

The Cran Family and the Queensland Sugar Industry

The Sugar Industry Booms, 1864-80

Altogether early manufacturing was messy, time-consuming, and inefficient. From the crushers a stream of yellowish juice would squirt out into several cast-iron pots, in which it was boiled and then allowed to cool. It was a clumsy and wasteful process. Whereas modern milling machinery extracts one ton of sugar from about six tons of cane, these early mills averaged only one ton from twenty. The cooked mixture was allowed a week to granulate before being transferred to V-shaped boxes perforated at the bottom and sides to let the molasses drain slowly away. The residue was a large-grained bright yellow sugar produced at the rate of about a ton a day.

Everybody perpetually moved about in sticky streams of molasses. Horses ate it instead of oats; builders mixed it with water to make a sort of cement. But the industry continued to make steady progress. There were fifteen sugar mills in the Maryborough district in 1876, turning out 3400 tons of sugar a year plus 178,000 gallons of molasses. And all the time production methods were gradually improving. About 1870 for instance Messrs Tooth and Cran, of Yengarie plantation, Maryborough, inaugurated a new system of sugar manufacture whereby the ordinary planter did only the crushing, and conveyed the juice by way of tanks floated on punts, and later by pipes, to the new modern plant at Yengarie to await the latter stages of processing. Robert Tooth and Robert Cran were two very skilful and enterprising engineers, and Yengarie led the way with newer, more efficient techniques. Steam-jacketed copper pans instead of old-fashioned iron pots prevented the juice from burning during the important crystallizing stage. New centrifugal machines, replacing the crude old boxes with draining holes, spun off the syrupy molasses in a matter not of weeks but of hours.'

Organization was Yengarie's success. Expensive new plants needed to be kept continuously in operation right through the crushing season if they were to be economic. So a method was worked out ¹

But "the day of small things" had by this time passed; and the dawn of a more prosperous era for the Bundaberg sugar industry was at hand. The auspicious change is foreshadowed in the following notice which appeared in the Mail of February 22, 1878: - "The Messrs. Cran, of the firm of Tooth and Cran, Yengarie, are now on a tour of inspection to the various farms and holdings in this locality, and, we are pleased to learn, are more impressed than ever with the great agricultural capabilities of the district."²

¹ Docker, Edward Wybergh. *The Blackbirders. A brutal story of the Kanaka slave-trade.* Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1981. pp 97 – 99

² Walker, J.Y. *The History of Bundaberg.* Brisbane, 1890.

The Cran Family and the Queensland Sugar Industry

CRAN, Robert (1821-1894), John (1848-1935), James (1850-1922) and Robert (1856-1940) were sugar manufacturers in central Queensland. Robert senior was born on 6 August 1821 at Towie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, son of John Cran, farmer, and his wife Jean, nee Petrie. He married Elspeth Winks at Aberdeen in 1847, and John, the eldest of their nine children, was born there on 14 January 1848. The family emigrated to Queensland in 1849.



Robert Cran (1821 – 1894)

Robert Cran was a stockman at the Albert River in 1850. He was at Lagoon station, Myall Creek in 1856 and next year was employed by Robert Tooth on Jondaryan Station.³

Immediately below the manager and also in the dominant class was the overseer, the manager's executive. It was usual for him to be addressed as "mister". His accommodation, the type of work he did, and his salary also set him apart from the men. Jondaryan usually employed three overseers, the principal one at the head-station and two off-siders, one at the outstation Codrington, and the other at the outstation, Bear. These last two positions attracted a wage considerably below that of the principal overseer at the head station, who was responsible for all stock work on the run. As many as four, five or six overseers were employed on Jondaryan in any one year. Kent liked personally to choose his overseers. In the early 60s he had Thelwall in charge of the My Hutton stud, and for the 1861 Rosalie Plains shearing season he had Cran as overseer, Graham at the washpool and Brissenden in charge of the shed. In the late 60s he had Williams and Baker in charge of the Jondaryan woolshed, Williams at the head-station, Cran overseeing at Irvingdale and Winks at Codrington.

³ Australian Dictionary of Biography, pp 137 – 138.

Winks “oversaw” for Kent from 1885 - 73.⁴ James Charles White was not the Tooth’s first Jondaryan manager. This position was held by Brookes Forster. Robert Cran was their first overseer. See N. Bartley, *Opals and Agates*, 128.⁵

He was at Pikedale, near Warwick, as a superintendent in 1861, and became manager of Tooth’s boiling-down works and abattoir on his property at Yengarie near Maryborough in 1865. It soon became a beef extract plant and Robert Cran became a partner with Tooth and others in a firm known as Tooth & Cran. John, Robert junior and other members of the family became sub-managers in the Yengarie plant which soon won a sizeable export trade.

In 1868 Tooth was producing meat extract on his Mary River property and in 1869 the bank gave R. and F. Tooth and Co a 5000 pound loan for the shipment of 300 cases of meat extract. Robert Tooth’s factory at Yengarie on the Mary River (his partner was Robert Cran ex-overseer at Jondaryan) was intended for meat and sugar extract. See R.F. Holder, *Bank of New South Wales: A History*, Vol 11, 1817-1850 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1970), 370-73.⁶

When sugar growing started around Maryborough in the mid-1860s, the beef extract plant was adapted by experiment to sugar refining, thereby avoiding the consequences of increasing cattle prices. Yengarie superseded most of the pioneer sugar makers, taking the juice from local crushing mills through a network of pipes. It was probably one of the first plants in the world to apply to cane the double carbonation process, used hitherto only for beet sugar.

When two of the Tooth family withdrew in March 1872, the firm became Robert Cran & Co. During 1880 it was accused of allowing excessive mortality among employed Melanesians by poor feeding, bad water, overwork and absence of proper care for the sick. Despite ten per cent mortality in 1879-80, the accusation was denied by the firm and the matter was not pursued.

Extract from Cato, Nancy. Brown Sugar.

The first Islander I met on shore turned out to be an absolute savage – covered with coconut oil and very little else.

(He forebore to mention that the ‘little else’ consisted of a coconut-shell codpiece which revealed more than it hid of the man’s anatomy). He could talk a sort of pidgin English, and told me “Me work big longa Mallybulla, longa that Misser Cran, my word, me plenty work longa soogar.” This

⁴ Walker, Jan. *Jondaryan Station. The relationship between pastoral capital and pastoral labour 1840 – 1890*. UQP, Brisbane, 1988. pp 75 – 76.

⁵ J. Watts, *Personal Reminiscences* (Winborne: Allendale, 1901), 61.

⁶ Walker, Jan. *Jondaryan Station. The relationship between pastoral capital and pastoral labour 1840 – 1890*. UQP, Brisbane, 1988. p 217, Note 51.

brought a laugh, for Crans owned one of the biggest plantations and mills in the town.⁷

When rumours reached the neighbouring town of Bundaberg that the Crans were seeking other localities for investment, a leading businessman published an invitation in the Bundaberg Star in March 1875 for the establishment of a refinery which would help the district to change from maize to sugar growing. John Cran and his brother Robert surveyed the district in April 1876 and were impressed by the rich volcanic soil of the Woongarra scrub. They returned next year to assess cane supplies and decided to open a plant. John Cran launched the building program in June 1878. Financing the initial investment of about 310 000 pounds mainly from Victoria, took time and in the interim some growers unsuccessfully approached the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Robert Cran senior went to England for machinery late in 1880, and in 1882 a ball hosted by the Cran family launched the Millaquin Refinery. Within a decade it was unable to handle all the local production; by 1887 there were five new crushing mills, including one owned Cran Bros and Frederic Buss and twenty new plantations in the district.



Originally was a boiling down works in 1866 run by R. H. D. White. It was taken over by Tooth & Cran and became a meat factory which included a large butchery. In 1870-71 the factory became a sugar refinery. (Description supplied with photograph.)⁸

⁷ Cato, Nancy. Brown Sugar. Heinemann Ltd, London, 1985. Page 58.

⁸http://bishop.slg.qld.gov.au/view/action/singleViewer.do?dvs=1412766873436~838&locale=en_US&metadata_object_ratio=14&show_metadata=true&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/singleViewer.do?&DELIVER_Y_RULE_ID=10&frameId=1&usePid1=true&usePid2=true

The sugar industry underwent radical structural changes in 1890-1915 and the Cran properties were mortgaged to the Queensland National Bank. Flood damage and the financial crisis of 1893, followed by the transition to white labour, upset the solvency of the firm, and in 1896 the bank foreclosed. Robert Cran senior died of pneumonia at Millaquin on 16 December 1894 and was buried in Bundaberg general cemetery with Presbyterian forms. His estate, valued for probate at 223 540 pounds was left in trust for his family.⁹



THE LATE MR. ROBERT CRAN.

WE reprint this morning from the Bundaberg Star an appreciative notice of the life work of the late Mr. Robert Cran, of Millaquin. It is the local estimate of the man and his service. A prophet often fails to win honour in his own day and country. What he sees he tells, but he cannot always enable his neighbours to see it by merely telling it. His vision, his idea, his truth can only be put into words; it cannot be immediately demonstrated; it gradually discloses itself to the general intelligence.

A happier experience often attends the capable pioneer of industry. Whether or not he personally profits from his enterprise, he often lives to see a far reaching prosperity built upon his foundations. That at any rate was the enviable fortune of Mr. Millaquin Cran. The great reward of his life's toil was not the consciousness of having climbed from the bottom to the top rung of the ladder, but the fact, spread out at large around him, that he had added to the sum of human happiness. " Those of us," says the Star, " who can remember the district in the pre-sugar days, will recall the picture then, and contrast it with the existing state of affairs. The farmer who struggled hard for a living then is now

⁹ ADB, op cit.

the happy possessor of position, place, and fortune, the profitless cornfields have given place to the verdant areas of profitable sugarcane, and the district which then was little heard of outside its own boundaries has become one of the principal and most prolific places in the colony."

Much of this is attributed by our contemporary to the " brain-power, enterprise, and indomitable perseverance" of the late Mr. Cran; for "with the starting of the Millaquin Refinery began the era of Bundaberg's prosperity." The Star's testimony to the personal quality of the man is as striking as that to his practical capacity.

"His establishments were well conducted, and his men were paid good wages and always treated with that deference and respect with which Nature's gentleman alone knows how to treat his subordinates. He never coerced their views, and the family he brought up in our midst followed and still follow his noble example.

If all employers of labour were like the late Mr. Cran we should hear of very few industrial disputes." He was not, we are told by one of the district journals, a "public man," which means, we suppose, that he was not a politician. It is as easy to disparage as it is to exaggerate the usefulness of a legislator. The country is all the better for the development of personal capacity in all spheres of service.

Let every man stir up the gift that is in him, and enter the open door which presents itself. But it is well to remember how great is our obligation to men like the late Mr. Cran. So long as Australia's natural resources are only partly discovered and partly developed the pioneers and captains of industry will be worthy of all honour. Few can lead and create, though all can follow and share.

Just now Queensland wants the rare capacity and courage which are able to extend profitable enterprise. Parliament, as we ventured to say the other day, has once more illustrated by its sessional labours how little legislation can do to lift a colony out of severe depression. Salvation must come chiefly from increased activity in the fields of production. Queensland is now daily indebted to the progress and profitableness of the industry with which Mr. Cran's life was associated. Honour to the men who are striving with all their might, and for Queensland as well as for themselves, to lift other producing industries to that level of prosperity which will mean financial relief and assure rapid expansion.¹⁰

¹⁰ The Brisbane Courier Wednesday 19 December 1894



The house was built for Robert Cran (owner Millaquin Sugar Refinery), but following his death in 1894, the year the house was completed, it was occupied by his son John Cran.¹¹



The Old Cran House in 2014.

¹¹http://bishop.slq.qld.gov.au/view/action/singleViewer.do?dvs=1412766711843~758&locale=en_US&metadata_object_ratio=14&show_metadata=true&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/singleViewer.do?&DELIVERY_RULE_ID=10&frameId=1&usePid1=true&usePid2=true

DEATH OF MRS. ROBERT CRAN, SEN.

Mrs. Robert Cran, sen., died this afternoon at the age of 94 years (our Bundaberg correspondent wired last night). She was the relict of the late Mr. Robert Cran, one of the founders of the sugar industry in Queensland, who started the Yengarie Sugar Co. on the Mary River in the sixties, and subsequently came to Bundaberg, where he laid down the Millaquin Refinery. The deceased lady was very active up to a few weeks ago, when she had a fall which hastened her end. She was an active member of the Red Cross Society, and did a great deal of knitting. She is survived by five sons, Mr. John Cran (Bundaberg), Mr. James Cran (Jindah, Mary River), Mr. Robert Cran (Sydney), Mr. William Cran (Herbert River), and Mr. Alex. Cran (South Johnstone River), and three daughters, Mrs F. W. Payne (Bundaberg), Mrs J Richardson (Auchenflower, Brisbane), and Miss Cran (Bundaberg).¹²



John Cran (1848 – 1935)

John Cran was head of Robert Cran & Co until 1896. In 1902 he joined Buss in launching the Fairleigh Estate Sugar Co. Apart from his position as a director, he took little part in management and lived in retirement. Initially prosperous, the company suffered severely from the disruptive effects on the industry of World War I; when it went into voluntary liquidation in 1926, John Cran stayed on the board of the cooperative which succeeded it. He was a Justice of the Peace in 1886-1919, an enthusiastic Freemason, and a member of St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Bundaberg; but much of his private time was devoted to local government. Unmarried, he died in Bundaberg on 24 September 1935, was buried in Bundaberg general cemetery and left an estate valued for probate at 52 489 pounds.

¹² The Brisbane Courier Saturday 2 September 1916

James Cran was born at the Albert River on 28 July 1850 and joined his father in Yengarie while young. On 21 June 1876 at Tamworth, New South Wales, he married Jane Irving: they had five children.¹³ When the others went to Millaquin, he stayed to manage Yengarie and, when it finally closed down, he began sugar planting at Duncraggan near Bundaberg as a partner in Buss, Williams & Cran. He was later on a plantation called Mon Repos. He died at Maryborough of bronchitis on 22 April 1922 and was buried in Maryborough cemetery. He was widowed about three years before his death and his estate, valued for probate at 3 922 pounds, was left to his unmarried daughter.



Memorial in Maryborough cemetery (Plot D 504) reads:

In Loving Memory of James
Cran
Of Lindah
Died 22 Apr 1922 aged 71
years 9 months
Also Jane Cran
Wife died 19 March 1917 aged
69 years
Also Horace William
Aged 21 years died 30 June
1904
Also Muriel Edith
Died 10 February 1886 3 years



¹³ James Cran married Jane Irving in Tamworth, NSW at St Pauls Church. Jane's father was Dr D.W. Irving. (Shang from Abstract, Chronicle Newspaper, Maryborough.)

Death of Mr. James Cran.

The death occurred at an early hour on Saturday morning of Mr. James Cran, one of the early pioneers of the district. The deceased, who was in his 72nd year, was a native of the Albert district.

In his early days he was associated with the firm of Forth and Cran, at Yengarie, and later, when sugar growing was started on an extensive scale, he engaged in the industry at Indah, and subsequently he was manager of sugar mills at the Island Plantation, Duncraggan, Mon Repos, Qunaba, Goodwood, and Mourilyan.

The deceased was also a member of the Tinana, Tiaro, and Barolin shire councils. He was a member of the Wide Bay and Burnett Pastoral and Agricultural Society, and at various times was on the committee of that body. He was predeceased by his wife by some years, and is survived by three sons Messrs. Alexander (Brisbane), Robert Dalysfoid (Mt Perry), and James Irving (manager of the St. Johnstone Mill, Innisfail)—and two daughters—Mrs. G. S. Mant (Gigoomgan) and Miss Cran (Pialba).¹⁴

Robert junior was born at Lagoon Station, Myall Creek, on 4 May 1856. Employed initially as a clerk by the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, he left soon to join the family enterprise and managed Yengarie for a time. When it was lost he mustered sufficient capital to move to Sydney in 1903 and set up as a sharebroker. On 6 April 1887 at Brisbane, he married Annie Mary, daughter of Sir Charles Lilley. Another brother, Alexander, married her sister. When Robert died on 16 December 1940, he left a well-established business which still survives and an estate valued for probate at 39 992 pounds.

Inclined to be dour, the Crans were not prominent public figures, but were involved in local government. John, James and Alexander were members of the Woongarra Divisional Board – John was a member in 1885-96 and Chairman in 1886-87 and 1890-94; his brothers were members in 1902. James was a member of the Tinana Shire Council in 1912-15 and chaired it in 1916-17. All the principal members of the family served on the Antigua Divisional Board in 1880-99.¹⁵

Alexander Cran (1861 – 1939)

MR ALEX CRAN

One of the pages in connection with the early history of the sugar industry of Queensland has been closed by the death of Mr Alex Cran who passed away on August 6th, aged 77 years. At one time Mr Cran was manager of the Benowa Sugar mill. During the past couple of years he had been residing at Southport.¹⁶

¹⁴ The Brisbane Courier Monday 24 April 1922

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ South Coast Bulletin Friday 18 August 1939

Appendix 1 to Part 1: Chapter 4

James Cran

Date of Birth: 10 June 1835.
Date of Death: 3 November 1914 (buried 4 November 1914).
Place: Buried Maryborough cemetery plot D 919
Notes:

Details taken from Cemetery entry at Maryborough. Identification of James as brother of Robert (16. Robert Cran 1821-1894) is assumed.

At time of death lived at Lennox St Maryborough (Shang)



From the Memorial inscription in Plot D 919:

James Cran
Louden Yengarie
Died 3 November 1914 aged 79
wife Margaret Cran
died 3 December 1933 aged 85
years
daughter Margaret Ellen Forbes
died 3 November 1939 aged 64
years
Mother of Oswald, Norman,
William and Leonard
George Alexander Cran
Died 19 November 1946

MRS. MARGARET CRAN.
MARYBOROUGH, December 3.

Mrs. Margaret Cran, relict of the late Mr. James Cran, pioneer sugar grower of the Yengarie district, passed away quietly in her sleep at her home in Lennox street this morning at the age of 85 years.

For over 30 years Mrs. Cran saw the vicissitudes of life on the land and the vagaries of the weather, good crops and bad crops, and the coming of the great sugar and dairying industry.

Mrs. Cran led a full life in the days when the Yengarie sugar mill flourished. Her charitable disposition earned her lasting esteem and the news of her death will be received with profound regret by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. Her death severed a link with the early days when the Yengarie enterprise saw the birth of the sugar industry in this centre.

Mrs. Cran was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in February, 1848. She sailed from Glasgow with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James M'Gown, two sisters and two brothers on the sailing ship. David M'Ivor, and landed in Mary borough on July 9, 1863. She lived in Maryborough seven years and then, after her marriage to Mr. James Cran, removed to Loudon, Yengarie. After many years in Yengarie she returned to Maryborough, where she resided until her death. Her husband predeceased her 19 years ago at the age of 72. Mrs. Cran earned a great reputation for her kindness to the Kanaka and other labour on the plantations in the early days.

She is survived by five sons, Robert William (Dalgety's Ltd., Brisbane), George Alexander (Maryborough), Leonard John (Rockhampton), Disney James (Tinana), and Oswald Lockhart Maxwell); four daughters, Mesdames M. E. Forbes (Rockhampton) and A. Sherrington (Maryborough) and Misses Louisa Mary and Jessie Florence Cran (Maryborough) ; and 22 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. One daughter, Mrs. Andrew Dunn, predeceased her by three years. The late Mrs. Cran is also survived by two sisters, Mrs. T. H. Hill (Brisbane) and Miss J. M'Gown (Maryborough), and two brothers, Messrs. James M'Gown (retired manager of Farleigh estate, Mackay) and W. M'Gown (Brisbane).¹⁷

¹⁷ The Central Queensland Herald (Rockhampton Thursday 7 December 1933

plained to me that he had been assigned to an employer whom he objected to serve. Then another and another followed, each of them grieving or wrathful at a like indignity.

Such an arbitrary proceeding as this could only lead to trouble, of course, and that not merely to the employers in Queensland. After these men returned home to their islands, they would hardly fail of having their revenge for the deceit, as they would deem it, that the Government was responsible for.

One "boy," a native of Api I., actually refused to go to the employer he was now assigned to—Mr. Cran, of Mengarie—under whom he had formerly served. We had allotted him to Mr. McPherson. Ultimately, a compromise was effected in his case, and he was employed on Magnolia plantation, to which he made no objection.

The G.A. and I interfered when we saw how the boys were being treated. We were told, in response, to mind our own business, as the Kanakas had now been taken out of our hands. All we could then do was to express our opinion regarding this high-handed proceeding, which we did without fear or favour. I began :—

"Well, sir, I have seen some rough things, and have heard a good deal about slavery in the South Seas; but the nearest attempt at slavery I have ever witnessed has been enacted on board here to-day. You are the biggest slaver in Queensland!"

To which the G.A. added hotly,—

"I quite agree with you, Captain Wawn."

"You, sir, have nothing to do with it," said the immigration agent.

"I beg your pardon," retorted the G.A. "These men, while on board, are in my care, although, when on shore, they will be in yours."

As might be expected, I had a powerful enemy henceforth among the Government officers connected with the labour trade. Twenty-four hours after this, I was in-

1.13 For 'Mengarie' read 'Yengarie'.

MESSRS. TOOTH AND CRAN'S SUGAR FACTORY, YENGARIE,

Is conveniently situated about half-a-mile above the junction of Graham's Creek and the River Mary, distant about nine miles from Maryborough by land, and by water perhaps rather less. The land route follows the main road to Gayndah for the first four miles or so, after which a bush track turns off to the left over stony ridges, covered with wattle scrub, succeeded by flats and undulating forest land, with belts of open scrub, which continues up to the gate of the fenced portion of the Yengarie estate. Long before coming in sight of the works, the clank of huge machinery and the shrill whistle of the steam-engines strikes upon the ear. On reaching the gate the visitor obtains a general view of the large establishment, which at once impresses him with the notion of a busy hive of human industry. It is, in fact, a village of considerable dimensions, extending along the banks of the creek, with the tall factory towering in the midst, surrounded with workshops and other out-buildings, among which a neat little school-house, for the children of the workpeople, is conspicuous. The private residence of Mr. Cran, the managing partner, is nearer the river, on a pleasant eminence, commanding a view of the winding of the creek, and of the plantations on the opposite side of the Mary. The lands bordering the lower course of the creek, as well as the contiguous river banks, comprising in all about 100 acres, are cropped with cane available for this year's crushing, but planting operations are being carried on over other portions of the estate, the area of which has been greatly extended by recent purchases.

The creek is navigable for small craft up to the wharf of the factory, and serves as a most useful highway for the transport of cane from those parts of the plantation which would otherwise be difficult to access. Having thus thrown a comprehensive glance over the exterior, it is time that we take a peep at the interior of the factory.

On entering the establishment one is struck and bewildered at the sight presented in the enormous masses of machinery, which appears so crowded and so complicated that it is difficult for the visitor at first to form anything like a clear conception of what is going on. Ultimately, by the courtesy of Mr. Tooth, and a little patient study of our own, we think we got sufficiently acquainted with the place to describe what we saw to our readers. We shall in doing this avoid all technicalities, using the plainest terms we can find to tell what we have to say.

The cane is brought in punts to the wharf, and drawn up by means of a wire rope on a tramway to the crusting machines, of which there are two, one only of which is at work at present. They are ponderous pieces of machinery, of the usual type. The rollers are fed by means of a travelling table, formed of boards fixed on an endless chain. The canes being laid on this table are carried to the rollers and no hand is required to feed. The megass is delivered on the other side of the crushers by means of a similar travelling table, into trucks running on a tramway, by which it is thus conveyed to some distance from the mill. The juice pours from the mill in a large stream into a tank below, from which it is lifted by a force pump to the top of the building, and delivered into four open urn-shaped

boilers, heated by steam. Here in a few minutes the juice is raised to boiling point, and the clarifying process is performed, after which it is drawn off into open shallow tanks, called subsidiers. The clarified juice next descends into a large receiver, from which it is drawn off into the evaporator, and here commences the application of Mr. Tooth's patent. The evaporator is in shape like a tubular boiler placed on its end, and is about fifteen feet high by six in diameter. On the one side of this are the air-pumps and condensers, and on the opposite side is the heater -a tube about seven feet high and one foot in diameter, through which the juice is carried by means of a force pump and connecting pipe, on the end of which is a distributor, in shape like the huge rose of a watering can. The face of this is perforated, we were told, with over 2000 holes. The juice descends in a shower to the bottom of the evaporator, to be drawn out of the bottom again by means of the pump, and forced through the heater and rained down again until, by means of a tester, the consistence of the juice is found to be such as to indicate a sufficient degree of evaporation. The beating is effected in the tube by steam being introduced around a number of small pipes through which the juice passes, and the latter being thus heated, is boiled in a partial vacuum at about 160 degree. The syrup we have described as being now formed at the bottom of the evaporator is drawn off next into a reservoir, and thence into an ordinary vacuum pan, where the crystallization takes place, after which the mingled mass of syrup and wet sugar is run off into coolers, and then passes through centrifugals in the ordinary way. In its passage through the centrifugals a little water is sprinkled on the sugar as it coats the sides of the swiftly revolving cage, thus assisting the cleansing and decolouration of the sugar. The waste syrup is returned to the heater to mingle with the fresh juice and undergo the whole process over and over again until the saccharine matter is completely extracted.

Of course the steam power for the working of all this moving machinery is enormous. Near the creek is an engine of 10-horse power to force water up to the factory for supplying the steam condensers and the general requirements of the establishment. An immense volume of water is used for the former purpose, as can be seen by the stream of hot water returned into the creek. At the mill the boiler power we believe to be equal to about 100-horse, but all is not used in driving, some of the steam being employed at the clarifiers, in heating the juice for the evaporator, and heating the vacuum pans, etc. The moving power is employed - to summarise - in crushing the cane, forcing the juice to the top of the building, exhausting the large evaporator, forcing the juice through tile heater, exhausting the vacuum pan, in giving motion to the centrifugal machines, lifting water from the creek, and in drawing up trucks laden with the cane from the punts in which it is conveyed to the mill. We are writing from memory, and may not have noted down all the machinery in motion, but we have said enough to give some idea of the intense activity which pervades the whole establishment. The sugar factory is not yet complete. The clarifying and subsidising operations are still carried on in the air, and though in all only for half an hour, Mr. Tooth considers this so detrimental that next year he intends to carry out a plan he has conceived, by which the juice, from the moment it leaves the cane until it is converted into sugar, will be altogether protected from the atmosphere. In fact, the juice will only be seen to flow from crushed cone, after which nothing more will be seen of it until it is delivered in tile form of sugar at the conclusion of the process, the moisture having meanwhile passed off as steam. In addition to these improvements there is also

beings erected what we understood to be a large sugar refinery. The large iron retorts for the manufacture of the animal charcoal extensively used in the process are now on the way to Yengarie.

Messrs. Tooth and Cran enjoy the advantage of being able to keep their factory in constant operation throughout the year. At the close of the sugar season a large portion of the available steam power is at once employed in the manufacture of meat extract and other subsidiary industries. Maryborough Chronicle.¹⁸

CRANS SUGAR REFINERY.

The Messrs. John and James Cran, with their engineer, Mr. William Thomas, arrived here per steamer Lady Bowen on the 31st ultimo, to inspect and take over the large wharf first completed for them by Mr. Anderson, contractor, on the river frontage of the refinery site. They had also other business viz. laying out the ground for the various buildings, selecting aspect, etc, and generally making preparations for the enlarged and improved Yengarie, which is forthwith to be commenced on the south bank of the Burnett River, within half a mile from Bundaberg. We have been favoured with an inspection of the plans and working drawings, consisting of ground plans, side and end elevations, exterior and interior, with all the mechanical and chemical appliances, *en bloc* and in sections, and the effect was bewildering compared to anything we have seen in the way of sugar factories. The designer is Mr. William Thomas, who has been the engineer of the firm for the last three years, designing and carrying out the various mechanical appliances there in practical operation. He has had considerable experience in engineering in this colony, and in Victoria, and in Cornwall, England. It will be seen that no time is to be lost in preparing the buildings and foundations for the placing of the boilers, furnaces, engines, vacuum pans and charcoal filters, limekiln, gas-making apparatus, etc. The main building—the refinery - is to be 300 ft. by 90 ft, and 32 ft in height : the mixing and charcoal rooms are contained in a building 220ft. by 50 ft., and 32 ft. in height ; a sugar house, 300 ft. by 50 ft., and 32 ft. high, having a ground and second and third floors. As the firm undertake their own fitting and turning there is to be a fitting shop, 91 ft. by 31 ft, and 16 ft. in height. There is also a boiler house and coal shed 40ft. by ft, and 22ft. in height. A large brick chimney stack is to be built, 130ft. in height, connected with the steam boilers. There are to be two high-pressure engines— one of 170 horse -power, the other 50.

There is a pair of powerful pumps, capable unitedly of lifting 2,330,000 gallons of water every twenty four boors ; this is over double the capacity of the Maryborough Waterworks pumps. The weekly requirement of coal is estimated to be 200 tons. They obtain their present supply from the Burrum but it is probable that coal will be obtained here shortly. A large quantity of lime is required by the process in preserving the juice from acidulating, clarifying it, and precipitating the impurities. Their aim find it to their advantage to import the limestone — which they now obtain from Rockhampton— and burn it themselves. It will be seen from the above that the locating of this refinery here

¹⁸ Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser Saturday 27 November 1869

will cause the employment of a large number of hands— skilled and unskilled ; as many as 200 white people have been employed at Yengarie last season. When we remember that the processes perfected by Mr. Tooth enables the firm to preserve their juice for an indefinite term sometimes extending over eight months of the year, some idea of the great magnitude of the industry may be obtained. The manufactory when in full swing is kept on day and night, ceasing only during the Sunday hours. It is impossible for us to realise the benefits that will accrue from the proximity of this refinery to Bundaberg; but we can naturally conclude that it will prove a great impetus to the shipping trade of the port, and the development of the coal industry. From Yengarie the sugar has to be brought down at present by small steamers, and transhipped to the coasting vessels; here the large steamers can go alongside and load direct from the sugar house. We have now congratulate the firm upon the wisdom displayed in selecting this district, and this particular site, for what will be the largest and most improved refinery in the Australian colonies: and we wish them the success which their enlarged enterprise so well deserves, — Bundaberg Star.¹⁹

BANQUET TO MR. CRAN.

A large assemblage of citizens of Maryborough and Wide Bay agriculturists took place in the Town Hall on Tuesday evening, in response to the project for banquetting Mr. R. Cran, as a means of showing the appreciation, by the district of the enterprise of Mr. Cran in extending the sugar industry on the Mary river and about Bundaberg. The large attendance at the banquet must have quite fulfilled the expectation of the promoter, especially as it comprised the leading men of the various districts, all of whom evinced an enthusiasm in the object of the banquet, which was probably gratifying to the gentleman they met to honor.

The magnificent space afforded by the Town Hall allowed the tables for so large a number to be laid without cramping either the sitters, waiters, or dishes; consequently the spread, which did the caterer, Mr. Brockman, credit, proved enjoyable. The ubiquitous town band, beaded by Mr. Rankin, furnished the needed musical harmony for the toasts.

His Worship the Mayor occupied the chair, and the guest of the evening, Mr. R. Cran, sat on his right. Messrs. J.L. Palmer, M.L.A., Alderman Booker, and A. H. Wilson filled the vice-chairs. It was intimated that letters of apology had been received from the following gentlemen who were unable to be present, viz. : —Hon. H. S. Littleton, Messrs. B. B, C. Corser. P. Ramsay, P. Lillis, J. Blanchard, and C. A. Foster.

The usual loyal toasts having been proposed by the Chairman, and loyally received, Mr. H. Palmer, M.L.A., rose to give the toast of the evening ' The health of guest.' He said he must make 'a rather long speech, for the theme could not be dealt with scantily. They met here tonight to welcome back to Maryborough a fellow townsman

¹⁹ The Capricornian (Rockhampton, Qld.) Saturday 22 January 1881 p 14

- and a good friend, Mr. Cran, from a hasty visit to England. Their guest had already received a deservedly hearty reception in his own town of Yengarie and another awaited him at Bundaberg. It may be said by some of the few croakers who exist in this, as in every community, that Mr. Cran had no claims on Maryborough ; that his interests were outside it. He claimed Mr. Cran as a Maryborough man, and would ask the company to see what Mr. Cran had done for the town and port. He looked on him as one of their public benefactors, and perhaps Mr. Cran would allow him to place him third on their list of public benefactors The chief benefactor of Wide Bay and Maryborough was James Nash, the discoverer of Gympie, who had, he regretted to say, received inadequate recognition from the public for his great discovery. No. 2 benefactor he considered to be the late partner of their guest, Mr. Robert Tooth. He (Mr. Palmer) was sure Mr. Cran would not object to his saying that Mr. Robert Tooth was the initiator of the great industry which Mr. Cran and his sons are now so ably carrying on and extending. Four years ago Mr. Robert Tooth went home on an errand much the same as that just accomplished by Mr. Cran and the people of Maryborough gave him a parting banquet, at which he had the pleasure of presiding. On that occasion their guest, Mr. Robert Tooth, privately asked him to couple Mr. Cran's name with his in any compliments which he might think fit to offer that evening ; showing that though his was the merit of invention, Mr. Robert Tooth gave Mr. Cran the credit of practically following up the industry on the lines he laid down. He (Mr. Palmer) considered every manufactory did good to the town. We could ill afford to lose our foundries or sawmills; our progress and prosperity had arisen from these institutions. A public writer had said, 'national progress is the sum of individual energy, industry, and uprightness,' This might aptly be applied in the present case, for the Yengarie industry contributed largely to our national progress. Its influence on the farming class was great. Last year, as they well knew, was not a good year for the cane growers, but he found that during that season and the previous one (1879) the firm of Cran and Co. had paid the farmers (himself included) on the river for 3500 tons of cane juice at the rate of £21 per ton. What other producer he would ask, could be depended upon to yield a few men the handsome total of £73,500 in two seasons? He could with authority assert that nothing but Mr. Cran's enterprise could have produced such satisfactory results to growers. He hoped Mr. Cran's visit home would result in further extensions of his industry. His private character' had won for him the high esteem of every person with whom he came in contact, in business or otherwise, and he called on the company to pledge their honored guest and friend in a bumper.

The toast was most enthusiastically received and accorded all the honors possible, the band's efforts being supplemented by Alderman Woodrow, who sang an appropriate Scottish song. Mr R Cran who, on rising, was greeted with a perfect ovation, said he could not employ words to express his deep sense of the honor conferred on him this evening. He did not know what he had done to deserve this public reception. He went home on certain business connected with his Bundaberg project, and had got through it with perfect satisfaction to himself. He had great confidence in that project, and believed it would pay him, and equally benefit the farmers and others at Bundaberg. He appreciated the reference which had been made to Yengarie and to Mr. Robert Tooth, whom he cordially eulogised, and wished he

were here now. He (Mr. Cran) considered the Yengarie industry still in its infancy, and expected to see it considerably extend its capabilities for good. They had had great difficulties, but succeeded in surmounting them; they had severe disappointments, but had got over them, too. Dr. Power had truly said, on Wednesday night, that there had been moments when he (Mr. Cran) would willingly have changed places with a laborer, but in those times of trouble he had found the value of the faithful men who he had round him. They had never denied him, night or day, and behaved like true men, An old Scotchman had said of the Queen, when the son of M'Callum Mohr became her son in law, 'She mun be the proud woman.' Her Majesty had not half the reason, even from a Scotchman's point of view, for being proud, as he (Mr. Cran) had that evening at seeing so many friends and citizens here to do him honor, and he thanked them from the bottom of his heart.

The Chairman proposed 'Success to the Sugar Industry.' He believed this industry would raise Queensland to the position of the premier colony of the group. The other colonies could not grow sugar unless they came very close to the Queensland border, and their other resources were becoming worked out. In Queensland, we were only beginning. The wealth of Gympie was only now being discovered. When, fourteen years ago, he sold by auction a parcel of sugar, the first made at the Maryborough Sugar Co's mill, he little expected that he should this evening preside at a banquet given to a 'Sugar King.'. He called on the company to do honor to the toast.

Mr. John Cran briefly, responded. He thought they might all congratulate themselves that the sugar industry, although barely out of its infancy, stood on so satisfactory a basis. It was now the most important agricultural interest in the colony, and sugar had done for the Mary River what nothing else could. Last season was not a good one; still a cane-grower had told him that he had made more out of his frosted cane that season than maize and potatoes would have made for him in 20 years.

Mr. P. O'Kelly, acceding to a call for a speech, thanked the company, for toasting the sugar industry. He lately saw in a statistical return published in London, that Queensland in 1879 yielded 19,000 tons of sugar, representing a money value of £475, 000. The Mary river could claim one fourth of this, say £120,000, and to show the amount of money actually put into local circulation by the industry, he would assume that the planter made a profit of ten per cent, after allowing for depreciation, wear 'and tear, etc. This left 108,000 to go into local circulation during the season of 1879; so that the planters, while benefitting themselves, largely assisted their neighbours and the town at the same time. This year he believed 24 mills would be at, work, and all but three would send their juice to Yengarie. He hoped to see the number increase year by year, and those engaged in this great industry taking more wealth from the soil. It was impossible to over-estimate the value of Yengarie to small planters. He called the Yengarie process the greatest discovery of the age. It was directly the means of raising a number of farmers from a state of poverty to one of plenty. By it the loss and vexation which followed the attempt to manufacture sugar with rude appliances was avoided, and they were prevented from annually spoiling a lot of valuable material. The straightforward, honorable dealings of

Messrs. Cran and Co. had been the means of establishing a firm confidence in connection with the sugar industry which he once thought could never exist. He was glad of the opportunity of stating this publicly. It was generally one thing to sell a commodity, and quite another to get the value of it, but with Cran and Co. it was different, and he considered it of great importance to this district and Bundaberg that such an industry should be in the hands of a firm possessing such high commercial integrity.

Mr. W. Canny also responded, and expressed the pleasure he experienced in being present tonight to compliment Mr. Cran, whose firm would very shortly be the largest manufacturers in the whole of Australia. As a sugar manufacturer himself he felt a sort of reflected glory. He thought the sugar industry here could claim to have brought much wealth to the town. He believed it was the demand for sugar mills which induced the eminent firm of John Walker and Co. to establish their fine foundry here. To sugar he believed was due the presence of the other foundries, and this was something to be proud of. Up to the present he thought the planters had not been fairly treated by the commercial classes of the town. In periods of political agitation the planters were made the object of class cries, and did not receive from the tradespeople that consideration which they were entitled to. The town working classes believed — conscientiously no doubt—that they were injured by the employment on plantations of kanakas. He contended that the planters had never taken one penny out of the pockets of the British workman, but, on the contrary, put many pounds in it. To cultivate 500 acres of wheat, but ten men need be employed, while on a sugar plantation of similar area, from 20 to 40 white men must be employed exclusive of black labor, which latter, in turn, gave indirect employment to people in town. After an eloquent reference to the labor question he disputed Nash's right to the premier place on the list of public benefactors, and concluded that agriculture was the backbone of the country. When Gympie is a thing of the past, agriculture on the banks of the Mary river will be a flourishing industry.

Alderman POWERS gave the next toast, that of 'Commerce.' In a discursive speech, he referred to the intimate connection between the guest of the evening and commercial enterprise. The Yengarie firm had for years past been in the van of local commerce, first as large exporters of boiling down produce, then as sugar manufacturers, then as importers of raw sugar from foreign countries to export again in a refined state. He eulogised the various commercial industries; and considered the Chamber of Commerce exercised a healthy influence.
Band: - 'Rule Britannia.'

Mr. A. H. Wilson responded. After paying a graceful compliment to the guest, he referred in graphic terms to the condition of Maryborough commerce 18 years ago, when wool, tallow and hides were their only export. He claimed that the timber trade had through the bad times maintained a healthy position and kept money in circulation. It had now reached such strides that three fourths of the vessels trading to the port were timber vessels, and the amount annually expended by the timber merchants, in wages alone, exceeded the disbursements of any other local industry.

In point of importance they must, however, soon give way to the sugar industry, which, thanks to the energy of their guest, was rapidly extending through this and the adjoining district.

Mr. John Walker also returned thanks in a few appropriate words and deprecated long winded speeches at that late hour.

Mr. C. Powell and Mr. W.F. Harrington also responded to the toast.

Mr. J. T. Annear proposed the toast of the 'Queensland Parliament,' which he contended had, up to this time, compared favorably with any Parliament in the colonies. The Premiers of the other colonies were now coming to Queensland for precedents, as witness the recent adoption of our Education, Municipalities and Anti-Chinese Acts.

Band: 'There is bad luck about the house.'

Mr H Palmer, M.L.A., responded and regretted the absence of the senior member for Maryborough, Mr. King, and the members for Wide Bay.

Mr. R. Jones gave the toast of the 'Municipal Council' in a speech full of humorous points, which were highly relished. The band accompanied the toast with the strain 'Hard times come again no more,' the Mayor and aldermen appropriately joining in the chorus.

Aldermen Walsh and Bryant suitably responded.

Mr Power proposed the 'Mining and Pastoral interests,' and in an eloquent speech dwelt on the grazing capabilities' of the Burnett district, and the necessity for avoiding over stocking, and a waste of the productive properties of the soil.

Mr. W. G. Farquhar said he supposed he was called on to respond to the toast, because he had unsuccessfully dabbled in both pastoral and mining pursuits. He regretted the political antipathy which was directed in many quarters against the squatter, who was really the pioneer of the country, and required a strong constitution and a stout heart to enable him to survive the difficulties which invariably beset him.

Alderman Booker in a few appropriate words returned thanks on behalf of the pastoral interest, and Alderman Woodrow replied for the mining interests.

Mr. G. Stupart in an eloquent speech, gave the toast of 'The Ladies,' and paid a loyal tribute to the high womanly qualities of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. R W. Netterfield, in responding displayed a becoming maidenly diffidence, and in a few words thanked the company for receiving' the toast so cordially. Mr R. Cran, junior also replied, and, on behalf of the bachelors, made a promise fraught with great benefit to posterity. In answer to calls, Mr. Michael Canny also responded, but the

intensity of his blushes rendered his speech inaudible.

The Chairman said he had a toast to propose which had been inadvertently omitted from the list, that of 'The Visitors' ; he was glad to observe they were honored that evening with the presence of several gentlemen from the other colonies.

Mr. D. Blair responded. He had travelled in many countries, and could honestly compliment Maryborough on the high commercial, social and moral tone which pervaded the place.

Mr. Simmonds, on behalf of his firm, James, McEwan & Co., Melbourne, also returned thanks.

The Rev. Alexander Hay thanked the company for the toast, on behalf of the Rockhampton visitors. He felt bound to admit that Maryborough had attained an importance! which the northern capital had not.

Mr. H. M. Reeve (R. Gray. Son & Co., Sydney), and Mr. Charlton also responded. Mr. W. Walker proposed the toast of the 'Press,' to which Messrs. W. Keith, J. Woodyatt, and C. H. Barton responded.

Mr. R. Cran, senior, proposed the 'Chairman and Vice-Chairman' which, being suitably, acknowledged, the National Anthem was rendered, and the proceedings terminated a few minutes before midnight.

The entire proceedings passed off most successfully, the tone of the speeches being entirely, in harmony with the gratulatory object of the banquet. The toast list proved a long one but the speeches were, as a rule, able efforts, and of a very interesting and practical character; Most of the speech-makers displayed a tendency to undue prolixity, which placed those low down on the list at a manifest disadvantage, but several appeared determined that their oratorical flights should not be curtailed on account of the late hour, and manfully adhered to their text. The committee of management, who deserve credit for the successful issue of the banquet, were the Mayor, Aldermen Booker, Blisset, Powers, Woodrow, Murray, Bryant, Walsb, and Boge, Dr Power, Mr. H. Palmer, M.L.A.. Messrs. W. G. Farquhar, P. Lillis, W. Canny, W. Harrington, H. Monckton, E. B. C. Coner, R. Netterfield, W. Menzies, J. T. Annear, P. O'Kelly, M. Canny, C. Powell, P. Ramsay, A. H. Wilson.²⁰

WHITE LABOR ON PLANTATIONS.

THE BUNDABERG EPISODE.

CRAN BROS.' DOCUMENT.

During the recent unemployed agitation a great deal was heard about the treatment to which the men who were sent to Bundaberg to work on Messrs. Cran Bros.' Duncraggan sugar plantation were subjected to. When a deputation of the

²⁰ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser Thursday 19 May 1881

unemployed had an interview with the Premier in February, Sir S. W. Griffith asked if they knew that Mr. Cran, of Maryborough, had wanted twenty men at 30s. a week, and could not get them. Mr. M. Reid, in reply, said that when the men got to Maryborough the manager of the plantation first said he did not want them, but said he would see what could be done. As the men had had no food they asked for orders to be storekeepers, but the request was refused.

They were then started to work without having partaken of any food during the whole of the previous day, and four well fed kanakas were put in front of them. Of course they could not keep up with the kanakas. Thirteen of the men then put down their cane knives, as the manager, Mr. M'Gown, said that they would be sacked that night. The remaining seven men kept on till evening, but as they could not get orders on the stores they left them. Four of these men afterwards got work at another plantation at 20s. per week, and gave every satisfaction. The Premier said this was a totally different version of the matter from that which he had heard. He was told the men knocked off and cleared out without saying a word to anybody. Mr. Reid said he had affidavits from three of the men, who stated the same thing. An account of what actually took place, according to Mr. James Cran, Mr. James M'Gown, the overseer on the plantation, and one of the men (Mr. Christopher Summers) who were sent to Bundaberg by Mr. Reid, has been forwarded by the police magistrate at Bundaberg to the Colonial Secretary, and a digest of the many documents is given below. It would seem that Mr. Cran experienced the greatest possible difficulty in obtaining the men, who, after they arrived, would not do the work ; and the account does not at all agree with that given by the leaders of the labour movement in Brisbane.

The correspondence commences as far back as the 12th December of last year. It would appear that Mr. Jas. Cran had had on the 12th December an interview with Mr. W. H. Demaine secretary of the Maryborough branch of the Australian Labour Federation, regarding the employment of men on the cane fields.

On the 12th Mr. Cran wrote to Mr. Demaine expressing the hope that the latter would be able to send on eighteen or twenty men who would take cane-cutting contracts. He thought it would be better for one or two men to go to Duncraggan and see the cane, and if they were satisfied with the prices offered the contracts could be signed in Maryborough or Bundaberg. He would instruct Mr. M'Gown, the manager, to give the men all the information they might think necessary. The men, Mr. Cran proceeded, might be a little awkward at the work at first, but he was offering them prices which he considered ought to pay them well, as it was a matter of greatest importance for the firm to convert their crop into money as a deal of it was too heavy to stand over, and if not cut that season would be a dead loss. Six days afterwards Mr. Demaine replied that the union men accepted work at 30s. per week and find themselves, or £1 per week with rations. If Mr. Cran could agree to these terms he could have from twenty men upwards. Mr. Cran replied on the 19th. He had apparently had an interview with some of the union men, and he repeated an offer made to them to give them cane-cutting at per acre, the price ranging from £1 15s. to £3, or pay them at the rate of 1s. per ton for cutting and topping. He added that at Duncraggan every dray load of cane was weighed as delivered, and that it won't be necessary for the men, if they accepted the offer, to have one of their number to check the weights. The man's time would not be fully taken up at that work, and in order to make

the cost of weighing fall as lightly as possible on the cutters, he was willing to ration the men he employed, and allow him half-pay, or, pay, at the rate of 10s. per week during the time he was engaged at cane-weighing. On the same day Mr. Cran addressed another communication to the secretary in reply to one received from him. In it, it is stated that as the men did not feel disposed to accept the terms offered he now agreed to take them on the terms offered by Mr. Demaine— at the rate of £1 10s. per week, they to find themselves in everything but cane knives, which the firm would provide, to be returned in good order, fair wear only excepted. The offer was made subject to the following conditions. The men were to do the same amount of work as the islanders, who would work side by side with them cutting the cane properly as the Islanders did, as directed by Mr. Cran or the person in charge. The hours of labour were to be from 7 to 12 and from 1 till 6, or ten hours per day. Smoking in the canefields to be strictly prohibited.

On the 22nd the following telegram, signed by Mr. Demaine, was sent to Mr. Cran ' Men cannot accept your offer; consider working with kanakas degrading.' The next letter is dated the 23rd, and is from Mr. Cran to the secretary. He states: 'I did not intend you to infer from my letter of the 10th Instant that your men were to work in the same gang with the kanakas (which they seem to think would be degrading), but merely in the same block or field of cane. I cannot understand why in the present congested state of the labour market the men should refuse such an offer; and as our cane crop is rotting in the field through our inability to procure men to cut it, I will take it as a personal favour if you will induce the men to accept my offer.' That letter was not replied to, and on the 20th Mr. Cran wrote, stating that he was anxious to know if Mr. Demaine had sent on any cane-cutters to Duncraggan. Mr. Demaine's reply on the same day was as follows 'I am very sorry to say that as yet I have not been able to get the men to consent to go. One thing against is the holiday time, but I believe I can manage it by the end on the week if that will suit you. Kindly excuse delay, and reply at your earliest convenience.'

Next day Mr. Cran wrote thanking Mr. Demaine for his efforts in trying to obtain for him some labour from the ranks of the unemployed union members in Maryborough.

That the men were not disposed to accept work until after the holidays allowed that they were not overanxious to get it. He was willing to wait till the end of the week, but Mr. Demaine must remember that he (Mr. Cran) made his first application on the 11th Instant, since when he had written six times, and called on Mr. Demaine as often, and yet seemed to be as far off a definite arrangement as ever. He repeated that the crop was rotting on the ground through inability to procure labour to cut it. The letter concluded : ' I think I told you that I have Chinamen cutting at the same rate (5s. per day) as I am offering your men.'

On the 2nd January Mr. Demaine informed Mr. Cran by letter that twenty or thirty men would be in Bundaberg at his service on Monday following. Subsequent to that Mr. Cran wired from Duncraggan that only twelve youths had arrived, and asking when more would be sent on, and on the 7th Mr. Demaine wired : ' Men coming up now. I thought they had gone before.' The next communication is dated the 14th January. It was from Mr. Cran, who wrote from Duncraggan as follows : 'On my arrival here yesterday I found that not one of the forty-five men whom you sent on here as cane-cutters remained. I was very much surprised to hear that twenty two of these men had been sent on from Brisbane, and had I known at the time that you were sending to Brisbane for men I would have objected to it, as I would have known what to expect. In all my correspondence with

you I have asked you to send me men from the union in Maryborough, a great many of whom I know to be hard-working men.

If, as Maryborough men state, they cannot now get sufficient employment, what necessity is there to send to Brisbane for so many men to compete with those now here, and make their chances of getting work more remote than before? I think it a great injustice to the men.'

It will be remembered that when a deputation headed by Mr. M. Reid waited upon the Colonial Secretary some hard things were said as to the conditions under which the men sent to Duncraggan had to work, the difficulty of procuring rations, etc., and that the statements were repeated when a similar deputation interviewed the Chief Secretary. On the 27th February Mr. Pugh, police magistrate at Bundaberg, forwarded to the Colonial Secretary a communication in which he said that, having read the report of the interview between the Premier and the unemployed deputation, he sent for the information of Mr. Tozer a statement of facts and enclosed documents, two of which were statutory declarations, because such baseless denials of facts had been made by the labour leaders, and that particular instance of refusal to accept legitimate employment might be again brought up and again denied. In consequence of a letter written by him to Mr. J. Cran he and the firm's principal overseer (Mr. J. M'Gown) waited on Mr. Pugh, and the latter made a statement. Mr. Cran made out his version of what had taken place and forwarded it to Mr. Pugh. Mr. C. Summers, one of the labourers, also made a statement on oath. It would appear that some of the malcontents were found employment by Mr. Caulfield and that four of the men who continued at work at Duncraggan were afterwards sent up to Bingera by Mr. Caulfield, and although not absolutely wanted they were offered 16s. a week and rations, and accepted the terms. Mr. Pugh mentioned these facts to show that some of the men at least would do honest work if allowed to act for themselves. Several of the Duncraggan malcontents applied to Mr. Pugh for railway passes, and were issued them. With reference to Summer's statement regarding what was said by Adie, the under-overseer, both Messrs. Cran and M'Gown informed Mr. Pugh that Adie denied that statement, and was quite prepared to make a statement on oath that no such words were ever uttered by him to the men.

Mr. Cran, in his statement, detailed the negotiations which took place between himself and the secretary of the Australian Labour Federation at Maryborough as given in the correspondence above, and adds, 'Twelve youths arrived at Duncraggan on the 6th January. These lads spent a day getting out their stores, fixing bunks, etc., then began working at 4 o'clock or thereabouts on the afternoon, and knocked off at about 10th the following morning, their answer to a question from the writer being, 'Oh, we have dissolved partnership,' and that they had spoiled the contract. On the arrival of these youths we wired to the secretary in Maryborough, stating that only twelve youths had arrived, and asking when the men were coming.

On the following day eleven more men arrived, but these after spending one night on the plantation, and without doing any work, left without giving any reason. On the 9th January twenty-two more men arrived, stating they had come from Brisbane, which surprised us very much, as all through the correspondence and interviews with the Australian Labor Federation secretary in Maryborough we were led to believe that we were to get Maryborough wharf laborers, many of whom are known to the writer as working men accustomed to work.'

Mr. James M'Gown stated that one lot of men stayed on the plantation one night, worked part of the next day, and then left. Another lot stayed one night and then left, without doing any work at all. The third gang consisted of twenty two men (one of them was to act as cook). They arrived on the plantation on the 9th January, about midday. They had two meals, and then started for town to make arrangements about their rations. The party returned on the 10th with their rations, Mr. Hulyer, local secretary of the union, accompanying them. On the 12th the men started to cut cane. Twenty one commenced work, and of these 13 knocked off at the end of four hours.

One of them told Mr. M'Gown that an under-overseer, Alex. Adie, had said they were to be sacked that night, and the rest concurred at the statement, and gave that as their reason for knocking off. He then asked Adie, who was standing by and within hearing of the men, whether he had made any such statement, and Adie denied having done so. He then told the men there must be some misunderstanding, and the best thing they could do was to go to work again. When he said that, one of the men stepped forward and said, 'I am not going to work with your b— blackfellows.' One of the men asked if they were expected to do as much work as the black fellows, and he replied, 'Certainly not,' they being new to the work. Mr. M'Gown then spoke to the other eight men who were still working, and they replied that Adie had not spoken to them, and they continued work. He saw no more of the thirteen men that day, but about 8 or 9 o'clock that night the eight men who had continued working came to Mr. M'Gown's house and told him that the others had either eaten or made away with the rations, and that they could not go on working. They asked to be paid for what work they had done, and they were each paid 6s. on the following morning, all the men were engaged at the rate of 30s. a week, to find themselves in every thing except tools. Six of the thirteen who had knocked off turned up on the following morning and received 24s. each. The whole of the rest cleared out. His opinion of the men — taking them all round — was that they were a worthless lot, men who did not want to work even if they could get it — men of a class who are not wanted in this country at all.

The plantation had nothing to do with finding the men tucker. The thirteen men found fault with the others for not going with the majority, and he was aware that they returned food to the butcher and baker, apparently because they did not want the remaining eight to continue at work. Mr. McGown concluded : ' Had the men chosen to continue, there was plenty for them to do, and the terms offered them were fair and reasonable enough. Our usual wages for such a class of labour is £1 per week and found ; but we had not the accommodation for these extra men, and consequently the 30s. a week was offered and accepted. Hulyer, the local secretary of the union, knew well enough what the terms were upon which the men were engaged, and what was to be their pay; and I fully believe he knew what kind of work they were expected to perform.'

The statement made by Christopher Summers was as follows : 'I had no objection to work for the 30s. per week and find ourselves. We were sent up from Brisbane by Mr. Reid. Mr. Reid told us we should get £1 per week and found, or 30s. a week and find ourselves. We came and went out to the plantation, and I spoke to Mr. McGown, and asked him what were the terms of engagement.

He said, ' Thirty shillings a week and find yourselves.' We came back to town, and the local secretary of the union sent us to a lodging house for the night, and next day sent us out with rations to the plantation, he and another going with us. That was on Saturday.

We went to work on Monday morning, and about 13 of us knocked off about 11 o'clock. We did so because an overseer came along and found fault with the way some of us were cutting the cane, saying it should be cut lower. I knocked off because the others did, not because I could not do the work. If I could have exercised my own free will I would have stayed on, because I wanted money. We remained at the camp that night, and came into town in the morning. During the afternoon of the previous day, (Monday), after we had knocked off, a load of rations, etc , was sent out by the union, and we sent it back. The other men who worked all day on the Monday wanted to be paid. It was not because of the wages that I left. I did not consider the work too hard. The weather was a little hot, but there was no hard work about it. I know some of the men of the party had been used to work, but some had not — clerks and others, who had never done a day's hard work. Just before we knocked off an overseer came along and said, ' Men, I'd knock off if I were you; you'll be sacked tonight, and I wouldn't give any one the chance to sack me.' We then all stopped work. It was the same man who showed us how to cut the cane in the morning. After we had knocked off I saw Mr. M'Gown. I did not hear Mr. M'Gown say that be ' would have nothing to do with unions.' I did not hear what took place. They were all talking together, and I left them and took my cane knife to the place where I got it I was not told to go, and as far as I am concerned I did not want to go. I consider myself at liberty to work where I like. I have had enough to do with unions, having lost so much by them.²¹

²¹ Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser Friday 20 March 1891

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