

THE INDIAN COOLIE LABOUR ISSUE IN QUEENSLAND

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When Queensland was separated from New South Wales in 1859, there were two major problems of immediate concern to the new colony's progress. These were: first, a critical lack of efficient labour,⁽¹⁾ and second, the need to expand and rationalise an economy which was bound, almost exclusively, to the pastoral industry. An adequate solution to each had urgently to be found before the orderly development of the colony could proceed.

It was early recognised that Queensland could not remain dependent upon one product, nor even upon solely pastoral products, and being a country whose territories lay entirely within the tropical or sub-tropical belts, the cultivation of sugar and cotton offered immediate possibilities for swift agricultural development.

In the circumstances, the Government had little hesitation in choosing cotton as the crop which would be the most lucrative. This was a time when civil war appeared imminent in the United States, and England, likely to be deprived of her chief source of raw cotton, encouraged Queensland to expend her energies in the cultivation of this plant. Since early experiments had shown that both climate and soil were adaptable to successful cotton growing, the Queensland Government reacted to English promptings with alacrity, and in 1860 premiums were offered in the form of land orders for the successful sale of cotton. At once, however, the difficulty of obtaining sufficient labour even for the task of clearing the coastal lands interposed a redoubtable obstacle between decision and effective action.

In order to compete with American cotton it was realised that the Government would have to encourage the cultivation of far larger tracts of land than was possible at the hands of small farmers—even if it seemed likely (which it did not) that sufficiently large

numbers of the latter could be brought to the colony. Thus, the plantation system at once suggested itself as being eminently suitable for cotton production in Queensland.

However, such plantations (being too large) could not be worked, much less cleared, by their owners; neither could the work be done by European labourers because sufficient numbers of these were not available—while even had there been an adequate supply, the high rates of wages would have been prohibitive. This was a consideration which assumed vast importance when it was realised that cotton would have to be cultivated in Queensland at a considerably lower cost than in the United States in order to compensate for the heavier freights from Queensland—the more distant country from England.

It seemed then that there was no possibility of successful competition with America unless the importation of some form of cheap labour was permitted—at the very least until the coastal areas were cleared and reduced to an easily workable condition. “Whilst anxious to encourage European immigration as largely as possible, we are convinced that for the development of the ‘Central’ and ‘Northern’ portions of the territory under Your Excellency’s Government, the introduction of coolie labour is indispensable. With the command of that element, we believe that we could successfully compete with the sugar-growing colonies of Mauritius, Java and Manila, and ultimately with the U.S.A. in the growth of cotton.”⁽²⁾ Accordingly, agitation commenced both in Queensland and in England for the introduction of coolies from India.

Apparently, English cotton merchants were growing daily more apprehensive of the possible effects of the American Civil War on the flow of cotton to the English markets. In a letter from a Manchester merchant to the President of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, the results obtained from the use of coolie labour in Mauritius were referred to, and a remark was added to the effect that “. . . the same thing might be done in Queensland. I wish you would induce someone in Queensland to establish a cotton farm with coolie labourers; if once begun it might lead to great results. The Governor of the colony might apply to the Cotton

Supply Association of Manchester for machinery to clean the cotton, and they would supply the best sort, and seed if required.”⁽³⁾ Similarly, in a despatch to the Colonial Secretary, Governor Bowen pointed out that a Mr. Bazley, cotton magnate of Manchester, was willing to give his assistance to any scheme for the cultivation of cotton in Queensland. The type of cotton which Mr. Bazley wished to popularise was one already tested on Queensland soil. This was “Sea Island” cotton which produced a thread so fine that it had already commanded attention when exhibited with a lump of Australian gold at the Paris Exhibition.⁽⁴⁾ The thread was so delicate that Mr. Bazley had finally sent it to Calcutta to be woven, “. . . and in due time he had the happiness of receiving from India some of the finest Muslim ever manufactured, the produce of the skill of the Hindoos with this delicate Australian cotton.”⁽⁵⁾ Such a cotton, thought Governor Bowen, would be sufficiently rare, cheaply manufactured, and a great asset to Queensland’s trade. He therefore supported with enthusiasm the proposed introduction of coolie labour.

At the same time the Queensland Assembly received several petitions from various sections of the community, all advocating the use of coolie labour on the cotton fields of Queensland. They pointed out that the growth of sugar and cotton would be productive of great benefits to both Queensland and the mother country, and that coolie labour was indispensable.⁽⁶⁾ Not only were the coolies “a race habituated to work at field labour under a tropical sun,” but the petitioners were further of the opinion that the introduction of an Asiatic race for the purpose of tropical agriculture would in no way interfere with the fair claims or prospects of the European immigrant—on the contrary, it might advance his position by giving increased value to property of every kind.⁽⁷⁾ “The introduction of Asiatic labour would be to Queensland what machinery has been to England, elevating the European labourer to the rank of a mechanic, and the mechanic to that of an employer, and contributing in a marvellous degree to the well-being of every class of society.”⁽⁸⁾

The “Crown Lands’ Alienation Act, 1860,” which

unlocked the coastal lands reserved by the New South Wales Government, removed the first obstacle in the way of tropical agriculture, but until the second obstacle (lack of labour) was also removed, the third (capital) would not be attracted. It remained then for the Queensland Government, by some means, to provide the labour necessary for the opening up of agricultural lands.

Disregarding the appeals of a number of the residents of Brisbane and Ipswich who were opposed to the idea of coloured labour,⁽⁹⁾ the first Parliament of Queensland appointed a Select Committee to investigate the whole question of coolie immigration to Queensland.⁽¹⁰⁾ In issuing its report, the Committee advised that the immigration of Europeans should be assisted by public funds, but that "no restriction should be thrown in the way of planters desirous of procuring Asiatic labour at their own cost and under the proper supervision of the Government."⁽¹¹⁾ In recognising that both types of immigration could proceed simultaneously, the way was left open for the introduction of coolies.

However, merely to place no hindrance in the way of the introduction of coloured labourers was not to ensure an immediate place for them in the colony's economy. Coolies were the particular type at that time desired,⁽¹²⁾ and according to Indian Government regulations they could not be obtained by private individuals of another country unless the Government of that country first regulated their introduction.⁽¹³⁾ This proviso, apart from being of particular concern to those who envisaged the unfettered immigration of Indian labour, might easily have given pause to the Queensland Government's apparent willingness to formulate comprehensive regulations—for it was not to be forgotten that the initial arguments for coloured labour had rested substantially on the plea that coolies would be introduced privately and without constituting any drain on the public revenue.⁽¹⁴⁾ Nevertheless, the colonial Government responded to the concerted pressure which was being brought to bear upon it, and during the second session of the first Parliament legislation was passed which gave the force of law to any regulations which the Governor might issue for the

introduction and protection of labourers from British India.⁽¹⁵⁾

In accordance with the terms of the act, regulations were issued by the Governor-in-Council on February 11, 1863, legalising all contracts made with coolies after March 1;⁽¹⁶⁾ it seemed that the dual problem of finding a plentiful supply of labour and labour suited for work in tropical regions had been finally solved: the squatters would obtain shepherds while the coastal areas would be cleared and cotton and sugar made the staple products of Queensland.

It would seem that the petitioners of Brisbane and Ipswich⁽¹⁷⁾ comprised the only strong element of opposition to the scheme inside the colony. When the passage of the Coolie Act appeared imminent, they appealed over the head of the Queensland Government to the Queen herself, praying that the Government of the colony be restrained from permitting the introduction of Indian coolies, and at the same time questioning the legality of framing regulations to the Governor-in-Council.⁽¹⁸⁾ They received no satisfaction. The Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies, replied that "no sufficient grounds are shown for depriving Queensland of a supply of Indian labour if the community at large desires to have it . . . and as the legislature represents the community, no constitutional principle has been violated by leaving the details to the executive."⁽¹⁹⁾ This ended the only significant move to prevent the introduction of coolies, though it foreshadowed the future opposition to Kanaka labour.

As soon as the Indian Government had given its tentative approval to the regulations promulgated by the Governor of Queensland,⁽²⁰⁾ it seemed merely a question of time before coolies would begin to arrive in the colony. Yet, an eleventh-hour development prevented the scheme from being brought to fruition.

Even with the permission which the Indian Government had given, in principle, to coolie immigration, certain details had still to be finalised; above all, emigration agents had to be appointed in accordance with Indian regulations. At once an impasse was reached over the salary of the emigration agent to be appointed. Not only would the Indian Government refuse to allow the agent to receive payment propor-

tionate to the number of emigrants sent, but it would require that a fixed salary be voted from Queensland Consolidated Revenue before such agent would be allowed to act at all. The Queensland Government was not willing to make any such provision.⁽²¹⁾

By this rejection of Indian terms (the more so in view of the pains which had been taken from the Queensland end to legalise coolie labour), the Queensland Government had manoeuvred itself into a cul-de-sac which might have brought embarrassing political consequences. That this did not happen was due solely to the fact that public attention in the meantime had been attracted to an experiment with another, more easily obtainable, and even cheaper class of cheap coloured labour.

These experiments which arrested the attention of the colonists was made by some South Coast planters and consisted in the trial of Kanakas as labourers for tropical agriculture. The sugar planters who had gone ahead and invested money in different parts of the colony in the belief that the Act of 1862 would forward their interests and provide the required labour, now turned in a body to obtain the Kanakas—the crucial factor in their decision being the fact that the services of the Kanakas could be bought at a much cheaper rate than the Indian coolies.⁽²²⁾ The coolie Act of 1862 was allowed to lapse and was effectively superseded by the passing of the “Polynesian Labourers’ Act, 1868,”

Happily for the Queensland Government, the Kanaka had thus led it from a discomfoting impasse. For the time being the question of Indian coolie labour in Queensland, if not entirely forgotten, was pushed into the background. Not until 1874, it seems, was it revived again.

On April 7 of that year John Murtagh Macrossan presented a petition from certain employers of labour, resident in the Kennedy district of North Queensland, representing the advantages of importing coloured labour to assist in rendering productive vast tracts of agricultural lands in the northern districts “which from the heat of the climate and other causes could not be successfully cultivated.”⁽²³⁾ The petitioners prayed that the Act of 1862 for obtaining coolies from British India, which had already been enacted by the

Government and had received Imperial sanction, should at once be put into active operation by the appointment of an Emigration Agent in accordance with the Indian Government regulations.⁽²⁴⁾

In the same year, three northern members—Fitzgerald, Hodgkinson and Macrossan—put their signatures to the so-called “Northern Manifesto,” a document setting out a five-point programme “to secure justice for the North,” which, they maintained, was being exploited in the interests of the southern portion of the colony. Specifically, Point Five in the Manifesto called for the introduction of coolie labour for the sugar industry “as already provided for under the Act of 1862.”⁽²⁵⁾

In the first session of the 1874 sitting of Parliament,⁽²⁶⁾ Fitzgerald, the member for Bowen, “who, as Thadeus O’Kane at any rate insisted, was the prime mover in the Manifesto,”⁽²⁷⁾ introduced a motion requesting the Government to take action immediately on the matter of implementing the 1862 legislation relating to coolies: “. . . That to promote the growth of sugar and other tropical products along the north-east coast of Queensland especially within the tropics, by allowing cultivators of land to obtain, at their own expense, labourers from British India, the Act of 1862 should be brought into force, and provision made by the Government on the Supplementary Estimates of 1874 for the salary of an Emigration Agent under the Indian Government regulations; provided the amount of such salary and other ‘expenses’ be recouped to the Queensland Government by pro rata contributions of persons taking advantage of the Act.”⁽²⁸⁾

During the course of the ensuing debate, it became clear what the principal motives were underlying the reactivation of the coolie issue—particularly from the arguments put forward by Fitzgerald himself. It does not seem that the planters wished merely to supplement the Kanaka labour supply,⁽²⁹⁾ rather that they were dissatisfied with many aspects of the operation of that system. Fitzgerald first mentioned the language difficulty—that the Kanakas, brought from so many different islands, were therefore very difficult to manage.⁽³⁰⁾ Secondly, he drew the Assembly’s atten-

tion to the difficulty of procuring the islanders without spending a great deal of time and money in going from island to island, and that consequently the planters "would rather have labourers from British India because they could be more certainly calculated upon, and would not entail so much trouble and annoyance as there was with the islanders."⁽³¹⁾

In other words, the Kanaka system was not proving as cheap as the planters had originally thought. Above all, they were becoming increasingly disenchanted with the complications which proceeded from Queensland's having to recruit the labour, with all the attendant moral responsibilities.⁽³²⁾

In order to give his polemic a more persuasive force, Fitzgerald repeated the conventional, disinterested argument in favour of coloured labour.⁽³³⁾ He referred to the rich tracts of country along the north-east coast which could not be worked by European labour because of the intense moist heat; he alluded to the huge amount of capital already invested in the sugar industry (little short of a million pounds sterling) and declared that unless the planters obtained assistance of the kind they desired, enabling them to continue their operations, the industry would surely decay; he mentioned that the introduction of Indian coolies would not put white men out of jobs—on the contrary, they would provide further employment for whites as experience had shown in the case of the Kanakas; he charged that any agitation against coloured labour was carried on by only a few individuals mainly confined to Brisbane, whilst no prejudice or agitation could be found in the North where the coloured labour was actually being employed. Finally, he pointed out that employers of labour were free to import Chinese in any numbers, but that they did not wish to do so because of the great antipathy on the part of the digging population of the colony to the introduction of Chinese. They would therefore prefer having in the colony "those who were, after all, already their own fellow subjects."⁽³⁴⁾

The arguments advanced against Fitzgerald's motion, if not so seductive, or even so extensive, were nonetheless fundamental and reflected the doubts and

fears of a rapidly growing segment of public opinion. Such opposition focussed its attack on the whole question of the acceptance in se of coloured labour and of the incalculable effects which it would certainly have on the life of the colony and the character of its institutions: merely to argue the "economic" pros and cons of Kanaka or Indian labour on the entirely ad hoc assumption that coloured labour was necessary, was to avoid essential issues. The Colonial Secretary, Macalister, speaking against Fitzgerald's motion, devoted a great part of his speech to this point. He maintained that the establishment of a system of coolie immigration would at once have the effect of stopping European immigration to the colony.⁽³⁵⁾ Furthermore, it was planned that Indians were to be introduced only as temporary labourers and not as permanent settlers; they would therefore be of no use ultimately in settling the colony—even if they were desirable as settlers, which they certainly were not. In a word, the Government (of Macalister) and the community at large would continue to denounce any system of Indian coolie labour—especially if they were induced to remain in Queensland—since the encouragement of such immigration would mean the introduction of a "servile and inferior race."⁽³⁶⁾

To a large extent, Macalister's argument lost its force because he misinterpreted the feelings of the Assembly in regard to the whole question of coloured labour. Reduced to the most simple terms, his appeal rested on the conviction that coloured labour should be opposed on every conceivable ground. To Macalister, the social and economic effects of a coolie labour system—the two being quite inseparable—would be productive of nothing but harm to the colony's standard of living, and the introduction of an "inferior" race would progressively impair Queensland's democratic institutions.

However, in 1874, an argument of this kind, coloured as it was with considerations of race and the inviolability of a white society, possessed only embryonic potency; though pushed with conviction, it had not the political power of persuasion which similar arguments in later years acquired. On the contrary,

most people were still convinced that the principle of coloured labour in some form was incontestable on purely economic grounds.

Thus, the inflammable issue at hand was, in reality, a difference to be found in the camp of the protagonists of coloured labour: between those who advocated coloured labour as cheap labour per se (that is to say, labour which need not necessarily be confined either to the tropical area of the colony or to the sugar industry), and those who condoned coloured labour as being essential for tropical agriculture (that is to say, labour which should be restricted to the tropics and to the sugar industry in such a way as not to compete with white labour on an open market or to endanger the living standards of the colony as a whole).

Ironically enough, it was not Macalister, but a Northerner, Macrossan, who seized on these basic issues, divested all arguments of their superfluous rhetoric, and laid bare the sharp, though hitherto concealed, dichotomy between the several vested interests concerned. In doing so, he split the North, pushed public opinion a little further into the anti-colour camp, and turned into positive channels the amorphous "liberal" sentiment which eventually put an end to the entire system of coloured labour.

Speaking late in the debate, he admitted that, even when he had come to the House that night, it had been his intention to support Fitzgerald's motion. However, when two squatting members, Ivory and Morehead, had supported it simply as a source of cheap labour (obviously looking forward to its extension beyond the cane fields), he was forced to change his mind. Quite emphatically, Macrossan said that he would not countenance coloured competition with European labour; ". . . if the honourable member for Bowen, in bringing forward his motion could so manage it as to confine this class of labour to the sugar industry and to that portion of the colony which, it was admitted, was unsuited for European labour, then he should vote for it, but on no other condition could he reconcile himself to do so."⁽³⁷⁾ Coolies he would have, but only so long as they were kept within bounds and certainly not at all once there was a chance of their operating beyond the

cane fields and so endangering standards of white labour in other industries.

Obviously, while not even the northern members could agree, Fitzgerald's motion had no hope of success. It was defeated by eighteen votes to twelve,⁽³⁸⁾ and the coolie question was thereby forced into abeyance until the Conservatives came into office in 1878.

Largely as a result of his own personal influence⁽³⁹⁾ during the landslide election of 1878, Macrossan was able to secure a solid ministerial bloc of nine votes—the "Northern Nine"—in the Government which McIlwraith subsequently formed. In view both of this resounding success and the fact that Macrossan had not abandoned his "coolies under safeguards" ideas in the intervening years, it was inevitable that some move would be made in the interests of the sugar industry. Such a move was taken in 1881 when McIlwraith included in the Estimates a sum of money to cover the appointment of an Emigration Agent in British India;⁽⁴⁰⁾ in doing so the first substantial indication was given that a definite move would be taken to implement the 1862 coolie Act. The Premier immediately conducted long and painstaking negotiations with India for the formulation of comprehensive regulations under which coolie immigration to Queensland could be set in motion.⁽⁴¹⁾

Fully aware of the electorate's sensitivity to the whole question of coloured labour⁽⁴²⁾—particularly with regard to the precise conditions under which it would be introduced—McIlwraith took two carefully planned steps in the direction of creating a public state of mind which would ratify the action he proposed to take. The Regulations already framed under the 1862 Act were revised so as to ensure, first, that the coolies imported as labourers would not remain and settle in Queensland after their term of hiring was completed, and second, that their employment would be restricted to tropical agriculture.⁽⁴³⁾

Griffith, in opposition, was still not disposed to accept McIlwraith's proposed course of action. Speaking in support of a Bill which he immediately introduced to repeal the 1862 Act, he put forward the usual arguments against coloured labour: that it would introduce a class of servile labour; that it would deter

European immigration to the colony; that it would be dangerous competition for white labour; that, being British subjects, Indian coolies would be entitled to full political rights after six months' residence in the colony.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In particular, he objected to the provision of the 1862 Act that any alteration in the Regulations was a matter for executive and not parliamentary approval.⁽⁴⁵⁾

In view of the provisos which he had already added to the Regulations, which were felt to be sufficient safeguard, McIlwraith was willing to make only one further concession to Griffith's demands. He proposed an amendment to Griffith's Bill which provided for parliamentary rather than executive approval before any action could be taken under the new regulations. In this, he was supported by Macrossan who took the view that coolies, as inhabitants of British India, could not legally be refused entry into the colony, and that, in consequence, Griffith's Bill was pointless.⁽⁴⁶⁾

In supporting McIlwraith's amendment, Macrossan, as always, was anxious about labour supplies for the sugar industry; he was honestly convinced (as were many of both parties at that time) that Europeans were unsuited for employment in the tropics, and was fully satisfied that McIlwraith had done all in his power to prevent coloured labour from competing with European labour by circumscribing the former's employment.⁽⁴⁷⁾ In any case, he felt that it was better to lay down governmental regulations before the planters took the initiative and commenced immigration on their own account.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Griffith's Bill was negatived, and McIlwraith based a short Bill on his amendment which subsequently passed into law as "The Indian Immigration Act Amendment Act." "The planters were jubilant."⁽⁴⁹⁾

McIlwraith then, in a moment of judicious political insight, had secured the statutory prerequisite for the importation of Indian coolies. The planters were content, the squatters were forced to accept a fait accompli, and the opponents of coloured labour were powerless because McIlwraith's safeguards had satisfied a potentially antagonistic public opinion.

Yet, his negotiations with the Indian Government did not proceed with a smoothness such as would have

guaranteed the immediate introduction of coolies into the colony. In the first place, conditions governing the emigration of coolies from India were not the same as they had been in 1862; successive enactments of the Indian Government⁽⁵⁰⁾ for the protection of coolie immigrants demanded compliance with new and stringent conditions. In particular, the Queensland Government was asked to send a representative to India for personal discussions on such questions as the appointment of a Protector of Immigrants (who would possess Indian experience and have some knowledge of Indian languages), the welfare of coolies in Queensland, the proportion of female to male immigrants, the payment of return passages, the hours and conditions of work, and the grounds for the cancellation of contracts.⁽⁵¹⁾

So that the minutest details could be worked out, McIlwraith despatched an agent to India to act on behalf of the Queensland Government.⁽⁵²⁾ However, before his arrival in India, further correspondence between McIlwraith and the Indian Government revealed that McIlwraith's "safeguards," designed primarily to protect the Queenslander from the coolie, would not necessarily be acceptable to the Indian Government as sufficient safeguard for the coolie against exploitation by Queenslanders.⁽⁵³⁾ Specifically, the Indian Government "expressed regret" that the Queensland Government's object of restricting the employment of Indian immigrants to tropical agriculture could create a state of affairs which would be most prejudicial to the best interests of the coolies; "the Governor-General-in-Council [was] unable to acquiesce in the proposal under which a British Indian subject [would] be exposed to the punishment of imprisonment for engaging himself in service other than that on account of which he was imported."⁽⁵⁴⁾

In framing the regulation to which the Indian Government took exception, McIlwraith explained that he had been influenced solely by the desire to confine coolies to tropical or semi-tropical agriculture by compelling them to return to India upon the expiration of their contracts, or, alternatively, by insisting upon the renewal of their contracts in the same type of agriculture—"thus preventing them from mixing with the

European population in the towns of the colony.”⁽⁵⁵⁾ He therefore assumed that the objection of the Indian Government was limited, not to their employment in tropical agriculture as such, but to the specific penalty proposed for coolies who transgressed the Queensland Government regulations. If this were the case, then he would be quite willing to recast the Regulations so that responsibility for evading the law would rest with the employer rather than with the coolie. In McIlwraith’s opinion, this could be effectively accomplished by placing a contractual obligation on the coolie not to work in other than tropical agriculture, and by imposing heavy penalties on those Queensland employers who sought to employ coolies in non-tropical industry.⁽⁵⁶⁾

On one other point the Indian Government showed that it was willing to make no concessions to expediency. This concerned the appointment and maintenance of a Protector of Immigrants to be stationed in Queensland. While McIlwraith had already made provision in the public Estimates for the salary of an Emigration Agent in India, he seems to have been reluctant to hold himself responsible for the further charge on the public funds which the appointment of a Protector would have involved.⁽⁵⁷⁾ On the contrary, he saw no necessity for the appointment of such an officer by the Indian Government and solicited its views on a proposal to combine the position of Protector with that of Immigration Agent-Chief Inspector of Pacific Islanders.⁽⁵⁸⁾ “He [the Chief Inspector of Pacific Islanders] had a well-organised staff, consisting of officers residing in several districts of the colony charged with the duty of carrying out the provisions of ‘The Pacific Islands Labourers’ Act,’ and these officers could be available for work usually undertaken by the Protector.”⁽⁵⁹⁾ But the Indian Government was unbending. “With respect to the Protector of Immigrants the Government of India is unable to withdraw conditions under which the appointment of a Protector is required who shall be responsible for the general well-being of the coolies to the Government of India, and shall also be under its general control.”⁽⁶⁰⁾

Faced yet again with the threat of a breakdown in negotiations, and fearful of the political consequences should he adopt an intransigent position, McIlwraith

readily acceded to the demands of the Indian Government.⁽⁶¹⁾ He had only now to introduce a second short Bill which would accommodate these requirements, and Indian coolie immigration could begin. However, before this could be done, there was a change in Government⁽⁶²⁾ and the new Premier, Griffith, “thanked the Government of India for its readiness to meet the wishes of the Colonial Government in the matter [of coolie immigration] but stated that it was not the intention of the present Government of Queensland to submit to Parliament for approval any regulations for the introduction of Indian immigrants.”⁽⁶³⁾

To prevent any future Government from trying to introduce coolie labour through a temporary majority in the Queensland Parliament, Griffith immediately introduced a Bill to repeal the two Indian Immigration Acts as soon as the Assembly reassembled in January 1884.⁽⁶⁴⁾ As might have been expected the debate was inclined to digress from the point at issue, that is to say, the pros and cons of repeal, into a general argument on the advantages and disadvantages of coloured labour. Even those who opposed unrestricted coloured labour felt that Griffith’s Bill was pointless and even dangerous, since, in the event of the Indian Government’s changing its legislation restricting the emigration of coolies, then private individuals might be in a position to import coolie labour. Naturally, should such a contingency arise, and should the Queensland Government have repealed its own legislation relating to coolie labour, then it would be quite impotent to control private use of such labour.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The “Brisbane Courier” was disposed to support this stand which was taken by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Morehead. In successive editorials which appeared between January 11 and 17, the “Courier” deprecated the waste of time which discussion of the coolie issue involved,⁽⁶⁶⁾ and considered that “the repeal of the existing law [would] be no safeguard against the future introduction of coolies or against the ‘social revolution’ that Griffith [dreaded].⁽⁶⁷⁾ In fact, that social revolution—which, if ever it was to be brought about, would be due to the introduction of Asiatics who would compete with whites in the general labour market, and not to the importation of mere field

hands—[could] not be obviated by the absence of a Coolie Act from our Statute Book.”⁽⁶⁸⁾

In spite of the fact that Griffith's Bill was defeated in the Legislative Council by two votes and did not become law, the sugar planters had ample reason to view with alarm the Premier's apparent determination to put an end to the coloured labour supply.⁽⁶⁹⁾ After 1884 the sugar industry was threatened with the collapse of the Kanaka system at a time when the sugar market was already depressed because of the over-production of beet sugar in Europe;⁽⁷⁰⁾ accordingly, in a desperate effort to preserve their interests, the planters showed their willingness to guarantee the payment of all expenses incurred by the Government in bringing coolies to the colony.⁽⁷¹⁾ If the planters could induce the Indian Government to allow them, as individuals, to introduce coolies, would the Queensland Government place any obstacles in the way?⁽⁷²⁾

Griffith's reply was quite explicit. Not only would he do everything in his power to prevent the introduction of Indian coolies under private enterprise, but he would regard Indian Government compliance with the planters' proposals as an unfriendly act.⁽⁷³⁾ Nor did the Premier stop here. “Seizing on the tide of public feeling rising against the use of coloured labour because of certain New Guinea scandals, the Liberals, in 1886, carried out their resolution to remove [the Indian Coolie] Acts from the Statute Book.”⁽⁷⁴⁾ On this occasion the Opposition had no particular objection to the removal of the Acts (largely, it seems, because the labour position for the sugar planters had very much improved over that of the previous years),⁽⁷⁵⁾ though many accused him of using this new repeal Bill as another opportunity of remaining popular with the electors.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Any analysis of the coolie issue in Queensland would be incomplete without some attempt to explain Sir Samuel Griffith's motives in resisting the various proposals for the indenture of Indian coolies, for, obviously, the man's implacable opposition to Indian labour was the decisive factor which ensured their ultimate miscarriage.

Many writers of Queensland history have found the character of Griffith elusive in view of the difficulty

which confronts them of reconciling his actions with his stated beliefs—and on no one question does he emerge as a figure of more dubious integrity than on the whole question of coloured labour. It seems, however, that the Indian coolie labour question can throw some light on this embarrassing dualism which was Griffith the man and Griffith the politician.

Much of the confusion surrounding his person is due in no small part to the conflict between Griffith's vehement denunciations of coloured labour and the actual steps he took to give effect to his pronouncements. And his views were certainly explicit.

First, he doubted the validity of the assumption that the climate of North Queensland was unsuitable for white labour: "I believe that the land can be cultivated by Europeans and that it will be so cultivated, but under different conditions, unless that result is defeated by the introduction of Asiatic labourers in large numbers . . ." ⁽⁷⁷⁾

Second, he was particularly concerned with the political consequences of a well-established system of coloured labour: "It is not desirable regarding Queensland or the northern portion of it, as a country which is to be civilised and governed on the model adopted in the rest of the Australian colonies, that a servile race should be introduced who can never be admitted to a share of political power, and whose interests will need protection by a paternal government . . ." ⁽⁷⁸⁾

Third, he feared the social and economic effects of Asiatic intrusion in a European society: "There . . . is no country in which Asiatic and European labourers are found working side by side on terms of equality. Where the Asiatic predominate or are admitted in considerable numbers, it is invariably found that they, being able to save money out of a pittance . . . would by degrees monopolise all branches of industry." ⁽⁷⁹⁾

When such pronounced views as these were contrasted with the same man's "hesitant gropings" at the coloured (Kanakan) labour problem as a whole, it could have been foreseen that Griffith would receive accusations of "placating a vocal minority for the sake of cheap electoral credit." ⁽⁸⁰⁾ Griffith's attitude to the Indian coolie issue might seem outwardly to substan-

tiate the argument of his detractors. Coolie labour was never an actual problem, and even were it to become so, the existing McIlwraith regulations must surely have ensured that it would never assume really dangerous dimensions. Thus, Griffith's persistent efforts to repeal the Indian Coolie Acts might be interpreted as no more than an innocuous sop proffered to the opponents of coloured labour in general, and a compromise of his own vigorous beliefs—that he was “‘humberging’ the public . . . that he was not really doing anything about the coloured labour problem . . . that he was hauling the dead coolie out of his grave simply to bury him for political purposes.”⁽⁸¹⁾

More than once he was criticised in this vein. “It is a mere trifling with the difficulty to talk about repealing the Indian Immigration Acts as a preventive against the colony being flooded with low class Asiatic labour Mr. Griffith and his followers are solemnly assuring the country that they will never allow the white labourers to be crowded out by coloured men, while the coloured men are landing literally in thousands. He told Mr. Black that it would be a poor way of preventing such an influx of Indian coolies, but he must surely know that the only reason why planters are importing miscellaneous labour is because they are not permitted to bring over Indians”⁽⁸²⁾

However, such outright condemnation as this was totally unjustified; and while it is never possible to understand the enigma which is any man, it is possible to explain (and to a large extent vindicate) his actions by constructing a balanced view of the whole complex of motives which underlies them. It is the relationship of the North Queensland Separation Movement to the coloured labour issue which completes this complex in Griffith's case; and it is this which provides the key to an understanding of Griffith's actions just as coolie labour provided Griffith with the key to an understanding of the place which coloured labour held in the Separatist scheme of things.

The argument is this: that until 1883-84, when the planters were content to seek coloured labour outside the Separation movement, and while the belief was still widespread that white labour was incapable of

effective work in tropical agriculture, Griffith was also content to limit his attacks on coloured labour to the relatively unimportant coolie issue. In doing this, he was compromising his own beliefs and acting so as not to offend any interests. When, however, it became obvious that the planters were behind the North Queensland Separation movement en bloc and were looking forward to coloured labour as a system of universal cheap labour (that is to say, labour not confined to certain industries) in a new North Queensland colony, then Griffith realised that no further compromise could be made if North Queensland were to be saved for the colony—and, as already suggested, it was the coolie labour dispute in 1883-84 which revealed to Griffith this clandestine relationship.

In the prior correspondence which had taken place between Griffith and the planters' representatives⁽⁸³⁾ regarding the planters' attempt to introduce Indian coolies under private enterprise, the last letter pointedly alluded to the Separation movement in North Queensland which, at that time, was experiencing a sudden recrudescence. The Premier had previously expressed the opinion that to offer the planters any facilities for obtaining the labour they deemed necessary by a system of regulated immigration from India, while it might create a temporary prosperity in certain districts of Queensland, would have an unfavourable effect upon Queensland as a country attractive to European immigration;⁽⁸⁴⁾ he had therefore urged the planters to try "fairly" European labour.⁽⁸⁵⁾

The planters' spokesman, Jeffray, made an unfortunate reply. Discarding caution, and making no attempt to answer Griffith's refusal with a safe restatement of the traditional reasons underlying the demand for coloured labour in the tropics, he replied simply that it was no use hiding any longer the real difference between cheap and dear labour.⁽⁸⁶⁾ To this admission he added the implied threat that unless Griffith candidly accepted the facts of the case as they stood, then the Premier's continued refusal of the planters' demands might "have an important practical bearing upon the progress of a movement having for its object the redress of whatever grievances arise out of a

system based upon a supposed but unreal uniformity of industrial and political requirements.”⁽⁸⁷⁾

This seemed to show beyond question that the would-be employers of Indian labour would give their unequivocal support to the Separation movement in a final attempt to obtain the coloured labour they required. It served to confirm a suspicion which Griffith must have been nurturing for some months, deriving from a letter which two northern planters had addressed to the Colonial Office: “. . . . Coloured labour, which is absolutely necessary for tropical agriculture, is denied to the inhabitants of the North by the representatives of the South or temperate portions of the colony, and the development of one of the main sources of prosperity in the colony is thereby completely stopped. The inhabitants of North Queensland are anxious to obtain coolies from India under proper regulations and supervision, and so put an end entirely to the Polynesian labour traffic, which is a fertile source of omnes troubles and complications. This is refused by the South On the ground, therefore, (1) of the enormous territory and want of adequate supervision, (2) of the unjust dealing with loans and revenue, (3) of the great difference of policy as regards coloured labour, and (4) of the precedent afforded by the separation of Queensland from New South Wales in 1859, we sincerely trust that Her Majesty’s Government will see their way to dividing tropical from temperate Queensland”⁽⁸⁸⁾

This rather obvious stressing of coloured labour as being the planters’ main interest in the Separation movement had vital repercussions which not only altered the entire complexion of the coloured labour issue, but tipped the balance of non-partisan opinion to the side of the anti-Separationists in the controversy over the political future of North Queensland. It brought cohesion to the ranks of the opponents of coloured labour just as it sowed discord among the protagonists of Separation. The “unionists” could now charge that the people who wanted separation were the same who denounced the amended rules drawn up for the protection of Kanakas as “cast-iron regulations” which were “harassing and strangling the sugar industry.”⁽⁸⁹⁾ They pointed out — and their appeals

were heard with increasing conviction—that such a northern colony could not be democratic since it would mean the rule of the employed by the employing class. Let all who enter the Northern colony—should it be formed—abandon hope of a European civilisation.⁽⁹⁰⁾

The North Queensland Separation League at once felt called upon to repudiate the motives attributed to it. In a letter addressed to the Governor of Queensland in reply to Griffith's attacks, it was pointed out that the labour question had "never even in the most remote degree come into the programme of the Separation League initiated in 1882."⁽⁹¹⁾ It was further denied that any connection existed between the League and the letter of Messrs. Davidson and Lawes. The League wished to remind the colonists that the question of the introduction of coloured labour had already been settled in the negative by the action of Parliament in 1885, in setting a time limit to the introduction of Kanaka labour and in repealing the Coolie Act of 1862.⁽⁹²⁾ If Separation was granted and a representative Government elected in North Queensland, then that Government would have to leave the ultimate decision of political questions in the hands of the electors who would have as much power to forbid coolie labour after Separation as before it. "Granting that the majority of the electors voted against coolie labour at the general election of 1883, it is to be presumed they would do the same when electing a Parliament of their own."⁽⁹³⁾

Apart from this official objection to Griffith's charges that the movement was planter inspired and that it was using Separation as a facade to conceal the real motive of securing cheap coloured labour, another letter was received by the Governor signed by twenty sugar planters of the Mackay district expressing concern with Griffith's now frequent insinuations that "the present movements for the territorial separation in Queensland originated with what he is pleased to call the 'planting party' The chief cause of the desire for separation, if honestly sought, may be found in the deep-rooted conviction that ever since the creation of the colony its Government has been rapidly deteriorating. . . . We may state with regard to coloured labour that we neither desire nor expect in the new colony any action to be taken which will not be for the welfare of

all classes of the community; but we do expect that any such action will be, after proper consideration, taken honestly and straight-forwardly in the interests of the whole of the State, and not for party purposes only; or worse still, for the fraudulent purposes of entrapping capitalists into investments with the intention of eventually destroying their securities, as has been done by the Government of Queensland to those who have invested in its sugar industry.”⁽⁹⁴⁾

This last rebuttal was evidently repeated by English capitalists who sympathised with the Separation movement because of the fertile ground for lucrative investment which a colony of North Queensland might provide: “. . . . A few people in England who have invested their capital in Queensland on the strength of the invitations and acts of previous Queensland Governments, and who consider themselves aggrieved by the conduct of the present Government, cannot do more than express their sympathy with the people in North Queensland in their desire to be separated from the South”⁽⁹⁵⁾

However, these denials, presenting as they did in combination evidence (however circumstantial) of an apparent collusion between British capitalist, Queensland planter and Northern Separationist interests, defeated the purpose for which they were written. When placed beside the unthinking admission of Jeffray⁽⁹⁶⁾ as to the real motives behind the planters' appeals for coloured labour, they merely rendered abortive the plea of the Separation League that the aims of Separation and planter ambitions were both separate and mutually irreconcilable. Griffith was thus able to announce, “unhesitatingly, and with conviction,” that “the demand for coloured labour is almost exclusively confined to persons interested directly or indirectly in the agricultural lands on the coast, while the town and mining populations and persons interested in pastoral pursuits (except some of the run-owners) are almost unanimously opposed to it.”⁽⁹⁷⁾ Governor Musgrave found himself substantially in agreement with Griffith's conclusion.⁽⁹⁸⁾

The simultaneous revival of the Separation and Indian coolie labour movements had thus helped to render intelligible what hitherto had been blurred.

First, it had shown the extent of planter interest in the Separation movement itself; second, it had exposed the planters' motives in supporting the movement; third, and most important, it had brought into perspective the essential issues involved in the entire coloured labour controversy. Whether white labour could or could not work in the tropics was now a matter of secondary importance: the planters had indicated that their desire was the institution of a system of universal cheap labour; therefore their own aims (and, counterminous with these, the aims of Separation) had to be thwarted in the interests of the preservation of a European society—a society which, above all, should be economically secure and socially homogeneous.

The result was to inspire Griffith with a sense of passionate dedication (since, for the first time, he had a clear appreciation of what had to be accomplished) in his chosen mission of removing from the Statute Books for all time the source of the colony's perpetual agony, that is, all acts relating to coloured labour. Coolie labour was merely one of the first steps to be taken, and because it was the first to appear as an urgent issue (through the fortuitous coincidence of circumstances just outlined) it was the first to be completed.

The repeal of the Indian Immigration Acts in 1886 represented the end of the twenty-year-old agitation to bring coolies to Queensland, though it is true, as one writer has suggested,⁽⁹⁹⁾ that memories and hopes died hard. The "Brisbane Courier," for example, "always had a sneaking fondness for coolies,"⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ and found it hard to divest itself of sympathies that had been gradually evoked over a long period of time and then vigorously proselytised: "the colony cannot afford to allow the sugar industry to be crippled, and if there are any people so ignorant as to fancy that because they are not directly concerned in sugar an injury to the planters will not affect them, they may have a rude awakening from their comfortable sense of security."⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Always, the importance of the Indian coolie question in colonial society was circumscribed by the controversy which ranged round that of Kanaka labour. The measure of this limitation may perhaps be seen in

the indifferent, and, on the whole, non-partisan attitude of the British Government which was quite willing to refer back to the Queensland Government any matters relating to the coolie issue which were brought directly to its notice.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Similarly, in Queensland, there was much the same unwillingness, amounting almost to disdain, to treat "coolie labour" as an urgent social problem: it never became a reality, so it aroused neither violent zeal on the one hand nor extreme apathy on the other. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Yet, for a generation, "coolie labour" refused to leave the sidelines of Queensland politics. If it did not excite public opinion, if it did not provoke wild emotions, if it did not cause Governments to totter in the way Kanaka labour was able to do, it was still apt to appear as an integral part of the entire problem of coloured labour—and it is precisely here that its importance lies. In the chaos of argument and counter-argument which surrounded coloured labour, the Indian coolie question possessed a catalytic function, now clarifying, now revivifying, now reconstituting the essential issues which had to be resolved.

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1. See Reports of the Queensland Agents-General for Emigration, *passim*, in *Votes and Proceedings*. In the 'sixties and 'seventies, petitions and arguments in favour of coolie immigration to the colony all stressed the shortage of labour in Queensland.
 2. Memorial from Sir Charles Nicholson and Landed Proprietors, Stockholders and others. Q.V. & P. (1861), p. 629.
 3. Quoted in MOLESWORTH, B. H., *History of Kanaka Labour in Queensland*, unpublished thesis, University of Queensland Library, p. 9.
 4. Bowen to Colonial Secretary, 6/1/1860; *Governors' Despatches to the Secretary of State* (1859-61), pp. 25-34.
 5. *loc. cit.*
 6. See, for example, petition from Land Stockholders, merchants and other inhabitants of the district of Maryborough (signed by 92 persons), Q.V. & P. (1861), p. 627.
 7. *loc. cit.*
 8. Bowen to Colonial Secretary, 6/1/1860, *cit. sup.*, quoting 'A Letter to the Colonists of Queensland.'
 9. See MOLESWORTH, B. H., *op. cit.*, p. 11.
 10. *ibid.*, p. 10.
 11. *loc. cit.*
 12. "The strong feeling excited by the presence of Chinese in New South Wales and Victoria caused (Queensland) to glance only cursorily towards China." See WILLARD, M., *op. cit.*, p. 101.
 13. A summary of the regulations had been despatched to Bowen from the Colonial Secretary, Newcastle (26/4/1861), in reply to the Governor's despatch of 18/12/1860.
 14. See Memorial from Mr. Louis Hope and Others to the Duke of Newcastle; Q.V. & P. (1861), p. 631; see also Governor Bowen's comments in his despatch, 18/12/1860, *cit. sup.*
 15. A copy of this act may be found in the *Queensland Government Gazette*, 1862, p. 341.
 16. The periods of contract were not to exceed three years, and the immigrant was obliged to bind himself to "industrial residence" in the colony for a further period of two years after his contract was completed. To prevent a repetition of the Kanaka fiasco in New South Wales, these contracts were made subject to the provisions of the "Masters and Servants Act, 1861," i.e., they were to be enforce-

able on both employer and coolie. Special agents for Queensland employers were to be licensed by the Queensland Government and were to be under the control of the Government Emigration Agent of the Indian Presidency in which they were stationed. A scale of wages and rations was to be arranged with the Indian Government. Finally, the possibility of friction between coolies and aborigines may be seen in Clause 43 whereby permission to employ coolies was to be given only to persons resident in the settled portions of the colony.

17. See above, p. 55.
18. See MOLESWORTH, B. H., op. cit., p. 11.
19. loc. cit.
20. See Q.P.D. (1874), Vol. 17, p. 908.
21. loc. cit.
22. loc. cit.
23. See Q.V. & P. (1874), Vol. 2, p. 413: “. . . In support of this our petition, we call your attention to the excessive heat and the tropical nature of our district; the great scarcity of white labour, and its uncertain nature, owing to the proximity of the gold fields; the vast extent of waste agricultural land, which, to the loss of the colony generally, must remain unproductive unless coloured labour be had; the growing importance of the sugar-producing industry—an industry in which an immense capital is invested, and which, under all conditions, employs white skilled labour largely, and which, unless a steady supply of coloured labour be obtained, must, to the detriment of the colony, cease to exist; it being an acknowledged fact that no country has ever been able to produce cane-sugar remuneratively without the assistance of coloured labour.”
24. loc. cit.
25. See *Brisbane Courier*, 2/2/1874! also BRYAN, H., *Macrossan and the Genesis of the White Australia Policy*, in the JOURNAL OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1954), p. 885.
26. On July 7.
27. See BRYAN, H., op. cit., p. 886, n. 3: “O’Kane, a journalist of Irish extraction, was a very loud and sometimes quite important voice in the North at this time. He was never very happy about Macrossan, and from the day the latter joined the ranks of the Conservatives, never ceased to assail him in print with much vigour and little decency. Said O’Kane of this Manifesto: ‘Hodgkinson and Macrossan were made catspaws to work out the coolie scheme of the astute Fitzgerald. Hence the famous Northern Manifesto’” (in *Northern Miner*, 2/2/1876).
28. Q.P.D. (1874), Vol. 17, p. 907.
29. Though this was, to some extent, a factor. “. . . Already the supply of Polynesian labour is found inadequate to meet the requirements of the planters, and independent of any other objections which may exist in procuring labour from that quarter, it is evident that, if sugar planting is to become a settled industry in this colony, it is necessary that we should look either to India or China for a regular supply of coolie labour.” See Normanby to Her Majesty’s Consul, Amoy, 3/8/1874; Q.V. & P. (1875), Vol. 2, p. 560.
30. Q.P.D. (1874), Vol. 17, p. 908.
31. loc. cit.
32. See Normanby to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7/8/1874; Q.V. & P. (1875), Vol. 2, p. 561.
33. Q.P.D. (1874), Vol. 17, p. 909.
34. This attitude of undisguised animosity towards Chinese labour was a factor common to every section of Queensland society—the planters included. In this respect, colonial opinion had not undergone any change since 1860: the danger of the “Yellow Peril” was felt to be sufficiently acute to outweigh the possible advantages which might be got from cheap Chinese labour. However, during the current revival of the coolie labour issue in 1874, the Governor of Queensland, Lord Normanby, seems to have been much more attracted to the potentialities of Chinese, rather than Indian, labour. In the latter half of that year Normanby entered into an extensive correspondence with the Colonial Secretary and the British Consul at Amoy, China, with a view to ascertaining the conditions under which Chinese labourers might be brought to Queensland. After some time, the Governor communicated the results of his negotiations to the Queensland Premier, Macalister. He was brusquely informed that “the Government are opposed to any action that would savour of encouragement to Chinese immigration.” Whereupon, Normanby wrote to his correspondent in Hong Kong on May 7, 1875, thanking him for his letters, but concluding: “. . . It would seem that my Ministers do not regard Chinese emigration to this colony with any favour; so that the valuable information you have been good enough . . . to supply and obtain cannot at present be turned to practical account.”
See Q.V. & P. (1875), Vol. 2, pp. 555 et seq.
35. Q.P.D. (1874), Vol. 17, p. 910.
36. loc. cit.

37. Q.P.D. (1874), Vol. 17, p. 918.
38. Q.P.D. (1874), Vol. 17, p. 925. The division was as follows:
Ayes, 12: Messrs. Palmer, Bell, Ivory, Moreton, Wienholt, Fitzgerald, Morehead, Buzacott, Royds, Thompson, Nind, Bailey.
Noes, 18: Messrs. MacDevitt, Macalister, Stephens. Fraser, McIlwraith. Dickson, Griffith, Hemmant, Beattie, Edmonstone. Macrossan, Low. Hodgkinson, Fryar, Morgan, Miles, Thorn, Stewart.
39. See BRYAN, H., *op. cit.*, p. 887.
40. Q.V. & P. (1882), Vol. 2, p. 543.
41. *ibid.*, pp. 544-60.
42. Scarcely had McIlwraith made his intentions known, when the Assembly received a petition from certain residents of Brisbane decrying the proposed steps which the Government was contemplating. The petitioners "viewed with feelings of the deepest anxiety and alarm the proposed introduction into Queensland of large numbers of coolies to work on the sugar plantations, having learned from the practical experience of other countries where Asiatics have been employed, in the first instance for sugar growing, that they have in a brief space of time invaded every avenue of labour and industry previously occupied by Europeans, and completely pauperised and driven out the latter; they [further] . . . are strongly convinced that the labour market will be seriously disturbed . . . and therefore claim your protection.
 See Q.V. & P. (1882), Vol. 2, p. 561.
43. Q.P.D. (1882), Vol. 37, p. 191. Speaking in support of a Bill which he immediately introduced to repeal the 1862 Act, Griffith, showing some surprise that McIlwraith was prepared to make these concessions, said: ". . . That such safeguards are included at all, even at this late stage in the proceedings, is due, I venture to think, mainly to [Macrossan]; I believe the Honourable the Minister for Works had a good deal to do with them. I have no doubt that if that gentleman had not been a member of the Government, the matter would not have occurred to them."
44. Q.P.D. (1882), Vol. 37, p. 98.
45. *ibid.*, p. 188. The provision made in this respect under the old 1862 Act stated: "It shall be lawful for the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, to issue by proclamation in the Government Gazette, such Regulations as may be necessary to provide for the introduction into this colony of immigrants from Her Majesty's East Indian possessions and for the maintenance, control and protection of such immigrants."
46. Q.P.D. (1882), Vol. 37, p. 204.
47. *loc. cit.*
48. *ibid.*, p. 207.
49. See WILLARD, M., *op. cit.*, p. 102.
50. See E. C. Buck (Secretary to the Government of India) to Queensland Colonial Secretary, 13/9/1881; Q.V. & P. (1882), Vol. 2, pp. 544-6.
51. *loc. cit.*
52. Queensland Colonial Secretary to Secretary to the Government of India, 24/10/1881; Q.V. & P. (1882), Vol. 2, pp. 546-7. The representative was a Mr. C. P. O'Rafferty "who was for some years in the Indian public service, and [was] well acquainted with the duties which an Emigration Agent under "The Indian Emigration Act, 1870" [would] be required to perform."
53. Secretary to the Government of India to Queensland Colonial Secretary, 16/10/1882; Q.V. & P. (1883), p. 429.
54. *loc. cit.*
55. Queensland Colonial Secretary to Secretary to the Government of India; *ibid.*, p. 423.
56. *ibid.*, p. 430.
57. McIlwraith to Secretary to the Government of India, 21/6/1882; Q.V. & P. (1882), Vol. 2, p. 549.
58. *loc. cit.*
59. *loc. cit.*
60. Secretary to the Government of India to Queensland Colonial Secretary, 16/10/1882; Q.V. & P. (1883), p. 429.
61. See McIlwraith to Secretary to the Government of India, 21/6/1883; Q.V. & P. (1883), p. 430.
62. On November 13, 1883, Sir Thomas McIlwraith announced in the Assembly that in consequence of his Government's having been defeated twice on the 8th of the same month, he had thought it his duty to tender his resignation to the Governor, and that the Ministry only held office until their successors could be appointed. On the same day, Mr. Sheridan, on behalf of the new Administration, informed the House that a new Ministry had been formed by Samuel Walker Griffith as Premier and Colonial Secretary. See Q.P.D. (1883-4), p. iv.
63. WILLARD, M., *op. cit.*, p. 102.
64. Q.P.D. (1883-4). Vol. 41, p. 55.

65. See, for example, the remarks of Messrs. Morehead (Balonne) and Norton (Port Curtis); *ibid.*, p. 56 and p. 57, respectively.
66. *Brisbane Courier*, 11/1/1884.
67. Griffith, in moving the second reading of his Bill on January 15, 1884, had maintained that a large majority of the country was opposed to the introduction of coolies. Although, as the existing law stood, any amendment of the Regulations governing the introduction of coolies had to be approved by Parliament, he feared that a time might come when a Government might be strong enough to have regulations formulated without much discussion. He therefore believed that should any future Government desire to propose the introduction of Indian coolies, it would be far better that it should have to do this through a formal Bill brought in the ordinary way before the House and receiving all the discussion which was given to other Bills. That would, he said, be a much greater safeguard than submitting mere Regulations—especially where a Bill “to revolutionise the social condition of the country” was concerned.
See Q.P.D. (1883-4), Vol. 41, p. 55.
68. *Brisbane Courier*, 16/1/1884.
69. In introducing his Bill to repeal the Indian Immigration Acts in January, 1884, Griffith had said that the Bill was part of his Government’s policy of dealing with the coloured labour question, and that it was intended to follow it up with Bills in regard to Chinese and Polynesian labour.
See Q.P.D. (1883-4), Vol. 41, p. 56.
70. See WILLARD, M., *op. cit.*, p. 103; see also R. J. Jeffray to Colonial Secretary, 4/10/1884; Q.V. & P. (1884), Vol. 2, p. 931: “The sudden collapse of the island supply of labourers has brought the question of labour into a position of extreme urgency, and there is not now time to trust to gradual change to an entirely new and experimental system based on the influx of European labourers under the sanction of the Government, even if that system possessed greater probable merits than it does.”
71. See J. E. Davidson and R. J. Jeffray to Earl of Derby, 9/7/1884; Q.V. & P. (1884), Vol. 2, pp. 927-8.
72. *loc. cit.*
73. Griffith to Governor of Queensland, 30/9/1884; Q.V. & P. (1884), Vol. 2, p. 929.
74. See WILLARD, M., *op. cit.*, p. 102.
75. See Q.P.D. (1886), Vol. 49, pp. 99 et seq. This is also corroborated by the Report of the Immigration Agent for the year 1885: “The demand for labour has not been throughout the year so brisk as I should like to have seen it, but I do not think that it has ever been so slack as it has at times been represented to be. It is now improving, and I have great hopes that it will continue to do so steadily. The classes most sought after have been domestic servants and farm labourers (single men); the demand, I believe, has always been equal to the supply, at fair wages.” See Q.V. & P. (1886), p. 921.
76. Q.P.D. (1886), Vol. 49, pp. 99 et seq.
77. See Griffiths to Governor of Queensland, 1/4/1885; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, p. 380.
78. *ibid.*, p. 381.
79. *loc. cit.*
80. The “vocal minority,” of course, being the working class. Thus, in the Assembly debate in 1884 on Griffith’s Bill to repeal the Indian Immigration Acts, Macrossan accused him of using the Bill as a “political skyrocket” designed to please “a certain section of the people.” Macrossan confined his speech to the argument that the Bill was pointless when the real danger was that the country was being over-run by Chinese. These, he said, were the real danger to the working class, not coolies. See Q.P.D. (1883-4), Vol. 41, pp. 55 et seq.
81. See the comments of the Opposition Leader, Mr. Norton, in the debate on “The Labourers from British India Acts Repeal Bill, 1886”; Q.P.D. (1886), Vol. 49, pp. 99 et seq.
82. *Brisbane Courier*, 17/1/1884.
83. See above.
84. Griffith’s to Jeffray, 23/10/1884; Q.V. & P. (1884), Vol. 2, p. 935.
85. *loc. cit.*
86. Jeffray to Griffith, 29/11/1884; Q.V. & P. (1884), Vol. 2, p. 938.
87. *loc. cit.*
88. Enclosure in despatch from Colonial Secretary to Governor of Queensland, 28/1/1885; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, p. 378. The original letter was addressed to the Colonial Secretary from J. E. Davidson and J. B. Lawes.
89. See Memorandum by Griffith, 1/4/1885; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, pp. 378-9.
90. *loc. cit.*
91. Council of the North Queensland Separation League to the Governor of Queensland, 2/8/1885; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, p. 387.
92. At this stage, the Bill had not yet been defeated in the Legislative Council.

93. Council of the North Queensland Separation League to the Governor of Queensland; op. cit., p. 387.
94. Messrs. Long and others to the Governor of Queensland; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, pp. 389-90.
95. Davidson to Colonial Secretary. 25/4/1885; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, pp. 380-2.
96. See above.
97. Griffith to Governor of Queensland, 1/4/1885; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, pp. 380-2.
98. See Governor of Queensland to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13/4/1885; Q.V. & P. (1885), Vol. 1, p. 383: "I do not share the opinion of Mr. Griffith that it will eventually be found impossible to successfully prosecute the cultivation of the sugar-cane in the tropics by means of white labour Yet there can be little doubt that the movement for Separation has originated with the sugar planters, who, I think, vainly hope that they will be able after Separation to carry their point and be allowed to introduce coolie immigration . . . (and) I greatly doubt that, as yet, any large influential section of the population of the North do really wish for Separation . . ."
99. See BRYAN, H., op. cit., p. 888.
100. *Brisbane Courier*, 16/1/1884.
101. loc. cit.
102. See, for example, the Colonial Secretary's reaction to the letter of Davidson and Lawes (cit. sup.) which contained matters which the planters regarded of primary importance to themselves. The letter was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary in the hope of British arbitration in the coolie issue. It was merely re-despatched to Griffith to be answered by him in his Memorandum, April 1, 1885.

ADDENDUM

Papers read during the year 1957 which were not available for publication were:

September 26: Presidential Address—A Rambling Retrospect. Sir Raphael Cilento, M.D., D.T.M. & H.Eng., Barrister.

May 23: The Leslie Letters. K. Waller, B.A.