was hacked out of what Sub-inspector Johnstone described in 1873 as “a swamp of mud and mangroves, and salt-water channels.” It had two serious rivals as the chief place for a settlement—Smithfield, on the Barron River at the foot of the range, and Port Douglas, founded in 1877. Smithfield was founded by Bill Smith, who had been transporting stores from Cooktown by mule team for the Hodgkinson miners. He received a reward of £500 offered by the Hodgkinson miners for finding a route over the ranges.

By the end of 1876, Smithfield was a wild, wide-open town of 150 people, where “Bill” Smith kept a hotel, and shops and a branch of the Q.N. Bank had opened. Money was made and spent freely, and for a time this was the real “Cairns.”

Within a year both Cairns and Smithfield were menaced by the rising star of Port Douglas, to which a trail had been blazed by Christy Palmerston in April 1877. A good dray road was constructed to the back country and practically all the gold and trade from the Hodgkinson drifted to Port Douglas. (Smithfield, which had been inundated by a flood in 1877, was destroyed in March 1879 by a tremendous flood in the Barron, which washed the town away.)

Colourful legends, most of them exaggerated, preserve the brief and turbulent history of Smithfield, which has been described by imaginative writers as “the wickedest town in Australia.” Smithfield was a typically lawless frontier town; incidentally Bill Smith and his partner Craig, the storekeeper, both came to a violent end.

In 1882-3 the sugar era commenced, and Cairns took on a new life.

Cairns became a city in 1923, and now it is one of Queensland’s most important ports. It draws its wealth principally from sugar-growing. Three sugar mills—Hambledon, Mulgrave, and Babinda—are located in the district, and almost 40,000 acres are under cane cultivation. Maize growing, mining, dairying, peanuts, tobacco, timber, grazing, fishing, and tropical fruits and vegetables are other important industries. These, together with the tourist trade, which caters for more than 40,000 people a year, make Cairns and district a very prosperous area.

Typical cane country towns are Babinda, Edmonton-Hambledon, Gordonvale, Mossman and Tully, all of which have central mills for...
crushing the crop of the surrounding districts. Atherton and Ravenshoe are the centres of the timber, maize-growing, dairying and pig-raising areas of the Atherton Tableland.

In approximately the same district, Herberton serves an area important for its tin mining and beef cattle, while Mareeba is the centre of the tobacco growing industry of the North. Ingham and Innisfail also serve the sugar-lands along the coastal plain. The area around Innisfail is noted for its high rainfall, being the wettest centre of the tobacco growing industry of the North.

Ravenshoe crushing the crop of the surrounding districts.

Innisfail is the site of the dredging activities of the Tableland Tin Dredging N.L., and is the supply centre for the grazing areas of the shire. Tully Falls, fifteen miles south of Ravenshoe, is served by a bitumen road. The Tully Falls hydro-electric scheme for the supply of electric power to the Cairns region was commissioned on 21 September 1957.

**HINCHINBROOK SHIRE**

Ingham (pop. 4,000), 67 miles north of Townsville and 399 miles from Brisbane, in the centre of the Herbert Valley, is the largest town in the HINCHINBROOK Shire (475 sq. miles, pop. 12,000).

The sugar industry began in the Herbert River district in 1870 when the Mackenzie Bros. selected their plantation, Gairloch, on the Herbert River. Sugar was made north of Townsville for the first time at Gairloch in 1872.

Dungeness, at the mouth of the river, now Lucinda Point, was the first port for the Lower Herbert. The town of Ingham, surveyed in 1878, was named after W. B. Ingham, a pioneer sugar planter who settled in the district in 1869.

In 1881 the C.S.R. Co. acquired land and erected the famous Victoria Mill, to-day the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. The company's two large mills, Victoria (near Ingham) and Macknade (near Halifax), deal with almost all the cane grown in the district.

The yearly value of the timber industry in the Herbert River district is about £40,000 from 4 million sup. ft. of log timber. The country to the west of Ingham is used for grazing, and the production of beef cattle.

Innisfail (pop. 6,649), at the junction of the North and South Johnstone Rivers, 989 miles north of Brisbane by rail, is the centre of one of the most important sugar-producing districts of the State—the Shire of JOHNSTONE (630 sq. miles, pop. 15,500).

Thomas Henry Fitzgerald, Colonial Treasurer in the Lilley Government, who had begun the growing of cane in the Mackay district in 1865, founded a company which took up about 10,000 acres on the Johnstone River. The first cane in the Innisfail estate was planted on 11 June 1880. The foundation-stone of the first mill was laid on 5 Aug. 1881. At its first crushing (9 November 1881 to 9 January 1882) 40 tons of sugar were produced. A town and port grew on the Johnstone River and was named Geraldton (later re-named Innisfail) in honour of this pioneer sugar grower in that portion of North Queensland. In 1882 the Goondi mill was established by the C.S.R. Co. To-day three large mills operate in the Innisfail district—Goondi, South Johnstone, and Mourilyan.

Mourilyan Harbour, named by Captain Moresby, after Lieut. Mourilyan, of H.M.S. Basilisk, is connected with Innisfail by rail. Other towns in the Johnstone Shire are El Arish, Silkwood, South Johnstone, Mourilyan, and Wangan. El Arish is the railhead for agricultural and fruit products from the rich Mission Bay farming area.

Mareeba, centre of the MAR EEBA Shire (20,355 sq. miles, pop. 7,900), is the oldest town on the Atherton Tableland. It had its origin eighty-two years ago when Granite Creek, site of the present
The first pastoralist on the Tableland was John Atherton, who in 1877 established Emerald End cattle station on the banks of the Barron River. The Tableland takes its name from this notable pioneer. Granite Creek developed as a camping and trading centre for the tin fossickers of the Tinaroo country, and miners and teamsters from the Hodgkinson and Palmer goldfields, and later the mineral fields of Herberton and Irvinebank. In 1893 Mareeba was connected with Cairns by rail. Mareeba received a new impetus with the great development of tobacco cultivation in the district. To-day, one-half of Queensland's tobacco production comes from the Mareeba district.

Kuranda, town of wide tourist fame, is a sawmilling centre.

The principal town in the MULGRAVE Shire (690 sq. miles, pop. 14,000) is Gordonvale, which was originally named Plain Camp.

Later it became known as Mulgrave, and the subsequent township was called Nelson, after Sir Hugh Nelson, Premier of Queensland (27 October 1893-13 April 1898). The name finally was changed to Gordonvale, named after John Gordon, a pioneer of the district. The Mulgrave Central Mill is located at Gordonvale.

**PENINSULA DIVISION**

Situated in the north of Queensland on Cape York Peninsula and incorporating the group of islands off the northernmost tip of the mainland, the Peninsula Division covers an area of 48,693½ square miles, and supports a population of 6,580 (3,296 males and 3,284 females)—one person to every 7.4 square miles—the second most sparsely populated area of the State.

Apart from a small amount of mining which comprises only an insignificant proportion of the State total, the main wealth of the area is derived from the fishing and beef cattle industries. The value of production of the fishing (which includes the pearling industry) in the area represents 25 per cent. of the State value. The beef herd amount to 1.6 per cent. of the Queensland total.

**Thursday Island** (1¼ sq. miles), on the island bearing the same name, is the principal town in the area. Historic Cooktown on the Endeavour River is the only other town. It is from Thursday Island that the fleets of the pearling industry operate. A new settlement is now growing at Weipa, where there are huge deposits of bauxite. An agreement has been signed between the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Ltd. for the development of the area. **Thursday Island** is thirty miles north of Cape York Peninsula, which makes it the most northern town in Australia; it is the natural supply base for the Torres Straits Islands.

It's official name is **Town of Port Kennedy**, but the popular name of Thursday Island has ousted it from usage and few would recognize it under that name. The Australian Encyclopaedia (p. 484) says: “After the mutiny on board the Bounty, Bligh sailed to Timor in her launch and passed through the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait in May 1789; he named many islands and bays, including Wednesday Island.” The naming of Thursday Island is a cartographical mystery. Captain Cook is thought by some to have named it so, but no record seems to exist. It has also been suggested it was named by P. P. King in his survey of 1819. Sunday Island was named by Bligh in 1792; but Thursday Island does not appear before the Admiralty Chart of 1850. The native name for the Island is “Waiben,” which translated means “waterless,” and it was for this reason that no tribe ever settled there. Europeans, Malays, other Asians, and Torres Strait Islanders comprise the population of 1,550.

European settlement dates from 1877, when the coaling station and port, formerly at Somerset (C. York), were transferred to Port Kennedy.

**Cooktown**, on the Endeavour River, discovered by Cook in 1770, has the most colourful past of any Queensland town. To-day its population consists of about 230 adults and 150 children. Cooktown was until recently the centre of the Cook Shire, the largest shire in Queensland and the second largest in the Commonwealth, containing 48,340 square miles. The local authority was abolished early in 1959 and the shire placed under the control of an administrator.

Cooktown is about 100 miles from Cairns, by sea and air, and 214 miles by road. The present population of the district is 1,300, comprising 500 whites and 800 natives. In its golden age, Cooktown was an opulent city with a population of 40,000 and some forty hotels in the main street. To-day, the once bustling Charlotte Street is lined with empty, decaying buildings, peopled with ghosts of the past.

The township of Laura is connected with Cooktown by diesel rail motor, road and air. **Coen**, 130 miles from Cooktown, is another small township. Industry in the Cook Shire is mainly limited to cattle raising.

**NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION**

As the name implies, the North-Western Division occupies the north-western corner of the State, and with an area of 146,760 square miles (the largest of any Statistical Division), it supports a population of 20,290 (12,201 males and 8,089 females); a density of one person for every 7.2 square miles.

The division ranks third in order of value of primary production in Queensland. This is mainly due to its minerals (copper, lead and zinc in particular) which constitute over half the primary wealth of the area, and represent about 79 per cent. of the State's production of these minerals.

The remaining contributions to the wealth of the area are derived mainly from the pastoral industry. Beef herds in the division amount to 20 per cent. of the State's beef cattle. While there are approximately only 12 per cent. of the total State sheep flocks in the North-Western Division, it possesses approximately 99.9 per cent. of all sheep above 22° S. lat., i.e. among the Divisions grouped together as: “North Queensland.” The manufactures of the area amount to 1.3 per cent. of the State total.

There are three towns with populations of 1,000 or more; largest of these is Mount Isa (pop. 7,500), terminus of one branch of the Great Northern Railway.
Mount Isa, the great mining town on the banks of the Leichhardt River, is 122 miles by rail from Cloncurry and 603 miles from Townsville. The town depends upon the Mount Isa Mines Ltd.'s mine and smelters, which produce lead, silver, copper, and zinc.

Cloncurry is the administrative centre of the CLONCURRY Shire (19,540 sq. miles, pop. 11,280), in which Mount Isa is situated.

The river after which the town is named was discovered by Burke and Wills, who called it after a small town in Ireland. Ernest Henry took up Fort Constantine and Devoncourts; and found several deposits of copper. Copper made Cloncurry, which became a local authority in 1884. Cattle raising and wool growing are also district industries, and Cloncurry is the natural outlet for most of the Gulf cattle. Major developments at Mount Isa and Mary Kathleen (forty miles from Cloncurry) have given a stimulus to Cloncurry which is now connected with Mary Kathleen by road; and will assume even greater economic importance when the Townsville-Mount Isa railway is modernised to cope with the enormously increasing traffic from Mount Isa and Mary Kathleen.

Cloncurry is the headquarters of the “Flying Doctor” Service, which has done more to make the town known in Australia than even its mineral wealth.

Hughenden (pop. 1,780) is an important railway junction linking the Great Northern Line to the Central Line, via Winton. On the banks of the Flinders River, 236 miles west of Townsville, it is the headquarters of the FLINDERS Shire (15,931 sq. miles, pop. 1,550) and also the centre of a vast pastoral district drained by the Flinders and Thomson Rivers.

The town is built on part of the old Hughenden Station taken up by Ernest Henry in February 1864. In 1887 the railway from Townsville was opened. Then, 450 carriers were centred at Hughenden, travelling west and south. In 1888 Johnston, a carrier, took loading from Hughenden to Bourin; the trip took twelve months and loading cost £30 per ton. In 1891, the year of the big shearsers’ strike, an encampment was formed on the Flinders below the old showgrounds. Approximately 1,178,000 sheep are grazed in the district.

Croydon, centre of CROYDON Shire (10,960 sq. miles, pop. 183), is in the Gulf Country of North-west Queensland, 276 air miles from Cairns, on the eastern tributaries of the Norman River.

The name Croydon was derived from the name of William Browne’s station—Croydon Downs—which he took up in 1881, and named after his birthplace in England. Browne discovered gold and the field was proclaimed on 18 January 1886. In that year Croydon had a population of 2,000, and in 1887 there were 6,500 on the field, the town supporting five banks and three newspapers.

Richmond, principal town of the RICHMOND Shire (10,400 sq. miles, pop. 1,700), is 300 miles due west of Townsville, on the banks of the Flinders. Shearing is the main industry, and the beef industry is also important. Gold is still being won in small quantities from the Woolgar field.

*In partnership with Roger Sheaffe.

Burketown, on the Albert River, is the headquarters of the BURKE Shire (16,830 sq. miles, pop. 270). The whole of the land from the Northern Territory border to the coast range on Cape York Peninsula and south to the Cloncurry railway is held in large cattle runs. Normanton, in CARPENTARIA Shire (26,360 sq. miles, pop. 580), is on the Norman River, fifty-six miles from its mouth at Karumba, and 255 miles from Cloncurry by road.

In July 1868, Normanton became the port for the growing Gulf trade. From 1880 to 1890 it boomed; it had five banks; a newspaper (the Chronicle, established 1884); and a population of 3,000. A meat works was built in 1892 and operated for four years. The railway to Croydon was opened in 1891.

Camooweal is the centre of the BARKLY TABLELAND Shire (15,720 sq. miles, pop. 450), and is 153 miles north-west from Mount Isa by road. It is a stock centre and entrepôt for Northern Territory trade.

McKINLAY (15,725 sq. miles, pop. 514) is last but not least, Julia Creek, 393 miles west of Townsville by rail, is the headquarters of the shire, and the centre of the surrounding pastoral district with some 500,000 sheep and 70,000 cattle. The State Government operates the Toorak sheep research field station, investigating problems affecting sheep, etc., in the north-west of Queensland.