

At the turn of the century Hope Valley was on the verge of becoming a very different sort of community. The missionaries had totally reorganized Aboriginal life on the Cape Bedford Reserve. In early 1900 Schwarz took new hope from his belief that the majority of the remaining 'Koko Yimidir tribe' were then living on the station.⁸⁴ Part of the job of the Mission was now to protect the remnants of Aboriginal populations in the North,⁸⁵ or, as Flierl expressed it in his report on the first ten years of Mission work at Cape Bedford, to give them 'a kind of Christian burial service, a kind of promising sunset glow, which cannot be followed by any bright dawn in this life here on Earth'.⁸⁶ The Hope Valley community was soon to be swelled by refugees from the failing Lutheran Missions at Marie Yamba (Proserpine) and Bloomfield, as well as by Roth's promised 'waifs and strays'. Schwarz saw Hope Valley, now with an established core of Christian families, poised to cohere and grow under his own authority and leadership.⁸⁷

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had begun to progress. Boys often went to Cooktown seeking food or tobacco; they left the dormitory to dance in 'heathen' camps or to attend ceremonies. One young Aboriginal after ten years of 'model' behaviour one day ran off and later appeared in Cooktown, married and working on a fisherman's boat.⁵¹

The story of Podaigo, as told by the missionaries in detail, reflects their view of the problems. A year after his arrival at Elim Schwarz singled out Podaigo, then fifteen years old and a mission 'veteran', as the best school pupil. He was diligent, quick to grasp work, sincere and obedient.⁵² Podaigo made a good impression on Poland the day he arrived in Elim⁵³ and, along with the girl Kakural (baptised Anna in 1896), appeared quickly to grasp and remember 'Christian concepts'.⁵⁴ Podaigo was also the first child to learn to sing newly translated Guugu Yimidhurr hymns properly, to acquire a true appreciation of the Gospel message, to be able to ask relevant questions about it,⁵⁵ and to have any success with arithmetic.⁵⁶ The missionaries claimed he once spontaneously praised Jesus for saving him when out at sea on the mission boat during a storm.⁵⁷

In 1889, however, when Podaigo was about sixteen, he began to show a certain restlessness. Poland thought he had begun 'to waver in his desire to please God', finding his manner vulgar and unpleasant when with other boys, unsure and nervous when with missionaries.⁵⁸ Once when he was being 'lazy and clumsy' Schwarz slapped him and, in the ensuing scene, Podaigo picked up a spear which Schwarz seized to beat him further.⁵⁹ Later the same year he again disappointed the missionaries by yielding to the urgings of certain elders and leaving the station to attend an initiation, where he could eat the forbidden yam.⁶⁰ When he returned, apologising for allowing the old men to lead him astray, Podaigo was punished by being banned from church services for one month. To the missionaries' surprise he appeared not to have forgotten his schooling or Bible stories. Though grown from a child to a youth taller than Poland, 'only spiritually he [had] not grown strong yet'.⁶¹

51 Poland to Connector, 20 May 1897, ND; see also Poland 1907, 1:12-14.

52 Schwarz report, KM 1888, #9.

53 Poland to Inspector, 21 June 1888, ND.

54 Poland to Inspector, 5 October 1888, ND.

55 Schwarz to Inspector, 17 October 1888, ND.

56 Poland to Inspector, 12 February 1889, ND.

57 Poland 1907, 1:13.

58 Poland to Inspector, 12 February 1889, ND (KM 1889, #5).

59 Poland to Inspector, 12 February 1889. Podaigo 'shook with helpless rage' at this treatment, though afterwards he apparently bore Schwarz no grudge.

60 Poland to Inspector, 6 June 1889, ND (KM 1889, #8).

61 Poland letter in KM 1889, #11.

In September 1889 Podaigo fell into disgrace. Poland later called it the saddest day in his professional career.⁶² While on the beach near Elim Podaigo and another boy chased two Elim schoolgirls along the beach and into the water, saying 'shocking and disgusting' things. Afterwards he apparently chose as punishment to be tied up one full morning rather than to leave the station, but Poland was shocked to find him unrepentant and defiant.⁶³ Shortly afterwards he picked up his spears and left the station,⁶⁴ returning before Christmas after having worked for a local settler. He was 'sullen but untroubled by guilt' and though he told the missionaries he had come back because he had been made to work on Sundays, he told other boys that he had returned because the settler had run out of tobacco.⁶⁵ Poland dispatched Podaigo to Hope Valley to work like the other older boys. Here he settled in, moody, but more capable than his fellows.⁶⁶

Although Podaigo had written a letter to Poland's bride-to-be in Germany,⁶⁷ he was not on the station when the white women arrived in late 1890. He had been sent back to the settler from whom, it appeared, he had stolen a shirt and a pipe. Schwarz wrote to him telling him he could return to the Mission if he repaid the stolen items.⁶⁸

Podaigo did not reappear for three years. On a Sunday in January 1893 he returned, accompanied by another long-time runaway. Poland had heard rumours that the boy, now nearly twenty, had been working around the McIvor River, and tried hard not to betray his joy at seeing him. 'It's me, I had to return to you, longing drove me back', Podaigo said. Poland thought him sincere, 'even though he used exactly the same words as all his countrymen use when they are feigning homesickness'.⁶⁹ During his absence Podaigo had explored his transformed homeland and his own position in it. He had been all over the Cape, up to Batavia River visiting the newly established Mission, and to the tip of Cape York itself, moving from one settler to the next, learning to speak English, to work as a stockman and 'sizing up the white man' though not very favourably. He had 'experienced brutality' and was in fact running from the police when he came back to the Mission although the police agreed to let him remain there. The missionaries were confident he would quickly catch up in school and hoped he might exert a good influence on other boys, enjoying the 'standing'

62 Poland 1907, 1:14.

63 Poland to Inspector, 28 September 1889, ND.

64 Poland to Inspector, 1 November 1889, ND (KM 1890, #2).

65 Poland to Inspector, 26 December 1889, ND (KM 1890, #4).

66 Poland to Inspector, 28 February 1890, ND (KM 1890, #6).

67 Poland 1907, 1:14.

68 Poland to Inspector, 22 December 1890, ND (KM 1891, #2).

69 Poland to Inspector, 21 February 1893, ND (KM 1893, #6).

Relations between Mission and government underwent a series of reversals. In April 1889 Police Magistrate Milman recommended the government grant the Mission an annual subsidy of £200, subject to his continued good opinion of Mission management.²⁴ Milman advised Schwarz to use the subsidy for rations and to keep meticulous records so as to justify further requests for assistance.²⁵ Schwarz, always sceptical, agreed that while Aborigines might well come to the Mission if promised government-supplied rations and that this was better than driving them from the towns or stations, he was nonetheless anxious about too many Aborigines flocking to Elim for free food. He was also dubious about depending on government aid which was contingent on the goodwill of a sympathetic police magistrate.²⁶ Schwarz's fears proved well founded; after a few years of favourable government inspections, the missionaries fell out with Police Magistrate Chester who in 1893 persuaded the government to cut off the subsidy. The official reason was to save money during a financial crisis, reflecting Chester's opinion that 'no practical result' had resulted from the Cape Bedford work and that:

no result at all commensurate with the outlay is ever likely to be shown by the latter station and especially since it is impossible for . . . the police to force the aboriginal children to remain in the schools, as such action would be contrary to the essentially voluntary principle of the scheme and would, moreover, inevitably break down.²⁷

The missionaries felt that the police magistrate had ordered the subsidy discontinued because he was unable to persuade Schwarz and Poland to send some educated, well-behaved Aboriginal girls into Cooktown to work as domestics. Chester was determined to have the girls, but the missionaries left the choice to the girls, who refused.²⁸ Cape Bedford received no government subsidy between 1893 and 1 April 1897, when £5 per month was granted for Aboriginal relief, apparently at Meston's suggestion.²⁹ In the interim the missionaries struggled to feed not only Aborigines but also themselves.³⁰ Uncertain funds were received from Neucendettelsau and emergency grants from South Australia.

²⁴ Milman report, 25 April 1889, QSA COL/139, #4058 of 1889; Poland to Inspector, 6 June 1889, ND.

²⁵ Schwarz to Inspector, 7 June 1889, ND (KM 1889, #8).

²⁶ Schwarz to Inspector, 10 July 1889, ND.

²⁷ Parry-Okeden to Rechner, 6 June 1894, LCA 1.2. The Police Magistrate argued, apparently without foundation, that ample native foods were available from the Reserve and the sea, so rations were unnecessary.

²⁸ KM 1894, #1.

²⁹ 'Relief for Cape Bedford, 1897-98', QSA COL/457, p.11; see also Meston 1896.

³⁰ Poland reported to Rechner on his own difficulties, 18 May 1891, KMZ 1892; Poland 1907, 1:16.

The government only approved a renewed annual subsidy of £100, 'conditionally on Missionaries Schwarz and Poland taking in hand some of the Cooktown aboriginal waifs and strays',³¹ after Schwarz approached Roth and argued that he had eighty or ninety Aborigines to feed daily who were otherwise starving. This was the beginning of a cooperative relationship between Schwarz and various Protectors of Aborigines and, over the years, many children from other parts of Queensland were transplanted to Cape Bedford.

Roth considered that a beneficial feature of the 1897 legislation was that it afforded protection to the missionaries who could (by taking out 'agreements' for employment 'on their own boys') keep Aborigines on the station. Without such agreements the young Aborigines 'as soon as they can make their way on their own, go off to Cooktown and accept any employment white people will give them'.³² The missionaries always had found their neighbours hostile to their enterprise, competing by underhand means for the services of the Aborigines the Lutherans also wanted.³³ The local settlers also had their eyes on mission land, often expressing the sentiment that setting aside useful land for Aborigines only impeded progress. Commercial timber-getters fought to gain access to the Reserve and they received the support of the Cooktown Chamber of Commerce.

. . . it is scarcely logical to stop the development of a district by locking up some of its richest natural resources as far as the white man is concerned, while they are freely vested in the blacks to whom they are of no use whatever. The position is intolerable and of injustice to the capitalist who has invested capital in the latest machinery [i.e. sawmills] for the purpose of converting this latent wealth into actual money.³⁴

At Cape Bedford the issue was cattle pasture. The Mission kept a small herd but neighbouring settlers freely ran their cattle on the Reserve,

³¹ Roth to Com. Pol., 6 June 1898, QSA COL/142, #7701 of 1898; also QSA COL/142: Schwarz to Roth, 16 March 1898, #15678 of 1898, and Roth to Com. Pol., 18 March 1898, #3421 of 1898 attachment; also QSA POL/1 Letterbook p.24, of 18 March 1898. Roth took a special interest in Cape Bedford and received letters written in Guugu Yimidhirr from Cape Bedford schoolgirls.

³² Roth's report, quoted in KM 1889, #3 and 4.

³³ Poland to Inspector, 12 December 1901, ND. Poland was once approached on a Cooktown street by a landowner in the area who wanted to hire some Elim schoolboys, (Poland to Inspector, 28 February 1890, ND). Meyer reported that settlers near Bloomfield were continually trying to lure natives from the mission (letter to Rechner, 3 January 1890, LCA 1.2); Meyer himself was later involved in the irregular recruitment of some mission boys for fishing boats, which ultimately led to the government's insistence that he be removed (Parry-Okeden to Rechner, 28 August 1890, LCA 1.2).

³⁴ Fruit, Cooktown Chamber of Commerce, to Minister for Lands, 14 July 1891, Queensland Department of Public Lands (LR) 86-89, #14917 of 1891.

miles distant, will there land them, and leaving them a small dinghy in which to reach the neighbouring reef where the bêche de mer is to be collected, he and his mates will return to their headquarters where they will revel in the society of the grass widows of the fish collectors, whom they will occasionally visit for the purpose of bringing in the fish obtained by them to the smoke house. Meanwhile the blacks will work patiently for a time, fed on a small allowance of 'sharps' (an inferior kind of flour) and such fish as they can catch. Those that get sick die unrelieved and unrecorded and they all live the hardest possible life, generally on the verge of starvation and frequently in want of water.²

Often Aborigines were put ashore hundreds of miles from their own districts, facing hostile tribes and predatory whites along their routes home.³ Women were detained on board for years at a time. Tooloo came to the attention of the police in Cooktown when she was around fifteen years old having been taken to sea some five years earlier by the schooner *Flirt*. Her companions were said to have run away off Cape Tribulation. She was left in the care of a Cooktown hotelkeeper, then 'decoyed away' by some native troopers. The captain of the *Flirt* tried to trace her, promising to return her to her native area and put her into domestic service.⁴ Another notorious incident occurred in 1882 when eighteen Aborigines aged nine to forty, procured from Townsville, arrived in Cooktown.

They drafted these 'boys' and gins after the manner of sheep, each captain casting lots for nine, mixed sexes, without reference to the inclinations or feelings naturally induced by the filial or friendly instincts of the parties concerned some of whom, I know, manifested a strong aversion to their separation. Amongst those who fell to the lot of Captain Webb of the 'Pride of the Logan' was a girl of 11 or perhaps 12 years old — a mere child, comparatively — who must have received shameful treatment on the voyage between Hinchinbrooke and Cooktown, as one Steve Barry, who belonged to the 'Reindeer' tender proceeded on board Webb's vessel, took forcible possession of this child, claimed her as his own and actually dragged her by the arm through the main thoroughfare of this town, despite my remonstrances until he lodged or secreted her in a public house, incidentally for very discreditable purposes.⁵

2 Parry-Okeden 1897 quoting John Douglas, Police Magistrate, Thursday Island.

3 Roth to Com. Pol., 6 May 1898, QSA COL/142, #6944 of 1898.

4 Blakesley to Robert Grey, 24 September 1879, QSA COL/A250, #3427 of 1879.

5 Fahey, Harbour Master to Collector of Customs, 2 March 1882, QSA COL/A333, #1385 of 1882.

Inspector Fitzgerald received advice that he possessed no powers to prevent 'the carrying off of gins'. The abduction of children, however, could be prosecuted.⁶

The abuse of women in the fishing industry became a significant demographic factor. Venereal disease, the exposed life on the boats, the insecure existence, and the likelihood of early death all affected women's capacity to reproduce and to rear children. Just as every diseased or drowned diver was lost to the Aboriginal community, each woman dead or diseased or unable to care for her baby was a loss to her own generation and those following. The rapidly dwindling numbers of Aborigines in the Cooktown area reflected this situation.

The treatment of women and girls by these boat crews was regarded by police as one of the main causes of murder by Aborigines⁷ and eventually the shipping of women and children was prohibited.⁸ Fishing crews had long been accustomed to paying Aboriginal fathers and husbands in food and tobacco for the sexual services of their women. Miners took temporary possession of women in similar ways, though violent conflicts often arose when miners refused to return women to their husbands. These practices and the ambiguous position of the children resulting from such unions forced the government to attempt to control access to Aboriginal women. White rights to female labour, and the movements of Aboriginal women, were controlled by legislation and refinements of policy during the ten years after mid-1890.

Colonial officials regarded Aboriginal women as even more dangerously sexual than European women:

We can hardly expect the emotions of the savage woman to be under more severe control than those of the white. All aboriginal girls, with a few rare exceptions, would drift towards one common destination involving their own degradation and additional burdens on the state.⁹

Even where they were in legitimate employment their 'unowned' sexuality was considered a problem because their employers dismissed them if they became pregnant.¹⁰

Control of the Aboriginal women was essential in the implementation of Aboriginal policy:

6 Fitzgerald to Col. Sec. (and minute by Seymour, Commissioner of Police), 2 March 1882, QSA COL/A333, #1385 of 1882.

7 See Fahey to Col. Sec., 23 June 1882, QSA COL/A340, #3552 of 1882; St. George to Seymour, 3 March 1882, QSA COL/A333, #1228 of 1882; Meston 1896.

8 QNPA (1899) 1900.

9 QNPA (1902) 1903.

10 QNPA (1902) 1903.

to give us so little?'⁷⁴ Quick to relate mission life to the promised Heavenly Paradise, they frequently asked 'How much food will there be in Heaven?' and 'How much work will be done there?'⁷⁵

The missionaries quickly realised that their goals were tied to a closed circle of necessity that was to plague them for sixty years. To become 'civilized', the Aborigines had to be induced to shun towns and other contacts with Europeans and to settle on the Mission; Aborigines were attracted to the Mission by ample supplies of food; such supplies could only be obtained through Aboriginal labour.⁷⁶ 'The only thing that could keep these wildly roaming hordes together at all is work; and if they are to work, they must be fed', wrote Pfalzer in 1887.⁷⁷ Thus began a continual, but rarely successful, effort to produce foodstuffs. The missionaries faced two insurmountable difficulties: they considered local Aborigines 'incorrigible loafers', in constant need of supervision, but always ready to eat rations.⁷⁸ They also discovered what early government officials already knew: that the land available was very poor. The missionaries searched the Reserve for better gardening areas, and Schwarz ultimately settled on the southern slopes of Cape Bedford, naming his station 'Hope Valley'.⁷⁹

Although Flierl considered religious instruction to be the greatest priority, in the first years the missionaries had little time for preaching. They lamented their lack of progress in spiritual matters. In fact their metaphors of religious enlightenment reflect their mundane preoccupations. Flierl commented on the religious training of Aboriginal women '... if they could learn to clear the garden of weeds, they might come to appreciate the weeds in their hearts and minds and prepare a fine clean bed to receive the blessed Seed of God's Word into their hearts'.⁸⁰ Pfalzer, in a more nutritive vein, hoped that 'the heathen's hunger for human flesh will soon be transformed into hunger for the Bread of Life'.⁸¹ At Bloomfield Meyer and his staff, somewhat apologetically, put spiritual work after building and cultivation activities.⁸²

74 Pfalzer to Inspector, 3 December 1888, ND (KM 1889, #3).

75 Meyer to Missions Congregation, Adelaide, 2 June 1888, LCA 1.2 (KM 1888, #9).

76 Schwarz to Inspector, 17 October 1888, ND.

77 Pfalzer to Inspector, 6 September 1887, ND (KM 1887, #12).

78 Meyer to Rechner, 5 August 1888, LCA 1.2.

79 The first attempt at cultivation in 1887-88 failed (Schwarz to Inspector, 27 December 1887, ND); another attempt was made in 1889-90 and Schwarz moved there permanently when Poland's bride arrived at Elim (Schwarz to Inspector, 21 October 1890, ND).

80 Flierl to Rechner, 6 March 1886, LCA 1.1.

81 Pfalzer to Inspector, 11 November 1886, ND (KM 1887, #2).

82 Meyer to Missions Congregation, 2 January 1889, LCA 1.2.

At Cape Bedford the missionaries tried to pursue Flierl's program of learning the language and saving souls. The Elim school was conducted in Guugu-Yimidhirr.⁸³ With the help of a *Diyari* evangelist, Johannes Pingilina, Schwarz translated the Lord's Prayer into Guugu-Yimidhirr only three months after his arrival in Australia.⁸⁴ As the missionaries became more proficient in the language, they appreciated its subtleties, although they clearly never grasped its basic grammatical structure.⁸⁵ They were particularly pleased to discover expressions which seemed to encode religious concepts⁸⁶ and considerable effort was devoted to uncovering native religious ideas. The missionaries, however, tried to oppose and correct these 'mistaken notions'; Schwarz, at Hope Valley defiantly made his coffee over a *Dhabul* or 'sacred' fire. in the face of predictions that strange Aborigines would surely murder him.⁸⁷ On the other hand, Pfalzer considered beliefs about transmigration of souls and rebirth (he thought Aborigines believed they would be reborn as whites),⁸⁸ proved that some 'spark of Divine Revelation' remained even among these heathens, these 'lowest of the low' – and thus that even their wretched souls could be saved for the Kingdom of God.

The parents of children in the Cape Bedford school, passing back and forth between Cooktown, local farms, cattle stations and new gold-fields north at Starcke River, were confronted everywhere with a white man's world. The terms on which Aboriginal men and women could find flour, grog or a bit of tobacco in Cooktown were less easy than the missionaries imagined, even though the forty-odd hotels and grog shops in booming Cooktown were happy to pay Aboriginal help in liquor, and to sell them more for cash. It was profitable for publicans to employ Aborigines on whom they could depend and who could warn them about strangers who might have informed the police, once the

83 Pfalzer to Inspector, 5 February 1887, ND.

84 Schwarz to Inspector, 27 December 1887, ND (KM 1888, #4).

85 Poland's first systematic description of Guugu Yimidhirr, modelled on classical grammar, was in a letter to Neuendettelsau, 16 August 1889, ND. See Poland 1907, 1:14, and Roth 1901, which is based on information supplied by Schwarz and Poland.

86 Poland to Inspector, 5 October 1888, ND. There were some notable misunderstandings: Meyer's rendering of 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' into Gugu Yalandji turns out to mean 'Thou shalt not marry'. (Meyer to Rechner, 6 September 1888, LCA 1.2).

87 Schwarz to Inspector, 13 February 1888, ND (KM 1888, #5).

88 . . . and whites as sharks! Pfalzer to Inspector, 28 May 1888, ND (cf. KM 1888, #7). All the Cape Bedford missionaries seemed to subscribe to a theory that Aborigines were somehow degenerated from full human beings; Poland wrote: 'These people are living proof of the low level a human can reach, when he lives like an animal, giving thought to nothing but the satisfaction of his physical needs' (Poland to 'Red School' in KM 1889, #1).

dead; the Aboriginal practice of hauling around the wrapped and rotting corpses of deceased children, mourning over the remains for months at a time, was abhorrent to them. Here was evidence that, in their darkened and Christless lives, 'they have not our hope'.⁴⁵

The most immediate evidence the missionaries had for the degraded state of the Aborigines and hence their need for the Gospel, however, was in Cooktown itself. Missionary W. Poland, arriving from Germany in 1888, was puzzled that so many Aborigines were wandering about the town and not at the mission; he reflected afterwards that their presence in town was due to 'lust, alcoholism, and opium-addiction'.⁴⁶ The missionaries despaired at cultivating either soil or souls when their native labour periodically left the Mission for town, where they would beg from door to door, occasionally cut wood, carry water, or wash clothes.⁴⁷ Aborigines themselves chided the missionaries for having *mangal murru* 'short hands', saying that on stations near town or at the 8-Mile Native Police camp, for a few days' work, they could receive generous handouts.⁴⁸ Pfalzer had to concede that by contrast two pounds of bread and a cup of tea was not much pay for two hours of hard labour on the mission.⁴⁹ Missionary G.H. Schwarz thought that Aborigines' working for food in Cooktown, or even begging, was not too bad: 'much worse is the way in which black women and girls earn their food and tobacco, and one's hair stands on end when one hears even the smallest children talk about this'.⁵⁰ Though missionaries devoted their primary attention to the Aborigines on the Reserve who were subject to the lure of town and its demoralising influence, they were aware of 'vast and promising' opportunities for mission work among the 'crowds of natives' in the hinterland.⁵¹

Flierl originally agreed to ask for no government support for the Mission Station (which he named Elim)⁵² after the first twelve months, but when government support ceased, in April 1887, it became progressively harder for the Mission to feed its inmates. As one agricultural venture after another failed, the missionaries were constantly in debt to Cooktown merchants, clamouring for money from Germany or South Australia.⁵³ The missionaries at Cape Bedford, though, found the

45 Pfalzer to Inspector, February 1888, ND; Poland report to government, 21 June 1888, ND (KM 1888, #8).

46 Poland 1907, 2:2-4, 'My arrival in Australia'.

47 Pfalzer to Inspector, 7 September 1887, ND.

48 Pfalzer to Inspector, 30 August 1888, in KM 1888, #11.

49 Pfalzer to Inspector, 12 March 1888, ND.

50 Schwarz to Inspector, 17 October 1888, ND.

51 Lutheran Church of Australia Archives (from now on referred to as LCA) 1.2, Meyer to Rechner, 5 August 1888.

52 Grope and Roennfeldt 1977:3; 'Elim' refers to Exodus 15.

53 Pfalzer to Inspector, 26 April 1887, ND, on end of government rations; Pfalzer to Inspector, 28 May 1888 and 3 February 1889, ND, on debts to Clunn in Cooktown and gifts from South Australia.

Queensland government cooperative, and they repeatedly asked for police assistance, both in keeping whites off the Mission,⁵⁴ and in keeping Aborigines, especially children, out of Cooktown and in school.⁵⁵ They also sought partial financial relief by asking the government to subsidise the mission school. The missionaries themselves pinned their highest hopes for improving the natives on the school.⁵⁶

Flierl outlined his mission programme for the Police Magistrate:

... the main point of all Missionwork is to Christianise the heathen — so consequently they become good civilised too — and this chiefly has to be done by religious instruction and preaching of the Gospel. Thereby it is necessary to use as soon as possible the own language of the aborigines . . . so they acquire a right understanding of the gospel of truth. On the other part in daily conversation and by teaching all what is possible must be done to communicate in English with the white people . . . As well as for young people instruction in School being good means of education, so for adults work and especially work in gardens to become steadily and useful men.

He concludes:

A good furtherance in our work would be if the natives who frequent the township shall be kept away after opening a station for them.⁵⁷

He argued that:

the blacks need to be shown, taught, attracted to the outdoor work, which will turn this wilderness into a flowering garden; and they must learn to accept a way of life that gives them a safe and permanent food supply in return for the labour of their hands and the sweat of their brow.⁵⁸

Flierl apparently envisaged his task to include: (a) religious instruction, with (b) learning the native language as a prerequisite combined with (c) secular and practical education of children, and (d) training adults to do productive work, with the aim (e) of cultivating enough food to feed the station, thus (f) making it possible for the Aborigines to abandon their nomadic habits, and (g) insulating them from corrupting European influence. Flierl soon left for New Guinea, and the new missionaries, recent graduates from mission training at Neuendettelsau in Bavaria, were young and inexperienced.

54 *Government Gazette* 3 March 1886 forbids unauthorized entry into the Reserve; also Flierl to Rechner, 4 April 1886, LCA 1.1.

55 Pfalzer report, 5 March 1889, ND; he calls for Aboriginal children to be kept from Cooktown.

56 As above.

57 Flierl to Milman, 26 December 1885, ND; this is Flierl's copy of the letter he wrote in English, signed also by the lay-helper Biar.

58 Flierl to Rechner, 16 February 1886, LCA 1.1.

By the late 1890s, W.E. Roth, the Northern Protector of Aborigines, pointed out to Queensland legislators that it was not feasible to expect people displaced by settlers simply to move on to the next river or creek, as this was certain to be owned by another group who would punish such trespass with death.²⁵ In reality, however, the next river or creek was being taken up by colonial settlers. This situation drove Aborigines to beg, to steal food, or to prostitute themselves for tobacco or flour. Roth noted the situation confronting local Aborigines in the Cooktown area:

As a case in point, I may mention that of a Northern run with a seventy mile frontage on a main river, both sides, where the manager has had trouble with the blacks of late owing to their "disturbing" (not spearing) his cattle . . . The manager himself told the police that he would allow no blacks on the run and that "the trackers should shoot them - that was what they were kept for".²⁶ The effect on the people whose tribal land was in the immediate vicinity of Cooktown was also noted by Roth in his first report:

You may have wondered at my gathering so little information of scientific value concerning the actual Cooktown blacks: in fact they are so demoralised and yet half-civilised that it is extremely difficult to obtain anything really reliable concerning habits and customs of the "old days".²⁷

This was in 1898, one generation after the advent of the intruders.

This loss of Aboriginal self-sufficiency was to benefit the settler and the townsman, despite fears of Aboriginal predations on stock and goods. Destitute Aborigines constituted a convenient supply of cheap labour; stock workers, housemaids, errand boys, water carriers, and bedmates could be had for the cost of minimal rations and a bit of tobacco and calico. Even in the mid-'80s, police were wary of settler requests to arrest Aborigines camping on stations; they suspected that the settler wanted them rounded up and brought in to carry out stock work.²⁸

A reliable supply of labour was needed on stations. Some Aborigines were kept more or less permanently as domestics and stockmen; generally they received no wage, but they, and a number of their dependants, were fed and maintained.²⁹ By the late 1890s when the options for self-sustenance in the bush had virtually disappeared and the numbers of such dependants, people begging or seeking work,

grew too large, station managers requested police to remove them. Formal legal power to deport Aborigines to distant reserves was provided in the Act of 1897.³⁰

The controversy in Cooktown over 'bringing in the blacks' reflects this ambivalence among settlers. In May 1881 the Cooktown police magistrate, Howard St. George, accompanied by two sub-inspectors and ten native troopers, travelled to Cape Bedford. They found no tracks so moved north to Cape Flattery. There they sighted some people, but failed to establish contact. St. George decided to send among them

some of the boys who understood the language, and when peaceful relations have been established induce them to accompany them to the coast near Cooktown when I have no doubt that some of them might be induced to come over to town and if a beginning was once made they would be sure to repeat the visit.³¹

Police Magistrate Fitzgerald succeeded in camping with the Cape Bedford people the following month, and his report concluded that Cape Bedford should be reserved for Aborigines. A temporary reserve was immediately gazetted on the north shore of the Endeavour River mouth.³² Two months later the Mayor of Cooktown wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

Referring to the matter of the treatment of aboriginal natives in this district I beg to state that numbers of them are almost daily camped on the North Shore . . . If the work of civilising them is intended to be carried out they must be supplied with a certain quantity of food and in course of time no doubt some of them will be induced to ship in vessels engaged in the bêche-de-mer fishing and also in town.³³

Next month his tone became more uneasy. He reiterated the need for the government to feed Aborigines until they took up what 'work they may be found suitable for' but warned 'they are becoming a nuisance to the townspeople who complain of their being allowed into the town at all'.³⁴ Aborigines were now crossing the river 'to beg

30 QVP 1897, IV.

31 Howard St. George to Col. Sec., 27 May 1881, QSA COL/A314, #2395 of 1881.

32 This temporary reserve was cancelled in 1881 and 50,000 acres between the Endeavour and Melvor Rivers were gazetted in its place; Inspector Fitzgerald stated in 1886 that Cape Bedford was unsuitable and would never be self-supporting; Meston, quoting Fitzgerald, concluded it was little but bare rock and sea sand (Meston 1896). Roth (QNPA (1901) 1902) observed that less than 200 square miles of the total of the reserves was suitable.

33 John Davis to Col. Sec., ca. 23 September 1881, QSA COL/A344, #4154 of 1881.

34 John Davis to Col. Sec., 14 October 1881, QSA COL/A344, #4566 of 1881.

25 Queensland. Northern Protector of Aborigines. *Annual Report of . . . for 1899*, by W.E. Roth. Brisbane, 1900 (from now on referred to as QNPA).

26 QNPA (1900) 1901.

27 Roth to Com. Pol., 4 March 1898, QSA COL/142, #3129 of 1898.

28 Brooke to Fitzgerald, 31 December 1882, QSA COL/A356, #1303 of 1883; see also QSA COL/A296, #2378 of 1880.

29 QNPA (1903) 1904.

European settlement subjected Aborigines to intense pressures and transformed with incredible speed the possibilities for Aboriginal life in the Cooktown hinterland. The transformation – initially often violent, and only latterly subject to any form of centralized direction – was nonetheless patterned: the fate of most Cooktown Aborigines was early elimination, and those who survived, both on and off the mission, took their places in the evolving colonizing society.

The missionaries shared with the rest of white society a conviction that European civilization was superior to Aboriginal savagery, but their well-articulated and self-conscious views about the nature and potential fate of Aborigines constitute the most important source for understanding the foundation of the mission community.

Whatever tales the Aboriginal people of lower Cape York might have heard about white men and their murderous weapons, they could never have been prepared for the amazing speed and massive extent of colonization and settlement when it occurred. In 1872 an expedition led by W. Hann was organized expressly for the purpose of investigating prospects for settlement and mining up to the 14th parallel.¹ Hann's guarded report induced James V. Mulligan and six companions to leave almost immediately to prospect on the Palmer River, and the party returned south on the 3rd of September 1873 with news of payable gold.² Within a week the government had commissioned a party to locate a port from which the new goldfield could be supplied.³ Two weeks later Mulligan and a party of one hundred miners with three hundred horses were back on the Palmer River.⁴

The speed of occupation and its transforming effects impressed even those engaged in the enterprise. When G.E. Dalrymple arrived at the Endeavour River mouth in late October 1873 he found an apparently empty and 'remote' place. The following morning the *Leichhardt* steamed into harbour carrying government police for a new port town, wardens for the goldfields, road engineers to prepare a route to the Palmer, and some seventy impatient miners.⁵ Dalrymple observed:

On Friday we had sailed into a silent, lonely, distant river mouth . . . On Saturday we were in the middle . . . of a young diggings township – men hurrying to and fro, tents rising in all directions, horses grazing and neighing for their mates . . . the shouts of sailors and labourers landing more horses and cargo, com-

1 Hann 1873.

2 Jack 1921, 2:418.

3 Dalrymple 1874:1.

4 Dalrymple 1874:21.

5 Dalrymple 1874:21.

bined with the rattling of the donkey-engine, cranes and chains.⁶

By early March, only five months later, two tracks to the goldfields had been cut. The Cooktown Police Magistrate estimated that at any one time no less than 1,000 men were coming or going on the track; the population on the Palmer itself was 2,500 and expected to reach 5,000 by the end of the month. To feed them 2,000 horses were constantly on the road.⁷

By March 1874 the population of Cooktown had reached 2,500.⁸ One observer counted over 550 tents in the main settlement, and an equal number spread over an eighteen mile suburb.⁹ The main street was already lined by eight hotels and public houses, a brewery, a Chinese boardinghouse, various stores and other commercial establishments.¹⁰

More substantial evidence of permanency was soon forthcoming. By June 1875 the Crown had received more than £5,000 in land revenues;¹¹ not only were substantial buildings erected on Charlotte Street but cattle already grazed on newly opened pastoral runs.¹² Butcher's Hill just northeast of the diggings opened in 1874; Mount Mulgrave to the west of the goldfield was settled in 1876.¹³

Farming properties began to be taken up along the north bank of the Endeavour River for some eighteen miles of its length, in particular at its junction with two permanent creeks, where the small township of Marton was established.¹⁴ Farming and pastoral settlement, hard on the heels of the gold rush and outlasting it by several decades, as well as the fishing industry which was established some time before the influx to Cooktown, interfered with local Aboriginal life far more than activity on the goldfields. In the early period, however, the large scale, continuous penetration of the bush by miners, digging and travelling on the roads, was the focal point of interaction between Aborigines and Europeans.

In early years miners feared Aborigines as 'bloodthirsty cannibals', and regarded their very presence as hostile. During the 1880s, however, pastoral and farming settlement rapidly expanded; new cattle runs were taken up in the dry, western country around Laura and the goldfields. Smaller farming and cattle properties spread along the

6 Dalrymple 1874:21.

7 Dalrymple 1874:21.

8 Dalrymple 1874:21.

9 Anonymous letter, 7 March 1874, in *Town and Country Journal*, reproduced in Pike 1979.

10 As above.

11 Queensland Parliament, Legislative Assembly. *Votes and Proceedings* (from now on referred to as QVP). 1875, II:917.

12 QVP 1875, II:917.

13 Stephens and Cilento 1976:4.

14 See note 21. Outline Map of the Cook District Illustrating the Pastoral Hold-