

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
QUEENSLAND—HARBOURS, RIVERS
AND MARINE

[By the President, NORMAN S. PIXLEY, C.M.G.,
M.B.E., V.R.D., Kt.O.N., F.R.Hist.S.Q.]

(Read at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Historical Society
of Queensland, 28 September 1972)

The growth and development of ports to handle seaborne trade has been vital to Australia, but nowhere has this been so marked as in Queensland, fortunate in possessing more deep-sea ports than any other State.

From the founding of the convict settlement in Moreton Bay in 1824 and for many years thereafter, settlement, development and supplies depended entirely on sea communications.

With the movement of explorers, prospectors and settlers steadily northward, vessels sailed up the coast carrying supplies for the overland travellers: some prospectors and others took passage by sea rather than face the land journey. Both passengers and cargo had to be put ashore safely at a point on the coast nearest to their destination with sheltered water. In the earlier days of the nineteenth century it was essential that some of the vessels find shelter where there were supplies of water, firewood for the ship's galley, with such food as the virgin countryside offered and where the mariner in distress could make good repairs to his ship.

With great thankfulness James Cook found such a haven in the Endeavour River in time of desperate need in 1770.

As settlements grew and developed, merchant ships, in addition to maintaining services on the coast, now carried our products to oversea markets, returning with migrants and goods.

On 9 November 1845 the brig *Eliza Kincaid* anchored near the mouth of the Brisbane River to receive the first cargo of wool.

The Hunter River Company began a regular steamship service between Sydney and Moreton Bay in 1842 with three ships *Shamrock*, *Rose* and *Thistle*, to which the *Sovereign* was later added. *Shamrock*, the first to arrive, brought Governor Gipps, taking him first to Cleveland which residents

of Ipswich and a number of squatters strongly stressed should be the port instead of Brisbane Town on the Brisbane River.

Unimpressed by Cleveland where he had to land at low water, the Governor re-embarked in *Shamrock* and proceeded up the river, where the ship berthed at South Brisbane, port facilities consisting of a large tree trunk lying parallel to the river bank where the ship lay alongside and moored to trees.

The following year *Shamrock* brought Captain Wickham, R.N., appointed Police Magistrate at Brisbane, and Mrs. Wickham. Captain Wickham carried out extensive surveys in Moreton Bay during 1846 and 1847 in company with James Burnett and James Warner.

In 1825, one year after the convict settlement was established, Pilot Gray assumed duties in Moreton Bay. He marked the natural channels of the Brisbane River.

Captain the Hon. John Rous in H.M.S. *Rainbow* made a survey of the Rous Channel in 1827. He was a son of the Earl of Stradbroke whose heir was Viscount Dunwich, hence the name of the island bounding the southern portion of the Bay, bestowed by Governor Darling, and that of the settlement on the western side of Stradbroke Island at the south end of Rainbow Channel.

In 1845 a scheme was afoot to resume transportation of offenders to establish a new colony to the northward of Moreton Bay: the "exiles", as they were termed, were to be granted a conditional pardon on arrival and could in due course be allotted land. The proposal, made to the Home Government, was approved and greeted with enthusiasm by Mr. W. E. Gladstone, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who in March 1846 formally offered Colonel Barney, the originator of the idea, charge of the settlement.

Sir Charles Fitzroy, Governor of New South Wales, received a fresh commission appointing him the first Governor of the new colony, to be named North Australia, the southern boundary of which was fixed at latitude twenty-six degrees south, which is a little south of Wide Bay.

At the same time the principal officials were gazetted, and Colonel Barney as superintendent arrived with his staff in the fine harbour of Port Curtis where the name of Gladstone was conferred on the new settlement. Later Maryborough was named after Lady Mary Fitzroy by Petrie and Stewart Russell in 1862.

The first "exile" ship had left England, but before it arrived, Earl Grey, who had formed a new ministry, directed

Governor Fitzroy to abandon the establishment, which was done within two months of its commencement.

The former limits, or abuse of limits of the colony of New South Wales, were restored in Governor Fitzroy's commission on his representing that his authority must be re-extended as "squatters were rushing up to the area" In 1848 Maurice O'Connell (later Sir Maurice) was appointed Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Burnett District and then Government Resident at Port Curtis.

The *Bangalore*, the last of the so-called "exile" ships, arrived in Brisbane in 1850 with convict ticket-of-leave men in addition to free settlers who included some members of the families of the "exiles".

Rev. John Dunmore Lang previously proposed that when Separation came the new colony be called Cooksland, and had floated the Cooksland Colonisation Company. The first of his chartered ships, the *Fortitude*, reached Moreton Bay on 20 January 1849, but honour for the first migrant ship to arrive went to the *Artemesia*, which entered the Bay on 13 December 1848.

More migrant ships followed, some going direct to Wide Bay, Port Curtis and Keppel Bay. The schooner *Albion*, 85 tons, in December 1855, was the first sea-going vessel to navigate the Fitzroy River, with supplies from Gladstone for Charles Archer, who had three months before taken up a property, portion of which comprised the area where Rockhampton now stands. *Albion* anchored in the vicinity of the present offices of the Rockhampton Harbour Board. Chas. Haynes, a seaman on board, became a pilot for the port of Rockhampton later, holding the position for over 30 years.

As more vessels, large and small, went further up the coast, around Cape York to the Gulf of Carpentaria, so grew the need for harbours and rivers with good shelter, which they could enter and leave with safety to land or take on board passengers.

These harbours and rivers had to be surveyed, the channels marked with beacons, buoys and lights and the ports developed. Pilots were also needed for the larger ships.

Many vessels were required to provide these services, including dredges with their ancillary craft to maintain and improve the channels and ports.

Thus a tremendous undertaking faced the new colony in the years that lay ahead after Separation in 1859. When it is realized that, in addition, Queensland assumed responsibility for providing and maintaining lighthouses, lightships, beacons and buoys along its enormous coastline of some

2000 miles and at points on the Great Barrier Reef, the magnitude of its task becomes apparent.

On Separation the New South Wales Government presented Queensland with its first vessel, the *Spitfire*, a wooden ketch of 84 tons built in 1856, which served the harbour authorities for many years.

MARINE AUTHORITIES

There was now the requirement to set up competent authorities to assume responsibility for the marine affairs of the colony, hitherto controlled by New South Wales.

Acts in force included the Harbours Acts of New South Wales, 3 William IV No. 6, 3 August 1832, and 22 Victoria No. 4 1858. The former contained the authority to . . . "fine the master of any craft for discharging any ballast, gravel, earth or filth in any roadstead, channel or navigable creek" (aimed to preserve the depth of those waters, this also appears to have been an early attempt to control pollution).

Before the close of 1859, appointments were made of a harbour master, a tide surveyor (A. Macdonald) and a shipping master at Wide Bay, with W. E. Hillyard as Harbour Master of Port Curtis.

The Governor-in-Council, on 25 February 1860, approved the setting up of the Queensland Pilot Board and the Queensland Steam Navigation Board: members of the latter were Wm. Thornton, Collector of Customs, and Charles Tiffin, with R. J. Colley as a non-official member.

On the same date the Governor approved Maryborough, Port Curtis and Rockhampton as ports for the registration of shipping and of ships and vessels under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, an act of the Imperial Parliament.

Appointments of a Harbour Master and pilot were made to Port Denison (Bowen) and the Port of Wide Bay was proclaimed, whilst the procurement of a dredge was approved.

CODE OF FLAG SIGNALS

With vessels bound for Queensland ports, it was important that information as to their impending arrival be passed to the authorities and agents concerned. As this could only be done by visual means, the Harbour Board in 1861 devised a simple code of flag signals for hoisting at the yard of the flagstaff at signal stations on the coast near the entrance to ports: the code was promulgated in "notices to mariners". On first sighting, a blue and white flag was hoisted on the south yard arm if the ship was approaching

from the south, or the north yard arm if coming from that direction.

When sufficiently close to identify the class of vessel a series of "descriptive" flags were used to indicate whether it was a ship, barque, brig, schooner, cutter or steamer.

On this identification, the blue and white flag was hauled down and the appropriate descriptive flag hoisted in its place.



The Old Pile Light 1885.

Having received information from the vessel, the signal station then used the following signal flags for the arrivals:

Ships of war. Union flag below the descriptive flag.

Troops on Board. Numeral pennant below the descriptive flag.

Immigrants on board. Red ensign above the descriptive flag.

Steamers with English mails. Red ensign below the descriptive flag.

If Governor on board. Union flag above descriptive flag.

On entering port a signal flag indicated the port the vessel sailed from.

BRISBANE

When the vessel crossed the bar and was proceeding up the Brisbane River a white flag was hoisted below the descriptive flag. This signal and others on shipping information were flown from the yard on the flagstaff alongside the old Observatory on Wickham Terrace.

Under the Appropriation Acts 24 Victoria, No. 8, 11 September 1860 and 24 Victoria No. 17, 18 September 1860, the Treasurer and Secretary for Finance and Trade approved the following expenditure:

11 September £1,292 Harbour Master, Moreton Bay; £112 Harbour of Wide Bay; £912 Lighthouse, Cape Moreton; £875 Harbour Master, Fitzroy River.

18 September £2,383 Harbour Master, Moreton Bay; £250 Harbour of Wide Bay; £912 Lighthouse, Cape Moreton; £658 Harbour Master, Fitzroy River; £900 Erection of pilot building, Moreton Island.

Supplementary: £960 Harbour Master, Moreton Bay; £900 Erection of pilot buildings, Moreton Island.

The allocation of these substantial sums for early requirements only as far as Rockhampton give some indication of future financial needs.

Of interest in 1861 was the arrival of Commander Norman of the warship *Victoria*, belonging to the Victorian Navy. Built in England and the first warship constructed for any British colony, *Victoria* in company with the brig *Firefly* was bound for the Albert River in the Gulf of Carpentaria to meet and render aid to the Burke and Wills expedition.

The Norman River and the subsequent Gulf ports of Normanton on the Norman and Burketown on the Albert River were named after the captain of the *Victoria* and the leader of the ill-fated land party. Burketown was Queensland's most remote port. Commander Norman was

appointed a magistrate of the colony of Queensland (No. 420 of the Statutes 1861).

FIRST PORTMASTER

1862 saw the appointment of Lieutenant George P. Heath, R.N., as the first Portmaster of the colony and a member of the Queensland Pilot Board, whilst at the port of Moreton Bay in the Harbour Master's department, J. Twine was appointed sea pilot and Henry Wyborn assistant harbour master.

The first Port Office was situated in Edward Street near the ferry: subsequently it became the Naval Staff Office of the Queensland Marine Defence Force, and later Water Police Headquarters. It has only recently been demolished.

Tenders were called for the erection of quarantine buildings at Dunwich on Stradbroke Island, where hitherto ships in quarantine had lain at anchor with facilities sadly lacking.

In Dunwich Cemetery may be seen the graves of the ship's surgeon and twenty-six immigrants from the *Emigrant*, which arrived in August 1850 with typhus on board and remained in quarantine until the disease ran its course. Dr Ballow, the Government Medical Officer, who went from Brisbane to assist, also died from typhus and is buried nearby. Another medical officer who was then sent to attend those on board, slept at night in a tent on Bird Island nearby, visiting the ship daily.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION

Assent was received on 2 July 1862 to a new Act, 26 Victoria No. 2. "An Act to provide for the better management of the ports and harbours of Queensland and for the better regulation of shipping and to constitute a board called the Marine Board of Queensland".

This Act repealed the Act of the Legislature of New South Wales, 22 Victoria No 4.

For the purposes of the Act the following were defined: "The 'Board' shall mean the Marine Board. 'The Portmaster' shall mean any person appointed to any port in the colony. The word 'pilot' shall mean any person not belonging to a vessel who has the conduct thereof.

The expression 'licensed pilot' shall mean any person duly licensed by the Marine Board to conduct vessels to which he does not belong. 'Vessel' shall mean any ship or other vessel used in navigation whether propelled by steam, sail or oars. 'Master' shall mean any person (other than a pilot) having command or charge of a vessel. 'Colonial trade vessel' shall mean any vessel engaged in the whaling trade or trading

between two or more ports of the colony of Queensland or between any port of the said colony and any port or ports in any Australian colony or in N.Z. or Tasmania."

III: "From the commencement of this Act, the Pilot Board and Steam Navigation Board now established in the Colony of Queensland shall be dissolved and discontinued and all duties, powers and authorities exercised by the Pilot Board and the Steam Navigation Board shall now be vested in and exercised by the Marine Board.

IV: "The Board is to consist of the Portmaster of the Colony and four other members, one of whom shall be elected chairman.

VI: "The Board is to be subjected to the general supervision, control and direction of the Treasurer.

IX: "The Board shall be the department to undertake the general superintendence of all matters relating to the preservation and improvement of ports, harbours, havens, navigable creeks and rivers of the colony, regulation of shipping and seamen, licensing, appointment and removal of pilots, maintenance of pilots' establishments, of superintendence of lights and other sea and harbour marks, placing and removing of moorings, establishment of light and beacon dues, granting and charging of licences to boatmen.

X: "The powers authorities and jurisdiction of the Board shall extend and may be exercised by them in and over the Colony of Queensland and for a distance of one nautical league to seaward from low water mark along the coastline of the colony.

XI: "Grant pilotage exemptions after examination.

XIII: "Examination for master or mate of vessels trading within the jurisdiction of the colony.

XVI: "Collect pilotage and harbour dues.

XXXIV: "This Act to be styled and cited as 'The Marine Board Act of 1862'."

Appointments to the Marine Board were made as follows: D. L. Drew, secretary; John Murray, engineer surveyor, D. Muir, shipwright-surveyor, with the Portmaster of the Colony as chairman.

HARBOUR FOR SOMERSET

Sir George Bowen served as Governor for eight years and, during his term of office, new ports were opened along the eastern coast from Rockhampton to Cape York and round to the southern shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

In 1862, after inspecting the coast in H.M.S. *Pioneer* with Commodore Burnett in command of the Australian

station, he recommended the establishment of a harbour of refuge and coaling station at Albany Pass, Somerset, near the eastern tip of Cape York, twelve hundred miles from Brisbane.

For in the years that followed the arrival of the first steamer in Moreton Bay the *James Watt*, which came in 1837 bringing Andrew Petrie and his family, steam vessels had joined the throng of sailing ships which had been using the Torres Strait route since early settlement at Port Jackson. Steamships were also among the ships of the Royal Navy on continuous survey of the coast and the Great Barrier Reef in the wake of Matthew Flinders and Phillip Parker King.

The settlement was officially founded on 21 August 1864, when a detachment of marines under Lieut. Pascoe were stationed there after landing from H.M.S. *Salamander*.

The passage through the inner Barrier was made before the days of lighthouses, lightships and buoys.

As a harbour of refuge Somerset proved its worth early when the crews from three shipwrecks arrived to seek assistance, but strong tides which flowed through the passage made it an unsatisfactory anchorage. In 1877 the establishment at Somerset was removed to Thursday Island with its harbour of Port Kennedy: the marines had been transferred elsewhere in 1867. Mr. H. M. Chester was appointed Police Magistrate on 20 July of that year at Thursday Island, his duties also embracing those of Collector of Customs and Harbour Master. Mr. Alan Wilkie was appointed pilot on 14 September.

DREDGING OPERATIONS

Dredging of the Brisbane River mouth began in 1867, the first bar cutting being completed before the end of the year, giving a depth of 10ft 6in from Moreton Bay to Pinkenba. This fortunately enabled Governor Bowen on his departure from Brisbane on 4 January 1868 to embark in the *City of Brisbane* off Lytton, which he had named after Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Secretary of State for the Colonies and designated as Brisbane's port soon after his arrival to assume office as Governor.

Two years previously the dredge *Bremer*, built by P. N. Russell of Sydney, had commenced operations in the Fitzroy River.

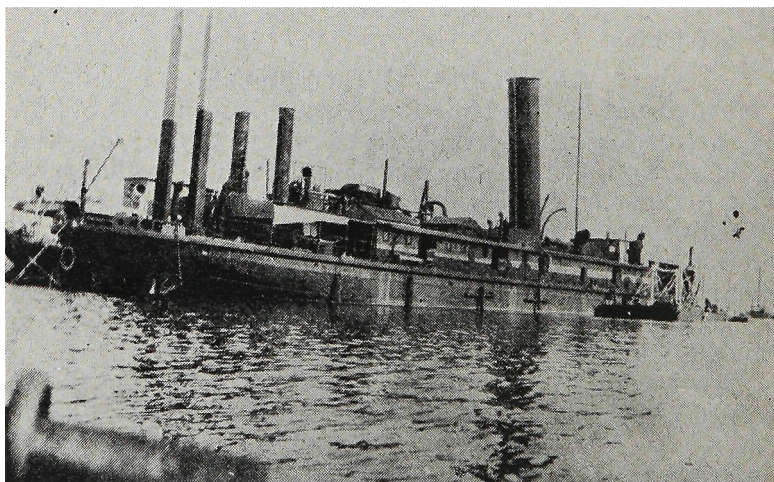
The story of the dredges is an interesting one, with over a hundred years of dredging and reclamation by bucket, suction and suction cutter dredges in Queensland's numerous ports.

Some came from England: Mr. Lyndon Bates appeared to be the main influence in the sales and delivery of these, but very many dredges, hopper barges to carry away the spoil from dredges, and anchor boats for laying and raising dredge moorings, were built in Queensland.

Platypus, a bucket dredge, heavy and cumbersome was fitted with temporary masts and made an epic journey under sail from England to Brisbane in 1884. After many years of faithful service and hard work, she moved under her own steam for the last time to form a breakwater on the western side of Peel Island in Moreton Bay, where the hull still remains.

The bucket dredge *Hydra* was built by Evans, Anderson and Phelan in 1886 on the north-eastern corner of Kangaroo Point. Fifty years later, in 1936, *Hydra* came back and ate away her birthplace as her buckets excavated the area in preparation for the building of the Story Bridge.

Five steam-propelled twin screw hopper barges, while under construction by Walkers at Maryborough in 1885, had their boilers lowered below the waterline and each fitted with a mounting for a 5-inch gun in the bow, by orders from the Government so that these vessels could be used as auxiliary units of the Queensland Marine Defence Force. They were named *Pumba*, *Stingaree*, *Bonito*, *Bream* and *Dolphin*. All have gone except the *Pumba* which, refitted and with a diesel engine installed, plies along the Brisbane River



The mighty *Hercules* which made the cut straight on from the mouth of the River and built up Bishop Island. On the far side are the twin funnels of the *Samson*; to the left of these are the two "spud bars" which went down to hold *Hercules* stern firm for dredging.

in the sand and gravel business under the name of *Enterprise*.

Seamen from dredges and other vessels belonging to the department formed the nucleus of the Queensland Naval Brigade.

Early this century two large, powerful cutter-suction dredges, *Hercules* and *Samson*, ordered from England, arrived in Brisbane, *Hercules* pausing en route to carry out dredging in the Suez Canal. After both had worked in the Port of Brisbane for some time, *Samson* was disposed of and sailed for Newcastle in New South Wales.

In 1913 *Hercules* completed dredging a new channel cutting straight from the mouth of the Brisbane River into Moreton Bay, creating as she did so an island on the eastern side of the river mouth called Bishop Island after Captain Bishop who was in charge of the operation. S.S. *Bombala* was the first ship to pass through the new channel.

Until then, the channel cutting in use followed the line of natural channels, first marked in 1825 by Pilot Grey, from the mouth of the river in the direction of Redcliffe. At that end of the cutting, ships entering or leaving the port rounded a lighthouse built on piles known as the Pile Light, which was continuously manned, reporting shipping movements and displaying tide signals for the information of ships about to enter the river.

On completion of *Hercules* Channel cutting a new Pile Light was erected at its seaward end, remaining in operation until one fine and calm morning in October 1949 when the tanker *Wave Protector*, which had been waiting to enter port, weighed anchor and, whilst manoeuvring, rammed the lighthouse, demolishing the upper structure. Those on duty in it were hurled into the water below among the piles. Fortunately there was no fatality, though the injuries included a broken leg.

The Pile Light was not rebuilt: a signal station erected on Bishop Island now serves in its stead.

Prior to World War II the *Hercules* was sold and, fitted as a bucket dredge, pioneered the coral dredging for the Queensland Cement and Lime Company at Mud Island, Moreton Bay. Her hull rests on the bank near Dunwich on Stradbroke Island at the end of an active life.

LOCAL HARBOUR BOARDS

Towards the close of last century it had become increasingly obvious that decentralised control was needed for the ports north of Brisbane: with the growing volume of shipping using them, continuous development of the harbours

and provision of the many services required of a marine nature, it was time that a properly constituted authority be set up in each port to take charge of its affairs.

Accordingly, appropriate legislation was set in train, as a result of which assent was received on 7 November 1892 to 56 Victoria No. 26: "an Act for the better regulation management and improvement of harbours and for other purposes pertaining thereto by local authorities constituted for this purpose".

It stated that "the Act shall be styled and cited as 'The Harbour Boards Act 1892,' and shall come into operation on the first day of January 1893," also that "nothing in this Act shall in any way derogate from any of the provisions of the Navigation Act of 1876 or the Port Dues Revision Act of 1882 or any Act relating to the customs".

Each Harbour Board was to consist of elective and non-elective members. Elective members were to be elected by ratepayers or by the appointing of a local authority. Non-elective members were to be members by appointment of the Governor-in-Council, or members by virtue of holding some other office. Directions from the Minister to any Harbour Board were to be communicated through the Marine Board.

Harbour Boards were authorised to collect harbour dues and to apply these for constructing facilities, dredging, etc.

The Act stated that the Governor-in-Council may from time to time by Order in Council:—

(1) Define, alter, annul and redefine the limits of any harbour.

(2) Fix or alter the name by which any harbour shall be known or designated.

A Harbour Board was not permitted to erect, place, or alter the position of any light, signal, buoy or beacon within its jurisdiction without the sanction of the Minister.

Many terms or definitions were included, e.g.: "the term 'coastal light' means any light established or maintained by the Marine Board on the coast of the colony and not being a harbour light.

"The term 'harbour light' means any light erected in aid of navigation within the limits of the harbour or near the approaches to a harbour, and includes all lightships or other fixed or floating lights erected, moored or placed for that purpose".

Harbour lights were to be the responsibility of the Harbour Boards.

Between the passing of the Act and the establishing of the

boards, all moneys received from harbour dues were paid into a trust fund and credited to each individual port. The Harbour Boards Act of 1892 and the Harbour Dues Act 57 Victoria No. 19, for which assent was received in the same year, were referred to as the Principal Acts for many years.

EROSION PROVISIONS

The Harbour Boards Amendment Act of 1906, 6 Edward VII No. 25, was an Act to amend the Harbour Boards Act of 1892 for the protection of private lands having a water frontage from erosion by water.

This empowered the Harbour Board to give notice to the owner of such lands to execute such works as were considered necessary to protect such lands at his own expense, and to comply with the requirements of such notice to the satisfaction of the Harbour Board.

The Harbour Boards themselves carried out similar work on the frontages of their own properties: in addition they had the task of building retaining walls along the banks of a number of navigable rivers. Along the Brisbane River these were built with stone from the Kangaroo Point quarry, which was also used more recently to build the boat harbour at Manly.

In 1955 the Harbour Boards and Harbour Dues Act of 1892 were consolidated. The Harbours Acts 1955 to 1968 and the Marine Acts 1958 to 1972 are those presently operating.

COASTAL LIGHTS

On Separation, the rights of Queensland regarding the islands off its coast were not clearly defined, Letters Patent dated 6 June 1859 and 13 March 1862 having transferred to the colony "all and every adjacent islands", etc.

In 1865 the New South Wales Government had granted a lease of Raine Island, situated on the outer edge of the Barrier Reef some sixty miles from the Queensland coast. Here in 1844, with H.M.S. *Fly* standing by, a party of twenty convicts from Sydney with guards and supervisors had built a circular tower forty feet high from stone quarried on the island to mark the opening through the reef used by ships from the Outer Barrier Route to make the passage through Torres Strait. No light was provided at this time, when the only lighthouse on the Australian mainland was that at South Head, Port Jackson.

By 1872 the Governor of Queensland was appointed Governor of all islands within sixty miles of the coast and in 1879 Queensland's boundaries were extended to include

all islands in the Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Before the turn of the century the colony had constructed nineteen manned lighthouses from Cape Moreton to Goode Island and Booby Island in Torres Strait, in addition to a lightship with a crew of four anchored at Channel Rock in Princess Charlotte Bay.

Queensland continued to service and maintain its coastal lights, attending also to the welfare of the lightkeepers until after Federation came.

In 1901 the Commonwealth, on its establishment, was authorised to make laws concerning lighthouses, lightships, beacons and buoys. It was given power by the Lighthouses Act of 1911 to enter into an agreement with the States to acquire lighthouses and marine marks and to erect or alter such navigational aids as required.

It was on 1 July 1915 that the Commonwealth Government finally took over the coastal navigational aids from the States and provided its own lighthouse vessels to maintain the service around the Australian coast and islands. Each State, however, retained responsibility for all requirements pertaining to its own ports, harbours and rivers.

THE PILOT SERVICE

Pilots appointed to each of the ports from Brisbane to the Gulf were experienced mariners familiar with the channels, tides and other details of the area.

Boarding in all weathers in the open water clear of the entrance, they piloted ships into the anchorage or to a berth at the wharf or jetty and out from the harbour on sailing day: a great deal of skill and judgment is needed, as a pilot is called upon to handle vessels of all sizes and varied types.

The pilot craft included those under oars or sail, steamers and later, motor boats. For the large Port of Brisbane, pilots accommodated in the pilot steamer boarded and disembarked from ships between Cape Moreton and Caloundra. (In 1918 the pilot vessel *Llewellyn*, which had been despatched with supplies to the north during a shipping strike, was lost with all hands.) Finally, with the construction of the boat harbour at Mooloolabah, the *Matthew Flinders* (the second of the name in the pilot service) and the relieving pilot vessel *John Oxley* were disposed of: fine sea-going launches now operate with the pilots from the boat harbour.

In the early days of the colony, the blue and white flag hoisted at the signal station alerted the pilot vessel or pilot station to the sighting of a ship. At the smaller ports where there was no signal station, the sharp eye of the pilot usually

made the first sighting. As communication from other places was by letter carried by sea, no information when and from where ships had departed could be received in advance.

One hundred years ago Australia became linked with Europe by cable from Darwin, to which the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide had just been connected. As telegraph networks spread through the colonies it became possible to give some early information as to shipping movements, but it was the development of wireless telegraphy in this century which enabled the ship herself to advise her own movements, such as estimated time of arrival, and to receive any messages, which has solved the difficult communication problems of the past.

The master mariners of the Torres Strait Pilot Service, who pilot ships through the difficult waters of Torres Strait and the North Queensland coast inside the Barrier Reef, do not belong to the Queensland service. They have an organisation of their own, with an office in Sydney to control affairs, and comfortable quarters known as the "Pilots' House" at Thursday Island, where the pilots stay briefly between arrivals and departures of ships.

HARBOURS AND RIVERS

Blessed from the start by a number of natural harbours and rivers conveniently spaced along its coast, Queensland had added to these, in recent decades, man-made ports.

The first of these was at Mackay on the Pioneer River, discovered by Captain John Mackay, later Portmaster in Brisbane, after whom it was named. Until the harbour came, ships anchored off Flat Top Island, passengers and cargo being carried by tender and lighter to and from the town along the shallow river.

Before constructing the Harbour which is at Weipa, on the great bauxite deposits near the western tip of Cape York, a scale model was made and tested at the Hydro-Delft Laboratory in Holland, using data supplied from surveys of the proposed area.

The most recent is at Hay Point, south of Mackay, where at the jetty large ships are quickly bulk-loaded by the massive loading complex which handles the trucks with coal brought from the Goonyella field along the newly-constructed railway.

As to the earlier ports, their fortunes have varied: The development of the sugar industry brought prosperity early to a number of ports on the eastern coast in the rich sugar areas. Others were not so lucky: The two Gulf ports of

Burketown and Normanton have long ago ceased to function as such for ships.

Regarded as of high strategic value, Thursday Island, with the constant flow of ships through Torres Strait, became an important port and coaling station. It was the centre of the prosperous pearling industry and responsible for the islands of Torres Strait: towards the end of last century the heights above the town were quite heavily fortified. Oil fuel instead of coal giving ships a greater range, the cessation of the mail steamer service to the Gulf Ports, and the end of the pearling industry sorely undermined the Island's economy. Cooktown grew and prospered considerably as the great wealth continued to flow from the Palmer and other goldfields. As ships continued to arrive the cosmopolitan population grew to many thousands, but when the gold had gone, the hinterland had no other product to offer so the port began to languish.

A few miles south of the Daintree River, on a pleasant bay, was Port Douglas, a busy place with considerable population, as people and supplies went over the range to the goldfields beyond. But sadly for it, the shipping and most of its trade moved sixty miles south to the newer port of Cairns with its extensive deepwater harbour of Trinity Inlet.

A CHANGE OF NAME

At the junction of the Johnstone Rivers, which flow through rich sugarcane lands, stood the small town of Geraldton, until a notice appeared in the "Government Gazette" No. 50, Vol. XCV, on 18 August 1910 that approval had been given by the Governor-in-Council to changing the name of the town to Innisfail.

The reason (Boulton's "A Thousand Miles Away") was that earlier in that year a Russian collier loaded with coal was intercepted off Cardwell, north of Townsville, en route to Geraldton, Queensland.

As the Johnstone River is only suitable for use by small vessels, the coal shipment was obviously intended for Geraldton, Western Australia.

As for the name selected for the change, a cane farmer named Fitzgerald had come from Mackay in 1879 to the Johnstone River and established cane plantations which he named "Innisfail", the name adopted in 1910 in lieu of Geraldton.

Sugar from the district is shipped through the bulk loading terminal at the almost land-locked harbour of Mourilyan, only a few miles from Innisfail.

From its beginnings Townsville grew and spread along Ross Creek, which was used by small craft, whilst large vessels had to anchor in the roadstead of Cleveland Bay. Bowen, further south on Port Denison, one of Queensland's finest harbours, has been overshadowed by Townsville, which early was vigorously established commercially and progressively developed as a port, firstly with a breakwater and finally with a harbour. Later a railway to the west to the pastoral and mining areas, passing through the goldfields of Charters Towers, helped it to prosper, whilst the immense production of Mt. Isa mines continuously flows to the port.

Of the bulk-sugar terminals erected in various ports, one is at Townsville Harbour. Filled to capacity soon after being built, this provided an example of the value of Queensland's sugar crop when it was set on fire by sparks from an oxy-acetylene torch. The insurance claims paid as a result were the highest in Australian history.

Like Bowen, Gladstone has a splendid harbour, but they have had other things in common, though mainly in adversity. The rush to the Canoona gold discovery diverted shipping and trade from Gladstone to Rockhampton, which was not far from the field. Though Canoona proved a sad disappointment and the gold was soon worked out, Rockhampton had started to consolidate and develop without delay. A railway line connecting it with the central-west and the gold bonanza of Mount Morgan later assisted greatly. Subsequently wharves were built in the deep water inlet at Port Alma, some two hours away by rail, to accommodate overseas ships.

However, after a long wait, Fortune smiled and Gladstone, with dramatic swiftness, has become one of Australia's most rapidly developing ports, handling more shipping tonnage than any Queensland port except Brisbane.

Maryborough and Bundaberg, the river ports of Hervey Bay, have rich cane lands around them and manufacture machinery for sugar mills in their own and other areas.

Maryborough, much the older of the two, was well established early as a busy port on the Mary River handling many vessels, including a number in the Kanaka trade. It has a deepwater jetty for overseas vessels at Urangan on Hervey Bay and has been building ships for nearly one hundred years.

Bundaberg on the Burnett, which is navigable up to the city, has a harbour and sugar terminal at the river mouth.

Finally to Moreton Bay and the Port of Brisbane, where the great tankers, the largest ships which come to it, berth

at Lytton, named long ago by Governor Bowen as the port. The numerous other vessels go further up the river to the wharves which stretch for some miles along its banks.

Today specialised ships and sophisticated cargo-handling equipment are being produced in an effort to minimise the period a vessel spends in port.

It is a long haul from Caloundra across Moreton Bay before a ship enters the Brisbane River, and in recent years the winds of change have murmured the suggestion that a harbour built within the confines of Moreton Bay would eliminate the journey up and down the river.

Should the question of the harbour be investigated, it would be strange if the wheel of destiny turned full circle and the area of Cleveland was given consideration for the second time in one hundred and thirty years.