

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ARRIVAL, TRANSFER, AND DISPERSAL OF CHINESE LABOURERS IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS

After enduring a sea voyage from Amoy which averaged 3½ months,¹ the indentured Chinese labourers arrived in the colony of New South Wales through the ports of Sydney, Newcastle or Moreton Bay. For the majority of the Chinese labourers that survived the passage, the first glimpse of their new home for the next five years was of Sydney harbour. The information contained in Table 2 clearly shows that only three ships made land in ports other than Sydney: the *Duke of Roxburgh* (1851) landed in Moreton Bay, and the *Eleanor Lancaster* made two trips direct to Newcastle. However, on closer examination the table reveals that many of the labourers disembarked in Sydney were quickly transferred by ship to other northern ports, any transfers being determined by the actual and perceived levels of demand.

This chapter traces the path of the Chinese labourers from the moment when the ship carrying them docked in the colony, to the point when the labourers reached their place of employment. In following this course the discussion presents the various routes taken to the stations, and an analysis of the dispersal of the Chinese labourers throughout the colony, specifically the sheep stations of the Northern Districts, the terminus of most of the labourers' travels.

A: FROM SHIP TO SHORE TO STATION

Once disembarked in the colony the Chinese either lived in the warehouse facilities of the shipping agents involved in the importation, or remained on board ship until engaged. The manner in which the Chinese were accommodated depended upon the port through which they entered the colony, and the manner in which they arrived in the colony, either as a sponsored labourer or as part of a speculation. Until the arrival of the *Duke of Roxburgh* in February 1851 most of the Chinese labourers arrived with places of employment ensured, or were relatively quickly engaged. These labourers rarely required any form of housing as the agents involved informed those that had contracted for the Chinese that the ship carrying the labourers was due to berth soon. The advertisements requested employers to ensure that '...immediate

¹ A report on shipping entering the port of Sydney from China during the first quarter of 1852 stated that the average length of passage was 85 days, a period that was dependent upon amenable weather conditions, something that did not always eventuate due to typhoons crossing the South China Sea. *SMH*, 3rd April, 1852. Actual passage times can be calculated from the information contained in Table 2: e. g. the *Eleanor Lancaster* in 1852-53 made the passage in 70 days; the *Nimrod*, 86 days, (*SMH*, 3rd October, 1848); with the ill-fated *General Palmer* taking 133 days to complete the voyage.

arrangements are made for the receipt of the men...' for which they had contracted.² Therefore, it was only those Chinese labourers that had been imported as a part of a speculation that usually required housing until engaged.

In Sydney the labourers were usually kept on the ships on which they had arrived, as the deep-port facilities allowed the ships to dock adjacent to the premises of the shipping agents. Although the majority of the Chinese were landed in Sydney, the agents there did not have to house any substantial number as nearly 59% were immediately transferred by ship to either the ports of Moreton Bay, Clarence River or Wide Bay. In some cases, if the ship was to commence another voyage directly after docking, the Chinese labourers were removed to the agent's warehouse so the ship could undergo refitting for the next voyage.

In Brisbane the Chinese were housed on land until engaged,³ as the large ships could not manoeuvre down the Brisbane River, stopping at Moreton Bay, and transferring their passengers, and other goods to smaller vessels. The rate at which Chinese labourers were landed at Brisbane even prompted suggestions at one stage for a holding depot to be built to accommodate them, although there is no evidence to suggest that such action was eventually taken. Connolly obviously held the Chinese within his warehouse until engaged, hence his request to the employers who had contracted with the Chinese aboard the 1851 voyage of the *Duke of Roxburgh* to arrange their removal from his stores "immediately".⁴ The eagerness of Connolly to have the Chinese engaged, which equates with Buckley's advertisement that any unengaged Chinese were to be forwarded to Sydney, can be related not just to the pressure exerted on space in the stores, but also to the fact that according to the contracts signed by the Chinese the labourer's wages were to commence '...from the date of his arrival...' in the colony.⁵

In another port, that of Newcastle, the Chinese were held on board the ship in which they had arrived until engaged, with the ship's captain and agent having to keep the Chinese on board busy and distracted making baskets due to the slow rate at which

2 "Chinese Labourers", *MBC*, 1st February, 1851.

3 In Brisbane the merchants identifiable with the trade were Henry Buckley, W. Connolly and in the case of the *Nimrod*, Robert Graham of North Brisbane. John Richardson handled negotiations for the *Duke of Roxburgh* (1850-51) in conjunction with the Ipswich agent Walter Gray, who was to become a partner in "Jondaryan" station on the Darling Downs. (Jan Walker, *Jondaryan Station*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1988, p. 51.)

4 *MBC*, 15th November, 1851.

5 Contract of Kaw Hoe, *RTC* (ML MSS 307/184). This contract is contained within Appendix 7. The contract supplied by Robert Jackson in A'noy states that wages were to start fourteen days after arrival in the colony. Refer to the contract by Jackson also contained within Appendix 7.

they were engaged.⁶ The Chinese labourers transferred by steamer to the Clarence River, or to Wide Bay would have been met at the port by either the employer or an agent of the employer, due to the lack of any facilities capable of housing the Chinese for any length of time at these ports. All of the agencies for the reception and dispersal of the Chinese labourers were also wool-shippers, a personal and financial link to the squatters which was to prove invaluable in the "sale" of the labourers.

Unlike European immigrants, the Chinese were not afforded the "luxury" of being housed within an Emigration Depot which provided sleeping and living facilities for the immigrants until they were engaged. The relative cheapness of their labour was not to be threatened by expenses incurred through ensuring the comfort of the Chinese while they awaited engagement. Another major difference and one which is quite surprising if some of the attitudes to the Chinese and their level of cleanliness and health are taken into account, is that the Chinese did not have to undergo any health check or period of quarantine as was the case with immigrants arriving from other ports. The Colonial Health Officer became involved with the Chinese emigrants twice, once at the request of the agent, in April 1853, when Dr. Alleyne boarded the *Spartan* to undertake a health check due to the extreme rate at which death and sickness had overtaken the passengers.⁷ An earlier involvement was on an official basis with the ill-fated voyage of the *General Palmer* when a Board of Health inquiry was instituted in order to '...enquire into the cause of the great mortality on board that vessel'⁸ and suspicions of mal-treatment over the death of Pan Keene.⁹

The importation of Chinese labourers was not perceived within the colony at least, as coming under the control of the Imperial Passenger Act, therefore the regulations and restrictions pertaining to the arrival of British passengers, including health checks and emigration depots, were not enforced with respect to the Chinese. However, at the height of the importations in early 1852 there were voices raised suggesting that '...no reasonable effort should be wanting in impressing as far as practicable, into the character of Chinese immigration, the wholesome regulations of

6 This case is found in the correspondence between Robert Towns and Captain F. Lodge the latter being in Newcastle at the time with the *Eleanor Lancaster* attempting, with little luck it appears to engage the Chinese that he had imported. In order to keep the Chinese busy until they were engaged, Lodge requested that Towns send him some rattans from Sydney, presumably to make into baskets. To which request Towns responded light-heartedly that at the price demanded for the rattans, Lodge would '...not be able to compete with (his) fellow tradesmen.' Towns to Lodge, 10th March, 1853, and 11th March, 1853, *RTC*, (ML MSS307/118)

7 Dr. Alleyne went on board the *Spartan* at the invitation of Towns '...for your own satisfaction as well as mine.' R. Towns to Dr. Alleyne, 13th May, 1853, *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/118).

8 "Chinese Immigration" by Paul Pix, No. V *SMH*, 27th March, 1852.

9 *Empire*, 5th March, 1852.

the British system...'.¹⁰ These suggestions were offered as a sop to the public which through the newspapers had begun to decry the importation of Chinese labourers as just another manifestation of the slave trade because of the rates of mortality, violence and disease that had come to the attention of the public with the arrival of the *Ganges* and then the *General Palmer*.

In contrast to the eagerness of the importers and agents to have the Chinese removed from their premises was the recommendation that:

*The immigrants should not leave the ship for at least a week after her arrival in Sydney, and certainly not then unless in good health. They require great attention for some short time after the termination of the voyage, in order to protect them from gorging themselves with the good things that fall to their lot on reaching this country. Several deaths have occurred by a neglect of this rule.*¹¹

This recommendation was rarely adhered to, as a number of examples indicate. Firstly, the labourers hired by Tertius Campbell for R. R. C. Robertson of "Wellington Vale" station in the New England district, arrived in Sydney per the *Arabia* 21st December, 1851, were transferred to the Clarence River by the steamer *Phoenix* 29th December, 1851, and arrived at the station about one week later. The labourers hired by M. H. Marsh of "Maryland" station on the Darling Downs from the *Cadet* which arrived in Sydney 13rd April, 1850 were transferred to Moreton Bay per the *Favourite* 27th April, 1850, and arrived at "Maryland" three weeks later. In both of these cases it was the "tyranny of distance" which prevented the labourers from reaching the stations any sooner after being disembarked; in neither case was there time allocated for the Chinese to adjust to their new surroundings, or to be checked for any sign of illness or disease. For Robertson's labourers the passage north was dependent upon the arrival and then departure of the *Phoenix*, as the letter informing Robertson of the arrival of the Chinese and their passage per the *Phoenix* is dated 24th December 1851.¹² Therefore within four days of arriving in the colony, both groups of labourers had been assigned to their future employer and only awaited transport, delays in transferral to their places of engagement had nothing to do with ensuring the health of the labourers.

Two further examples are the labourers that arrived on board the *Royal Saxon* in February 1853 who were advertised as being available for engagement only three days

10 "Chinese Immigration" by Paul Pux, No. VI. *SMH*, 3rd April, 1852; and Evidence of H. H. Browne, 27th November, 1854, Report from the Select Committee on Asiatic Labour. *NSWLC V&P*, 1854, Vol. II, p. 18.

11 "Chinese Immigration" by Paul Pux, No. VI, *op.cit.*

12 R. Campbell and Co. to R. R. C. Robertson, 24th December, 1851, *Wellington Vale Station Records*, (UNE-A185).

after landing.¹³ Also, a number of those from the *Ganges* which arrived in Sydney on 27th January 1852 were indented the following day to Robert Fitzgerald and taken on to his Windsor property. The passage of this latter group of labourers, first by steamer to Parramatta, then on foot to McKays Inn (at Baulkham Hills) continuing onto Windsor by wagon, was to end with the death of two of the labourers. One death was ascribed to an existing condition of "peritoneal inflammation", the other to the "oppressive state of the atmosphere" and, surprisingly for one who had been contracted as a labourer, the individual being "unaccustomed to exercise".¹⁴ It can be surmised that if the labourers had remained on board for the period stipulated by Browne these deaths may have been prevented as existing conditions could have been recognised and possibly treated.

A(i): AND OFF TO WORK THEY WENT!

The transfer of the labourers from the captains or importers to the contracting employer or their agent involved the payment by the employer of the "passage price". The passage price of the Chinese labourers included the advance and the cost charged by the importer and started at £15 for one labourer or £10 each for five or more for those that arrived on board the *Vimrod*;¹⁵ finishing at £14 for the labourers from the *Eleanor Lancaster* in 1853.¹⁶ With regard to the *Ganges* Towns wrote, that '...we had no difficulty in hiring all we could spare at @£12 per. head and the advance,...', a total cost to the employer of £13 4s., and advised Lodge that he would have '...no difficulty in getting rid of all you can spare @ £15...'.¹⁷ Although the contract for Yap Chew from the *Arabia* states that he had been paid an advance of \$6 (refer to Table 7a) Robertson of "Wellington Vale" station was charged 30s. or \$7.50 advance for each of the ten labourers that he acquired from that ship.¹⁸

Once the labourer was purchased from the agent or captain the employer's name was affixed to the contract, although those purchased from Robert Towns received separate contracts which were completed once the labourers were transferred to the employer, with the original contracts that were signed in China being taken from the Chinese. The precaution of issuing two contracts was taken as a response to the threat

13 "Immigrants per Royal Saxon", *SMH*, 19th February, 1853.

14 The labourers that died were Chicong Hang No. 33, and Oug Khai, No. 5; "Chinese Labourers", *SMH*, 3rd February, 1852.

15 *MBC*, 2nd December, 1848

16 *MM*, 12th February, 1853.

17 Towns to Lodge, 26th February, 1852, *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/117).

18 Accounts for R. R. C. Robertson, 27th December, 1851, *Wellington Vale Station Records*, (UNE A185).

of challenges made to the legality of contracts transferred by means of a signed note to that effect on the back of the contract.

From the ports the Chinese were transferred to the stations that had engaged them by bullock dray or sometimes on foot if the distance to be travelled was considered not too great. Figure 7 over the page shows the various dray roads that accessed the Northern Districts, and the stations found to have employed Chinese labourers. Prior to setting out, the Chinese were outfitted in clothing deemed suitable for those employed in shepherding. As described within the advertisement placed in the *Moreton Bay Courier* regarding the *Nimrod*, and the contract for Eyu, the Chinese were provided with two suits of clothing, although in most cases only one set was provided, usually by the shipping agent or merchant handling the engagement. For R. R. C. Robertson the cost of outfitting the 10 Chinese labourers that he engaged from the *Arabia* was £9 9s 6d in total,¹⁹ with Marsh paying £10 12s 5d to Henry Buckley for the outfitting of the ten Chinese that he acquired for "Maryland".²⁰ In the previous chapter it was noted that as the trade progressed the provision of clothing was removed from the contract. The contracts issued to those on the *Arabia* did not include clothing therefore, the cost of the clothing provided to Robertson's Chinese labourers would have been deducted from the labourer's future wages, a sum which Campbell described as "trifling".²¹

This clothing was called "slops", a nautical term which had been adapted to colonial requirements to define the clothing issued to convicts, which consisted of "...one Jacket or frock, one shirt, one pair Trowsers, and one pair of shoes...".²² This description of "slops" can be assumed to also apply to the outfit provided to the Chinese labourers, although a lesser quality of workmanship may have applied given the advertisement in the *Moreton Bay Courier* for "Cheap Slops For Chinamen".²³ The standard of some of the slops raised complaints from one employer that the "The Shirts are so flimsy that the Chinamen even refuse to take them."²⁴

19 Account of R. R. C. Robertson with Campbell and Co., *Wellington Vale Station Records*, (UNE A185).

20 Commercial Bank Account, 15th May, 1850, *Maryland Cash and Stores Book*, (UNE A1352).

21 R. Campbell to R. R. C. Robertson, 24th December, 1851, *Wellington Vale Station Records*, (UNE A185). W. C. Wentworth had supplied his Chinese labourers with goods to the value of £1 9s. viz. two shirts, a blanket, a black shirt, two cotton rugs, a hat, a handkerchief, a knife, a tin pannikin and some tobacco, the cost of which was mulcted from their future wages of 12s. per month. Sydney Police Court, *Empire*, 27th March, 1852.

22 W. S. Ransom, (ed.) *The Australian National Dictionary*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 600.

23 *MBC*, 15th November, 1851.

24 Chauvel to Towns, 5th August, 1853, *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/196).

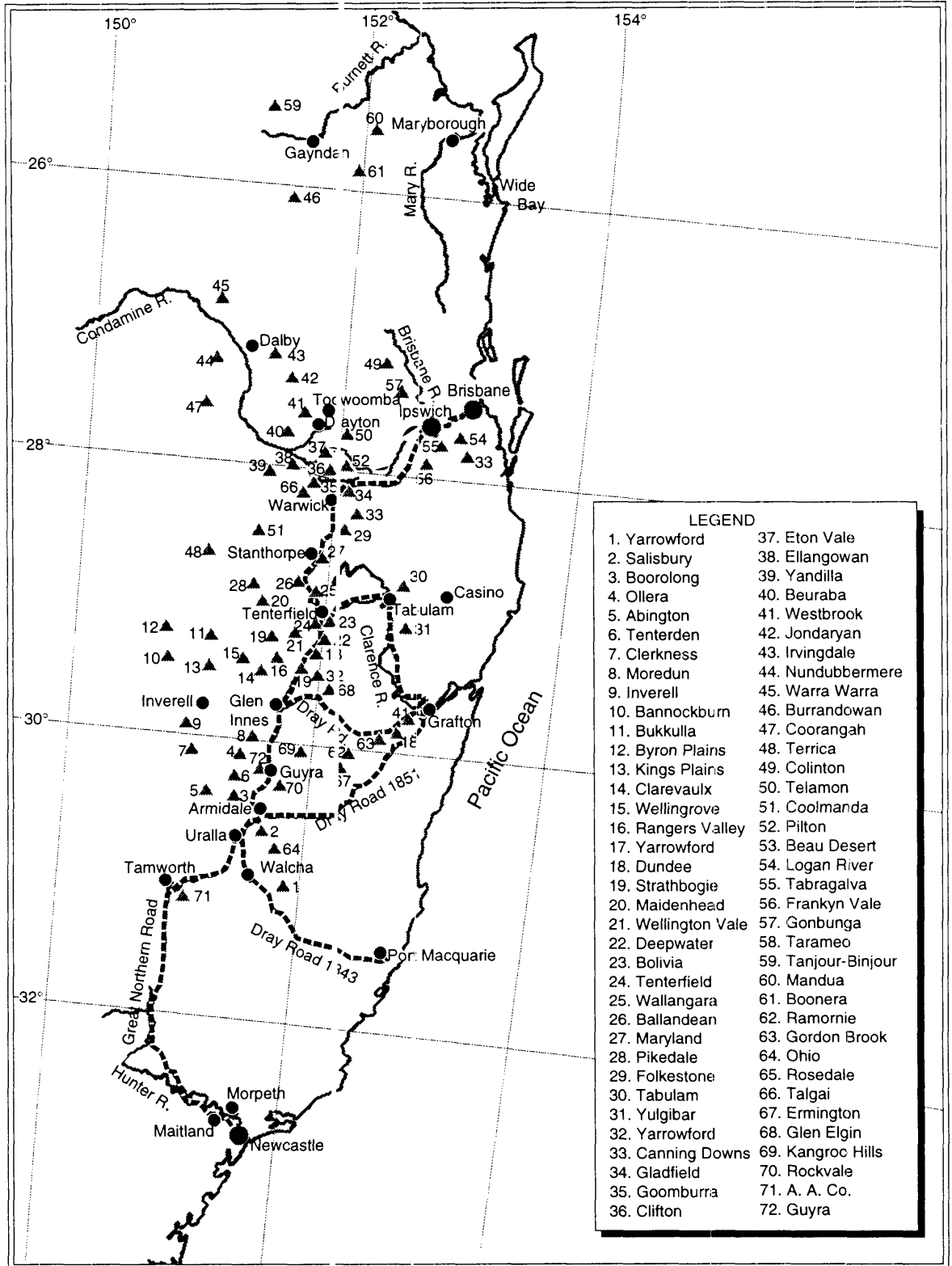


FIGURE 7
STATIONS EMPLOYING CHINESE LABOURERS-
NEW SOUTH WALES NORTHERN DISTRICTS

On the question of clothing the *Nimrod* again was an exception to the general case being the only example found of a Chinese emigrant ship carrying clothing for the passengers, a cargo that was advertised for sale at very cheap prices, by W. Connolly.²⁵ However, another advertisement for "SHOES FOR COOLIES"²⁶ provides some evidence that the Chinese were specifically catered for in the clothing department, although such catering may have been the consequence of a merchant, in this case I. M. Illidge, acquiring the goods at a price which could not be refused.

In the case of the Chinese employed in the districts of New England and Darling Downs different tracks were taken to the stations to which they were engaged. For those engaged to serve in the Darling Downs and the northern reaches of the New England Tableland, the Chinese were shipped from Brisbane to Ipswich by steamer and thence usually by bullock dray to the station. The Chinese that were engaged for "Maryland" in 1851 were brought, or more correctly, an attempt was made to bring them up from Ipswich in this manner. A report from the Ipswich correspondent of the *Moreton Bay Courier* related the story of the bullock driver, Paddy Blunder, being attacked, with '...one of the scoundrels having taken a knife to cut his throat, and another an axe to dash out his brains';²⁷ apparently in response to not being allowed to travel on the dray.

The second route taken was from Grafton on the Clarence River, through Tabulam and on to Tenterfield, which was followed by those with properties in the mid-reaches of the tableland around the present site of Glen Innes. Those engaged by Oswald Bloxsome for his station of "Rangers Valley" near Glen Innes, (supposedly "a shipload"²⁸ although no specific evidence has been found to prove the veracity of this statement), were landed at Grafton and transferred from there to "Rangers Valley", during which trip an affray broke out amongst the Chinese and one labourer was killed.²⁹ In contrast to the violent entry of these Chinese labourers to their stations, the Chinese engaged by R. R. C. Robertson in 1851 arrived in Grafton aboard the *Phoenix*, were then carried to Tabulam by boat and thence by bullock dray to "Wellington Vale", a trip that was undertaken in a peaceful manner.

25 *MBC*, 27th January, 1849. The delay in Connolly advertising this clothing may have been prompted by the problems Captain Espinasse encountered with the port authorities when he landed 11 bags of rice, landed at Moreton Bay that had not been entered in the clearance he received when departing Sydney, a charge for which he was fined a total of £60. "Highly Important Seizure", *MBC*, 23rd December, 1848.

26 *SMH*, 20th April, 1852.

27 *MBC*, 29th November, 1851.

28 H. S. Bloxsome, *A Short Biography of Oswald Bloxsome Snr.*, 1942, p. 19.

29 *ibid.* As no records of the outcome of this disturbance have been found in the form of Bench of Magistrates records or newspaper reports the actual cause and result of this incident remain unknown.

For those properties located on the southern reaches of the Tableland and the properties surrounding Armidale, the Chinese were usually brought up by the Great Northern Road from Morpeth through Maitland. This was the route followed by Alexander Barlow of "Abington" who:

...once went through Morpeth driving his team and dray with loading for the coming year, with seven Chinese walking on each side of his dray. Each man carried a long pole and had a bundle on either end. ...Some of them stayed at Abington as shepherds and some went to the Everett's at Ollera.³⁰

A fourth path which may have been used by those employers located on the eastern fall region of the New England tableland was from Port Macquarie, an even slower and more dangerous track.

B: LOCATION OF THE CHINESE

It is not possible to provide an accurate listing of the stations or employers to whom the Chinese were engaged due to the paucity of existing archival information which hinders much of the research into the indentured Chinese labourers. The Chinese and their employers noted in Table 3 provide an insight into the dispersal of the labourers throughout the Northern Districts, yet must be viewed with caution as it only includes those Chinese and their employers who are noted within newspapers, Bench of Magistrate records and a small number of private and business letters and station journals. Some employers are known to have employed Chinese labourers but as no records have survived to indicate the numbers employed, the names of the Chinese employed or the specific date of their arrival in the colony, these employees and employers have not been included in this table. Figure 7 above details those stations known to have employed Chinese labourers and includes stations for which no archival information regarding the number or names of those Chinese labourers employed has survived.

Bench records give an indication of where the Chinese were employed, but only in cases where the employer utilised the law to maintain control over their labour force. Some contemporary newspapers give the impression that the courts were full of

³⁰ This statement raises some questions as to the actual number of Chinese labourers engaged by the Everett's, and the time at which they were engaged, as the "Ollera" accounts show the first group arriving in mid-1852. Barlow, however, had sold "Abington" to the Morse brothers in May 1852, after previously purchasing "Beverly" from Phillip Ditmus in 1850. Therefore the Everett's must have engaged a previous group of Chinese labourers that have not been recorded in the "Ollera" Account book or Stores Issue book, which argument is supported by the statement of Harris that Barlow acquired the Chinese to which she refers '...from one of the first ships to bring Chinese immigrants to the colony'. This first group of Chinese to arrive at "Ollera" may have disappeared into the mists of history due to the breaks apparent within the "Ollera" journals that have survived. A. Harris, *Abington, a History of a Station and its People*, Armidale, University of New England, 1982, p. 9.

Chinese labourers, and that all of the labourers were totally uncontrollable, taking up the time of the Bench and filling the lock-ups and gaols at substantial cost to the public purse³¹. By relying solely on magistrates records the eventual location of many Chinese labourers remains hidden, as not all employers had a need, or a desire, to resort to the law as a bargaining point in industrial relations. Neither did all of the Chinese abscond or give their employers other cause to take them before the Bench. Apart from covering only those Chinese that were brought by their employers before the Bench, gaps within the records of magisterial proceedings can also give a false impression that in some regions indentured Chinese labourers were not employed, although their presence has been verified through other sources.

B(i): PROBLEMS IN LOCATING THE CHINESE LABOURERS

On these points, that is that not all Chinese labourers were brought before the court and that incomplete Bench of Magistrate records can give false impressions, the case of Matthew Henry Marsh and his employment of Chinese labourers provides a perfect example. Marsh is known by his own statements to have employed a substantial number of Chinese labourers. Within the parliamentary records, and within a letter to Earl Grey, Marsh asserts that his labour force was comprised of a substantial proportion of Chinese labourers, who were shepherding two-fifths or 39,000 of his total sheep flock³². Only one set of records, previously held only in private hands,³³ exists to prove the veracity of Marsh's statement, and without the limited knowledge that these records offer it would appear that Marsh employed no Chinese on his properties of "Salisbury", and "Boorolong" in New England and "Maryland" in the Darling Downs region. The Chinese employed by Marsh on these three stations apparently never made it before the Bench as the records for these two regions contain no mention of Chinese from any of these properties. The records for the Tenterfield Bench, which cover the Police District in which "Maryland" station was located, are relatively complete, the same, however, can not be said for the Armidale Bench. This Bench would have heard any cases involving the Chinese labourers employed at "Salisbury" and "Boorolong" stations the running of which Marsh controlled, during those periods when he was in residence.

31 "Chinese Labour- Its Cost to the Public", *MBC*, 11th October, 1851.

32 "Letter from M. H. Marsh to Earl Grey, 11th May, 1852", reprinted in the *Empire*, 17th September, 1853.

33 These are the records for Marsh' property of "Maryland" in the Darling Downs region, which had encompassed the whole of what is now the town of Stanthorpe in Queensland. Mr. and Mrs. Greenup the owners of *Maryland* very kindly allowed me access to the contract of Eat, the 1850-51 Cash and Stores Book, and the 1856 Day Book, the only books remaining from the nineteenth century, and also allowed the Dixson Library at U. N. E. to microfilm the books for later researchers. The microfilm of these journals is now lodged at UNE Archives A1352.

In the case of the Everett: at "Ollera" a disturbance amongst the Chinese that they employed would appear to have never been brought before the Bench although the expectation is that when a "Tremendous bunk with our Chinese lately fighting with knives etc..."³⁴ occurred, the masters would have used the law to enforce order amongst the combatants and pressure them back into work. That this disturbance on "Ollera" is not mentioned in the Armidale bench records calls into question the completeness of the extant records. The Armidale records are if anything uninformative on the existence and distribution of Chinese labourers within the Armidale Police District especially in comparison to the information on these subjects offered by the Tenterfield and Wellingrove Bench Records.

The records of the Armidale Bench of Magistrates do exist, yet what there is does not give the impression of being complete as any person perusing the records would be given the impression that all labourers in the Armidale Police District remained on the properties, always followed the employer's directions, and therefore gave the latter neither cause nor reason to bring their labourers before the Bench. From 1847-1849 there are a few cases brought before the Armidale Bench under the Master and Servants Act, the majority either being employees suing employers for non-payment of wages or the prosecution of ticket-of-leave holders for travelling outside of their assigned districts³⁵. Between 1849 and 1851 only three cases were brought before the bench under the Master and Servants Act, all of which were for absconding and no Chinese labourers are detailed. The majority of prosecutions were against European labourers employed within the town of Armidale for being drunk and disorderly.

After November 1852 the rate of prosecutions in the Armidale Police District under the Master and Servants Act increased for a couple of months, especially under 2nd Sec. 9 Vic. 27.³⁶ In 1853 only a couple of prosecutions were registered, with none being recorded for 1854, 1855, 1856 or 1857. Throughout all of this period no prosecutions were registered against any of the Chinese labourers that are known to have been working in the district on the properties of "Abington", "Salisbury", "Boorolong", "Ollera", "Tenterden", and "Aberbaldie". By referring to Table 3 it will be seen that the only Chinese mentioned within the Armidale Bench reports are later in the period under review and therefore it cannot be assumed that they entered the

34 George Everett to Thomas Everett, 9th February, 1854, *Ollera Station Records*, (UNE A103-V3052/4).

35 *Bench of Magistrates, Armidale, 1847-1849*. (UNE Archives A872)

36 This section allowed for prosecutions against employees that either broke an agreement by not entering into service, absenting themselves from their place of employment, or were guilty of neglect, misconduct or misdemeanor.

colony under indenture. The only other times when Chinese are mentioned, and it can be proved that the labourers in question were under indenture, were in the cases of Jemmay versus Hogan, where Jemmay had taken action over the theft of a horse, and that of Tan Koey of "Abington" station, who had suicided. It is difficult to accept that the Chinese (and the European labourers) resident in the Armidale Police District never warranted prosecuting under the Master and Servants Act, as the rate of prosecutions within other districts suggest otherwise, especially during the period of the gold-rush. Correspondingly, it is impossible to believe that all of the masters within the New England district were loathe to initiate such prosecutions.

Within these years other Bench of Magistrates records are full of prosecutions under the Act, as are the contemporary newspapers, and this can be seen clearly in Table 3. It is difficult to offer an explanation as to why there was such a low rate of prosecutions under the Master and Servants Act within the Armidale Police District compared with other districts.³⁷ The answer may however lie in the fact that many cases were not recorded at the time of trial, or that cases brought before the Bench under the Master and Servants Act were '...treated separately from other Petty Session matters, though why they would have done so is unclear.'³⁸ In extension of this argument the author suggests that the question over arbitral jurisdiction raised by Charles Windeyer in 1844, where magistrates were found to have no power to convict summarily, may have deterred the Armidale magistrates from hearing and adjudicating on prosecutions under the Master and Servants Act.³⁹ This explanation is particularly viable as Marsh himself was a magistrate and would have been aware of the questions surrounding magistrate's jurisdiction in these matters.

Marsh was one of the few people raised to the position of Justice of the Peace who possessed training and experience in the legal profession,⁴⁰ in contrast to the majority whose training was on-the-job. This argument collapses, however, as the Select Committee of 1845 enquired into various aspects of the Master and Servants Act, and the consolidation of this act in the same year addressed this issue ensuring

37 The rate of prosecutions noted for the Wellingrove Police District under the Master and Servants Act which ended in sentences of imprisonment solely are for 1853, 10; 1854, 4; 1855, 11. Return of Persons Under Sentence of Imprisonment for Breaches of the Master and Servants Act During the years 1853, 1854, 1855. *Register of Cases. Wellingrove Bench*, (AO 4/6660).

38 A. S. Merritt, 'The Development and Application of Master and Servants Legislation in New South Wales- 1845 to 1930', A. N. U., Ph. D Thesis, 1981, p. 184.

39 Merritt, *op.cit.*, p.76. Refer also to the evidence particularly of Charles Windeyer to the Select Committee, Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Master and Servants Act, *NSWLC V&P*, 1845, pp. 517-521.

40 Matthew Henry Marsh was admitted to the Bar of the Inner Temple in 1836 and practised, unsuccessfully it appears as he received very few briefs, on the Western Circuit and the Wiltshire Assizes, (*ADB*, Vol. 5, p. 213) this experience allowed him greater insight into the role and responsibility of a magistrate than many of his fellow "Merino Magistrates'.

that magistrates did in fact have the power to convict summarily. Also such worries, whether or not they had been addressed by the 1845 legislation, did not hinder magistrates within other Police Districts from applying the Act to wayward employees according to the surviving evidence.

The sparsity of magistrates in Armidale, the distances that had to be travelled by them to reach the Court House and therefore the difficulties experienced in assembling a bench, were the subject of a report from the Armidale correspondent of the *Maitland Mercury* and was accompanied by a request that more of the "eligible and competent men" residing in the district be made Justices of the Peace.⁴¹ Another correspondent, this time to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, stated that there were enough Justices of the Peace, what was required was a paid magistrate, which would alleviate the difficulties of the magistrates having to '...ride a few miles once in six months to take their seats upon the Bench...'.⁴² These problems, if they were such, may have prompted the masters to apply their own justice, a suggestion which admittedly cannot be substantiated, yet given the style of justice that was meted out to the Chinese even when they were brought before other Benches, is not outside the bounds of probability. Conversely, the problems with convening a bench in Armidale may have prompted masters to take their prosecutions to the Maitland bench as evidence exists that a few followed this course including Marsh⁴³ and Thomas Rusden.⁴⁴ Although why the Wellingrove bench was not utilised in this manner as it would have entailed less travel and therefore time, is a mystery.

Admittedly, many employers of Chinese labour never had recourse to the Bench as a form of labour control, as the Chinese did not break their contracts as often as previously argued. Therefore, such records provide a skewed view of the distribution of the Chinese. However, the nearly complete lack of such prosecutions in Armidale calls into question the completeness or accuracy of those records, more than providing an example of a district where the "master and servant" relationship was in a state of equilibrium or near perfection.

The lack of a local newspaper in the New England region until 1856, when the *Armidale Express* commenced publication, also accounts for the lack of information

41 *MM*, 17th December, 1851.

42 "News from the Interior", *SMH*, 16th November, 1851.

43 In 1849 Marsh brought his superintendent James Burnett, before the Maitland Circuit Court on charges of neglect and mismanagement, a case that Marsh lost. *SMH*, 19th February, 1849. Other cases from Armidale tried at Maitland include W. Maxwell against Wee and Hee for assault, September 1852 and G. Bowmar against Gaw Koor, August 1853 for absconding and assault. For more information on this last two cases refer to Table 3.

44 "Master and Servants Act", *MM*, 21st April, 1847.

on the Chinese within that region that can be gleaned and utilised in comparison with the Moreton Bay and Hunter River districts. These regions were covered by the *Moreton Bay Courier*, *Moreton Bay Free Press* and the *Maitland Mercury* which allows a far greater number of Chinese labourers to be identified. Table 3 contains a greater number of labourers for the Darling Downs and northern New England regions than the area around Armidale which is a result of the lack of complete magisterial records and a local newspaper.

Another problem encountered when attempting to ascertain the final destination of many of the Chinese labourers is that in a number of cases the Chinese were not identified as passengers when being transferred from Sydney. In these instances the labourers had not been listed on the ship's manifest even within steerage, and may have gone unnoticed if it was not for associated reports in the newspapers and other sources mentioning in some manner the movement of the Chinese labourers from Sydney.⁴⁵ For example, those indentured to Robertson were not listed within the *Phoenix's* manifest, with no passengers only cargo being noted. A similar situation was found with the five labourers transferred to Moreton Bay per the *Jack* in February, 1852. Robertson's labourers were found to have travelled on the *Phoenix* through the letters and accounts of "Wellington Vale" station, and those on the *Jack* were only recorded in a small notice in the *Moreton Bay Courier*.⁴⁶

Another example, which again relates to the passage of Chinese labourers to the Clarence River, was found within the report on the sinking of the *Phoenix*. In this report it was stated that the 12 Chinese labourers that had been transferred from the *Amazon* had been rescued; these labourers had again not been included in the *Phoenix's* manifest when leaving Sydney. Of equal interest is the mention within the same report that in company with the aborigines who had assisted with the saving of the passengers and the cargo was '...a Chinaman, who appears quite mad'. As to how this person found himself with the aborigines or what happened to him after his "discovery" the report is not forthcoming, stating only that 'No one knows how or when he came there...'.⁴⁷ Equally unknown is to where, and to whom, the twelve Chinese labourers who had been saved from the *Phoenix* were indentured to spend the next five years.

The only explanation that can be offered for the apparent tendency to "hide" the Chinese labourers during their passage from Sydney to the northern ports by not

45 Refer to Table 2, specifically the notes relating to the ships *Duke of Roxburgh* [6-2-51], and *Arabia* [21-12-51].

46 "Chinese", *MBC Supplement*, 6th January, 1852.

47 "Loss of the Phoenix", *SMH*, 5th May, 1852.

reporting them as steerage passengers was to reduce any public animosity directed towards the Chinese labourers and their importation. The level of animosity towards the Chinese labourers increased in direct proportion to the rate of importations, and was directed towards not only the Chinese but also, if not more so, towards their employers. It may be conjectured that by "hiding" the northward passage of the Chinese, the public and the anti-squatter newspapers in Sydney may have been deceived into believing that the northern squatters had forsaken the Chinese labourers in favour of more acceptable European labourers.

B(ii): URBAN AND RURAL EMPLOYMENT

By combining the lists of squatting licences held with the relatively scanty knowledge possessed of those squatters in the Northern Districts who did employ Chinese labourers, the following figures on the rate of employment of Chinese in these districts can be offered, with the cautionary note that the percentages are approximate at best. One problem in tracing employers rather than the Chinese labourers, is that the squatters continually transferred runs, the ownership of some runs changing every year. As the Chinese labourers were usually included with the sale this problem is mitigated to some extent.⁴⁸

Another problem arises when using the Bench of Magistrates records if the squatters were absentee owners and the management of a run was undertaken by an overseer or manager. The absentee squatter was not an uncommon occurrence primarily as the number of runs held by the larger squatters made their personal attendance impossible, however many of the squatters preferred the relative comfort of Sydney, Brisbane or their estates in the Hunter Valley to life in the bush. In these circumstances it was the overseer or manager who would pursue any cases against the Chinese labourers. Unless the names of the various managers or overseers are known it is difficult if not impossible to discern to which property the Chinese labourer appearing before the Bench was indentured. In some cases the managers were known, for example Dr Traill managed "Tenterfield" and "Clifton" for S. A. Donaldson; and the infamous H. B. "Murdering" Fitz,⁴⁹ whose exploits will be discussed later, the was manager for Captain Pike of "Pikedale", "Pikes Creek" and a number of other runs on the Darling Downs. The surfeit of Campbells and Mackenzies around the

⁴⁸ Bloxsome, *op.cit.*, p. 19. Sale notice for "Dogswood and "Hookswood", *PA*, 13th February, 1852.

⁴⁹ Henry Bates Fitz (1817-1880) the son of Robert, Deputy Commissary and Anne Fitz (nee Cannon), was born in Windsor and after achieving the rank of captain in the Indian Army became the manager of "Pikedale" in 1843. By the 1860s Fitz had become a substantial squatter in his own right owning "Pike's Creek", "Warra Warra", "Braemar", "Forrest", "Pilton" and "Haldon" stations. Became a member of the Queensland Legislative Council and was a founding member of the "Queensland Club". D. B. Waterson, *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament, 1860-1929*. Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1972, p. 56-57.

Glen Innes/Wellingrove district also caused problems at times in deciding who was manager for whom, and which Campbell was the owner and which the manager.

TABLE 8a
EMPLOYERS OF CHINESE LABOURERS

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SQUATTING LEASES 1849 (A)	NUMBER EMPLOYING CHINESE (B)	% B of A
NEW ENGLAND	132	51	38.6%
DARLING DOWNS	60	19	31.6%
MORETON BAY	39	13	33.3%
CLARENCE RIVER	56	16	28.6%

SOURCE: J. F. Campbell, *Squattling on Crown Lands in New South Wales*, Sydney, Royal Australian Historical Society, 1968, pp. 36-39; 60-61; 63-66.

From this table it can be adduced that at least a third of the squatters in these four Northern Districts employed Chinese labourers. What must also be taken into account here is the fact that most of the employers of Chinese labourers were the larger squatters, whose stations in some cases were measured in square miles and who held more than one lease. The smaller squatters, that is those with a holding less than 25,000 acres, rarely employed Chinese labourers, which may be related to the cost of acquiring the labourers. When employed by the smaller squatters the Chinese were not acquired in the batches of ten or more that characterised the larger pastoralists, the squatters. Many of the smaller pastoralists may not have had the funds or the access to the credit necessary to purchase the Chinese labourers, the latter financial requirement being important in the acquisition of the labourers. The lack of familial and/or commercial ties with the importers of the labourers by the smaller pastoralists may have also acted to prevent their acquisition of Chinese labourers. The larger pastoralists, the squatters, were a tightly-knit clique which through their various associations and clubs remained aloof from the rest of society, even other pastoralists. It must also be remembered that the Chinese labourers were usually employed in bulk on the stations, only in the urban areas where the labourers were employed by merchants and shopkeepers are cases found of the labourers being employed singly or in pairs.

Evidence to substantiate the assertion that the squatters tended to acquire the Chinese labourers in batches of ten or more is found with Robertson's indenturing of ten labourers, and then his request for another group of equal size; that of Marsh who acquired two lots of ten labourers for "Maryland" station; Gordon Sandemann of

"Burrandowan" had forty Chinese labourers in 1854;⁵⁰ George Gammie of "Ellangowan" and then "Clifton" station, employed in excess of thirty;⁵¹ all of whom were overwhelmed by Robert Fitzgerald's employment of more than a hundred Chinese labourers.⁵² From Table 3 the "bulk" purchasing of Chinese labourers by the major employers is clear. Those who utilised the courts to control their labour force brought most, if not all of their Chinese labourers before the court at one time, usually not with the intention of prosecuting, but of intimidating the labourers into submission.

The percentages provided above can be augmented by the figures provided by the 1851 and 1856 Census figures on the population of the Northern Districts. The number of sheep, shepherds and Chinese/Pagans within these districts can be used to determine the percentage of Chinese labourers shepherding within the labouring population. The figures for the number of Chinese in these districts for 1851 are those given in the Census for "Mahomedans and Pagans" and therefore contain a small number of Indian labourers imported and employed by Phillip Friell and Gordon Sandemann in 1847.

Some of the figures included in Table 8b below appear to be inflated which is a result of the figures for the County of Stanley being included with the Northern Squatting Districts. For example the 1851 total of 620 Chinese labourers in the North compared to 499 within all of the squatting districts, can be reduced by the 168 stated for Stanley, giving a total for the Northern Districts of 452 Chinese labourers in 1851. Another figure which at least gives the impression of being inflated is that for the number of sheep within the Wide Bay District, which doubled between 1851 and 1855,⁵³ yet the number of shepherds employed increased by only 14 over the same period. Doubts must be raised about this figure as in 1854 the number of sheep within this district was assessed at 68,702, and it is highly unlikely that this increase could have been through reproduction alone. Unless a mass migration of sheep to this district occurred between 1854-55, and there is no evidence to suggest that this happened, the 1855 figure must be inflated.

50 Evidence of Gordon Sandemann, 29th August, 1854, Report from the Select Committee on Asiatic Labour, *NSWLC V&P*, 1854, Vol. II, p. 5.

51 Evidence of George Gammie, 2nd July, 1852, Report from the Select Committee on Immigration, *NSWLC V&P*, 1852, Vol. II, p. 47.

52 Evidence of Robert Towns, 29th August, 1854, Report from the Select Committee on Asiatic Labour, *NSWLC V&P*, 1854, Vol. II, p. 12.

53 The sheep figures for Wide Bay and the Barnett districts are for 1855 as the 1856 figures for these two districts were combined.

Two other figures, that for the number of Chinese labourers in the New England district in 1851 and for Wide Bay in 1856, in contrast appear deflated. The small number of Chinese registered in New England in 1851 is surprising as a number of employers are known to have employed Chinese labourers before this date above the number of 27 recorded; Marsh and Barlow alone account for this number of indentured labourers. For Wide Bay the near halving in the number of Chinese labourers employed is equally surprising because in 1852 at least 84 labourers were transferred to Wide Bay from Sydney (refer Table 2). This number would be expected to have kept the number of Chinese labourers within this district at least constant as there are no reports of the labourers leaving this region *en masse*.

TABLE 8b
CHINESE LABOURING POPULATION

DISTRICT	YEAR	A POPULATION	B SHEEP	C SHEPHERDS	D CHINESE	% D of A	% D of C
DARLING DOWNS	1851	2,173	713,658	726	174	8.01	23.96
	1856	3,977	1,176,137	936	227	5.70	24.25
MORETON BAY	1851	272	322,101	138	51	18.75	36.90
	1856	527	382,010	206	40	7.60	19.42
NEW ENGLAND	1851	4,197	951,725	1,252	27	0.64	2.15
	1856	5,508	1,119,673	867	155	2.80	17.88
CLARENCE RIVER	1851	1,721	124,144	193	12	0.69	6.22
	1856	2,359	107,690	84	21	0.89	25.00
WIDE BAY	1851	406	56,970	100	86	21.18	86.00
	1856	669	117,000	114	49	7.32	42.98
MARANOA	1851	85	N/A	N/A	2	2.35	
	1856	110	33,940	19	3	2.73	15.79
BURNETT	1851	852	424,640	421	102	11.97	24.23
	1856	1309	515,815	529	142	10.84	26.84
STANLEY	1851	4,787	71,307	461	168	3.50	36.44
	1856	9,875	47,064	391	68	0.69	17.39
TOTAL	1851	14,493	3,767,671	3,291	620	4.27	18.83
	1856	23,482	3,525,216	3,146	702	2.99	22.31
TOTAL ALL SQUATTING DISTRICTS	1851	27,697	4,723,356	6,715	499	0.17	7.43
	1856	37,794	6,887,921	5,860	951	2.52	16.23
NSW TOTALS	1851	187,243	6,784,494	11,449	852	0.45	7.44
	1856	266,189	8,603,499	8,532	1800	0.68	21.09

SOURCE: Census of New South Wales, 1851, *Government Gazette*, 1851; Census of New South Wales, 1856, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 57, 1857. New South Wales Statistical Returns, NSWLC V&P, 1852, Vol. II; NSWLC V&P, 1855, Vol. II; JLC, 1856-7, Vol. I.

From this table, and the figures quoted in Table 8a it is clearly evident that the majority of the pre-1852 Chinese labourers imported into the Colony were employed by the squatters in the Northern Districts, specifically those located in present day Queensland. In 1851, the percentage of Chinese labourers amongst shepherds in the Darling Downs was 23%; in Moreton Bay and Stanley 36%; and 86% in Wide Bay whereas New England recorded a surprisingly low 2% of Chinese amongst all shepherds. Decreases within sheep and shepherd numbers in Clarence and Stanley are accounted for by movements into other fields. In the case of the Clarence district this was primarily into cattle as the region was found to wet for sheep, with cattle numbers increasing from 62,028 in 1850 to 91,420 at 1st January 1852.⁵⁴ In the County of Stanley a movement into more agricultural rather than pastoral pursuits as the urban centre of Brisbane developed explains the decrease in sheep and shepherd numbers.

Even though sheep and shepherd numbers decreased in the Clarence district the percentage of Chinese labourers amongst all those shepherding increased significantly from 6.22% to 25% indicating that the pastoralists in this region were relying more on Chinese labour. John Dobie of "Gordon Brook" (30,080 acres) and "Stratheden" (38,400 acres) argued that the Clarence district squatters had been forced to employ Chinese labourers as shepherds, the only alternative was '...to let their flocks shift for themselves'.⁵⁵ Dobie's labour force of about 45 included nine Chinese labourers working as shepherds, however, it is unknown when these labourers were acquired.⁵⁶ In the New England district an equivalent increase in the percentage of Chinese labourers employed as shepherds is noticeable, although total shepherd numbers decreased whilst sheep numbers increased by 17.6%, a result it can be assumed of larger flock numbers. As the number of Chinese labourers within this district increased by an amazing 474% over the same time period, the squatters were obviously placing a great deal of reliance on the Chinese shepherds for the care of their increased flocks. An estimate of the proportion of Chinese labourers amongst all shepherds within the Northern Districts was that in 1852 '...Chinese labourers were herding about 2,000,000 sheep...',⁵⁷ or between a third and a half of the flocks grazing in the districts and the majority of other shepherds were exiles.⁵⁸

54 New South Wales Statistical Returns, *NSWLC V&P*, 1850, Vol. II, and 1852, Vol. II.

55 Evidence of John Dobie, 9 July, 1852, Report from the Select Committee on Immigration, *NSWLC V&P*, 1852, Vol. II, p. 58.

56 Evidence of John Dobie, 9 July, 1852, Report from the Select Committee on Immigration, *NSWLC V&P*, 1852, Vol. II, p. 58.

57 T. M. L. Prior, "Public Meeting to Petition for Direct Immigration", *MBFP*, 11th March, 1852.

58 "The Late Meeting at Brisbane", *MBFP*, 27th May, 1852.

The smaller number of Chinese labourers registered in 1856 in those districts noted above as employing a large percentage as shepherds in 1851, is due to the fact that in many cases the contracts of those Chinese labourers imported before 1851 would have expired. As many of these labourers had been indentured between 1849-50 the nearing completion of the contracts binding these labourers may have prompted the suggestions of 1854 within the Northern Districts that Chinese labour importation should be restarted.⁵⁹ Although numbers decreased in the Darling Downs the percentage of Chinese within the shepherding population increased slightly, the Burnett region exhibiting the same movements. The massive increase in sheep numbers in Wide Bay, from 55,970 to 117,000 and an increase of only 14 in the number of shepherds indicates that those employed in the district as shepherds were tending much larger flocks of nearly 1,000 sheep each, nearly double the average yet without the services of as many Chinese labourers, if the figures are accurate.

It is wrong however to assume that the Chinese labourers were only employed as shepherds and hut-keepers although this was the major occupation undertaken, and the reason why they were imported in the first place. Chinese labourers have been found to have been employed as deck-hands working on boats plying between Brisbane and Ipswich; employed in numbers at boiling-down stations; cooks; shop-hands; grooms; wharf labourers; gardeners and house servants. One Chinese labourer, Chamdya, in the Wide Bay region apparently had become a butcher and owned several flocks of sheep, as a newspaper report noted that he had lost 66 sheep which had been in the care of an aboriginal.⁶⁰ Although there are no early figures to substantiate this, it appears that a greater proportion of the Chinese labourers imported after 1851 were employed in a broader range of activities than the early importations. This movement into non-pastoral employment is due to the growth of urban centres servicing the local community, such as Ipswich and Armidale, which led to an increased demand for unskilled labourers and also possibly due to Chinese labourers moving into these centres from the stations after their contracts had expired.

The distribution of the Chinese labourers across the urban and rural centres of the Northern Districts is provided within the following table which also contains population figures for the years 1851 and 1856 in order to show the rate of growth of the districts and the towns during this period. The figures are divided according to Police District, that is the region covered by the Bench of Magistrates and by major town within these districts. One figure that has not been included in this table, as there are no corresponding figures for the other northern towns and Police Districts is the

59 "Immigration and Labour", *MBC* 20th May, 1854.

60 "Domestic Intelligence", *MBC*, 21st December, 1854.

one Chinese female listed among the Chinese in Ipswich; one of only six Chinese females living in the colony at the time. This is the only information found relating to this woman, so it cannot be determined whether she had emigrated to the colony of her own accord, or had been brought over as a wife for one of the labourers already in the colony. The latter is the most acceptable explanation as the emigration of Chinese women was rare and was inhibited by societal factors. For a woman to disregard these restrictions would have been even rarer than for a family to give permission for a daughter to emigrate in order to marry or join a husband.⁶¹

TABLE 8c
CHINESE POPULATION: VARIOUS TOWNS AND POLICE DISTRICTS

POLICE DISTRICT	TOTAL POPULATION		1851 Mahomedans & Pagans	1856 No. of CHINESE
	1851	1856		
ARMIDALE	2759	3895	5	87
BRISBANE	3156	5844	160	29
DALBY		678	-	31
DRAYTON	1022	1457	87	112
GAYNDAH		1309	88	142
GRAFTON	802	1069	9	2
IPSWICH	1903	4558	59	79
MARYBOROUGH	406	669	86	49
TABULAM	890	1283	1	19
TENTERFIELD	409	675	11	28
WARWICK	970	1362	65	61
WELLINGROVE	1114	1091	21	46
TOWN				
ARMIDALE	556	857	-	14
BRISBANE	2543	4395	139	14
DALBY	-	109	-	5
DRAYTON	200	263	1	22
GAYNDAH	92	152	1	19
GRAFTON	448	655	-	-
IPSWICH	932	2459	2	29
MARYBOROUGH	299	353	70	16
TABULAM	-	-	-	-
TENTERFIELD	-	133	-	10
WARWICK	267	472	1	19
WELLINGROVE	-	71	-	-

SOURCE: Census of 1851, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 30, Pt. 1, 1851; Census of 1856, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 47, 1857.

Regrettably some population figures are not available, notably the town figures for Tabulam and Wellingrove, which is mainly due to the lack of any real township. Another set of figures which are unavailable for comparison are the number of specifically designated Chinese within the various towns in 1851, as the 1851 Census

⁶¹ A later report details the "sale" of Chinese women in Sydney, with one man paying £120 at an auction for a 19 year old girl. Emma Hardinge Britten, *The Chinese Labour Question, or the Problem of Labour and Capital*, Sydney, Hampson & Green, 1878. (Attached newspaper article, no date) (ML 331.6B).

collated the various town's populations according to whether the inhabitants were born in the Colony, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, other British Dominions, or Foreign Countries. The latter grouping would have included any Chinese, however, it is impossible to declare what proportion of the numbers provided for this group were Chinese. The figures for the total town, and Police district populations born in a foreign country in 1851 are: Armidale 0 and 10; Brisbane 145 and 180; Drayton 0 and 87; Gayndah/Burnett 1 and 88; Ipswich 11 and 77; Maryborough/Wide Bay 71 and 89; and Warwick 4 and 70.

The 1851 figures for the population within the towns and Police districts recorded as "Mahomedans and Pagans" are included in the table in order to provide some idea of the approximate numbers of Chinese labourers within these regions. As noted above, these figures also include any Indian labourers who had been imported in the late 1840s and were still under indenture. The majority of these labourers were located in the Drayton and Maryborough Police districts. If the figures for this grouping, that is "Mahomedans and Pagans", are compared with the figures quoted above for the numbers within the population born in a foreign country in these districts it is found that nearly all of those foreign born were "Mahomedans and Pagans".

The rapid population growth of some towns which is in part attributable to the gold-rush is evident within this table. Armidale experienced a 54% increase in population between 1851 and 1856, and the town of Ipswich as a transit point between Brisbane and the Darling Downs, recorded an even more remarkable rate of growth, growing from 932 inhabitants in 1851 to 2459 in 1856, an increase of 164% over five years. Likewise the number of Chinese labourers living within towns especially Armidale, Warwick, Drayton, Ipswich and Gayndah increased over the five-year period. The massive decrease in the number of Chinese within Brisbane is difficult to account for, as there is no evidence to suggest that many of the Chinese labourers who arrived in 1851 remained in Brisbane. All available evidence suggests the opposite, that is, the labourers were very quickly engaged to pastoralists and removed from the urban environment of Brisbane, and were therefore, unlikely to have been counted in the Census.

A number of the Chinese listed as residing in the Armidale Police district in 1856 would have been located on the Rocky River gold-field, which was located about 15 miles from Armidale. Some of these Chinese can be found within the Armidale Bench of Magistrates records which relate the events surrounding a fight

between the "Hong Kong and Peking" Chinese located on the field.⁶² Many of the "Peking" Chinese would have been labourers from Amoy who had been imported earlier under indenture. Another fight erupted six months later between what was then described as the two groups of Chinese located at the field, the Amoy and Hong Kong Chinese.⁶³ However, the majority of the Chinese listed for this district were employed on the pastoral stations or in the town of Armidale as the Chinese did not arrive at Rocky River in any numbers until late 1856 or early 1857, after the southern gold-fields either petered out or antagonism to the Chinese diggers increased.

The preceding discussion has located the Chinese throughout the Police districts and towns of the Northern Districts as far as possible given the available information. As time progressed and towns grew in size and importance, and contracts expired, a greater number of indentured Chinese labourers were to be found within the towns. The labourers therefore, became more visible to a greater proportion of the population and more susceptible to anti-Chinese intimidation and violence. A result also of the increased rates of "free" emigration by thousands of Chinese to the Victorian gold-fields and the agitation against these Chinese within that colony being transferred to New South Wales. This latter aspect is not of direct relevance to this thesis, therefore the following chapter which analyses how the Chinese, and their masters were "sold" within the colony, focuses primarily on those Chinese who had been imported with the specific purpose of being indentured to employers throughout the colony.

62 *Armidale Bench of Magistrates*, 7th October, 1856 (UNE A872) and "Robbery", *AE*, 18th October, 1856.

63 Report of Gold Commissioner Buchanan, 1st April, 1857, Report from the Select Committee on the Chinese Immigration Bill, *Journal of the New South Wales Legislative Council*, 1857, Vol. III, p. 320.

CHAPTER NINE

THE "SELLING" OF THE CHINESE AND THEIR MASTERS

Before progressing on with the Chinese to their places of employment there is a requirement to explain how the Chinese were sold in the colony, as the sales techniques used by the importers determined, and were determined by where the Chinese and their employers were located in the colony. The selling of the Chinese labourers in the Colonial market assumed two forms: firstly, those advertisements that were aimed at prospective employers; and secondly, the newspaper columns and letters that endeavoured to sell the Chinese labourers to the general public, or at least that section of the public that objected to the introduction of Chinese. Intertwined with the positive portrait painted of the Chinese was the promotion of the attitude that the importation of the Chinese labourers was essential to the continued success of wool-growing, and therefore the existence of the squatters. The profitability of both was heralded as essential to the economic health of the colony.

As shown earlier the enactment of various changes within the legal structure governing labour relations within the colony allowed the organised and sponsored importation of indentured Chinese labourers to proceed, none of which would have eventuated had not the squattng class previously achieved social, economic and political hegemony. It was because of the hegemonic position of the squatters that the relatively open and public sponsorship of the early importations of indentured Chinese labourers had been able to proceed. However, such openness and the weakening position of the squatting clique eventually altered the characteristics of the importation in a number of ways. The widening of the franchise in 1850 started this weakening process within the urban regions which was reflected in changes in the techniques used to sell the Chinese labourers and their employers. In order to counter the growing anti-squatter and anti-Chinese sentiment the nature of, and methods utilised to "sell" the Chinese labourers in the labour market to both potential employers and the general public became less open, more veiled and in some cases deferential.

This chapter presents and discusses the various forms of advertising used to sell the Chinese and their employers from the placement of advertisements requesting expressions of interest in the importation of Chinese labourers; advertisements informing the market that the labourers were ready for engagement; through to the literary efforts of Paul Pax; analysing why some forms were used in one part of the colony and not in others.

A: SALES TECHNIQUES

Two sales techniques were available to the importers, newspapers and private letters, the favoured method usually depending upon which region of the colony that was the target market. The type of newspaper advertisements used depended upon where the target market was located, and the type of labour importation intended by the agent. The Chinese that arrived aboard the *Cadet* and the *Duke of Roxburgh* had been sponsored arrivals, contracted for by replies to advertisements placed in the *Moreton Bay Courier*¹ requesting that interested persons affix their names to lists held at various mercantile establishments in Brisbane and Ipswich. These styles of advertisements and importations matched the supply exactly to the demand for Chinese labourers, therefore the only other advertising undertaken was to inform the sponsors/contractors that the labourers were now available.²

Pre-dating these advertisements had been the republishing of private letters regarding the employment of Chinese labourers, in an attempt to inform prospective "buyers" and gauge the level of demand from within the colony. The first of these had requested the letter's recipient opinion on a number of questions regarding the importation of Chinese labourers, whether they would employ some, and if so how many?³ The second private letter that was published for the information of the readership, detailed the costs and benefits of Chinese labourers from an employer of 6 Chinese labourers located in Yass.⁴ These advertisements and letters carried on the tradition of "selling" Chinese labourers that had been established 10 years earlier by Davidson and then used by Bogue in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Maitland Mercury*. Other than the advertisement placed by Maclehose in 1847, the Sydney newspapers carried nothing equivalent to the letters and advertisements noted above after this date in consequence of the level of antagonism that was evident within Sydney after the arrival of the *London* in February, 1849.

A(i): NEWSPAPER SALES

Once the trade changed from a sponsored to a speculative venture, due mainly to the entry of Robert Towns, the form of advertisement placed in newspapers changed as no longer were the imported Chinese assured of a place of employment. The labourers therefore had to be "sold", and direct newspaper advertising was one

1 *MBC*, 21st April, 1849, 19th May, 1849 and 22nd June, 1850. Refer also to Chapter Six for more detail on these advertisements.

2 *MBC*, 17th November, 1849, and "Chinese Labourers", 1st February, 1851.

3 "Chinese Immigration", *MBC*, 10th April, 1847.

4 "Chinese Immigration", *MBC*, 20th July, 1848.

method used by the importers to obtain places of engagement for the Chinese labourers. However, variations in the style and content of these advertisements are noticeable over time and region of readership.

The Chinese that arrived aboard the *Nimrod* were the only shipment from the evidence found, that were advertised as being cheaper to attain in numbers. The advertisement that was placed in the *Moreton Bay Courier* advising the public of the existence of the Chinese and the price for which they could be procured⁵ has been reproduced below in order to provide a point of comparison with later, and less informative advertisements.

TO STOCKHOLDERS AND OTHERS, REQUIRING CHEAP LABOUR.	
50	CHINESE LABOURERS are to be engaged on board the NIMROD , for five years, at the rate of £6 per annum, and two suits of clothing, on payment of the following rates of passage money, viz.,:-
	For 1 labourer £15
	" 2 ditto each £13
	" 3 ditto each £12
	" 5 and over, each £10
Apply to Robert Duncan Espinasse, or to MESSRS. ROBT. GRAHAM & CO. North Brisbane	

The engagement rate of the Chinese aboard the *Nimrod* in Moreton Bay at least, can be presumed to have been fast as the above advertisement was repeated only once on the 9th December, with Captain Espinasse leaving (or at least attempting to leave) the port of Moreton Bay on the 15th December.⁶ Unlike all future importations of Chinese labourers the Sydney papers openly advertised the Chinese aboard the *Nimrod*, with Henry Moore the ship's agent placing advertisements on the front page of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In contrast to the advertisement above which was placed in the *Moreton Bay Courier*, Moore's advertisement made no reference to the fact that a '...liberal allowance is made on taking a quantity'.⁷ This omission may indicate that Espinasse on behalf of Captain Thomas Larkins had begun to panic upon reaching Moreton Bay, and in an attempt to quickly dispose of the Chinese labourers he reduced the price for which they could be acquired.

5 *MBC*, 2nd December, 1848.

6 "Highly Important Seizure", relates how Espinasse had appeared before the Police Court on the 15th after having been charged with not declaring 11 bags of rice which he had landed at Brisbane as he left the port. *MBC*, 23rd December, 1848.

7 "Chinese Labourers", *MBC*, 2nd December, 1848.

That the Sydney advertisement began by stating that 'Some of the Chinese Immigrants per *Nimrod*, from Amoy, being still open for engagement...', two weeks after the *Nimrod* had arrived and ran for nearly a month,⁸ may indicate that unlike Moreton Bay employers within Sydney and the surrounding districts did not either expect, nor as readily accept the Chinese labourers. This slow rate of indenture may have also influenced Espinasse in his decision to lower the price of the labourers when he reached Moreton Bay.

Aside from the *Nimrod* the only other shipload of Chinese to receive any where near the same degree of advertising space in Sydney were those that arrived in the colony on the *Royal Saxon*.⁹ The advertisement in this case carried no information as to price, which given the length of time for which the trade had been operating such information would have been superfluous. Most potential employers and interested parties would have been acquainted with the price range for which the Chinese could be engaged. This advertisement however appears to have had little effect on the engagement rate of the Chinese on board the *Royal Saxon* as Towns was to write two weeks after its placement that there was '...still about 40 of them, but I hope they will soon be hired...'¹⁰

None of the other advertisements placed in the Sydney newspapers provided as much information nor occupied as much space as the one for the *Nimrod*, most being only what Towns called "mild notices", simply notifying the public that the Chinese were available for engagement. Illustrative of this is the advertisement for the Chinese from the *Spartan* in 1852 which was significantly smaller than either the *Nimrod* or *Royal Saxon* advertisements, unobtrusive, and carried little information other than informing the public that the Chinese were now available for engagement.¹¹

In contrast to the diminishing size of the advertisements in Sydney by 1852, is the advertisement that was placed by Captain Francis Lodge in the Maitland Mercury for the Chinese aboard the *Eleonor Lancaster*.¹² This is the largest advertisement placed in a newspaper after the arrival of the *Nimrod* and is reproduced below in order to provide a comparison with the advertisement for the *Nimrod* shipment.

8 This advertisement first appeared on the 23rd October, 1848 and continued until the 13th November, 1848.

9 "Immigrants per Royal Saxon", *SMH*, 19th February, 1853. Repeated 24th February.

10 Towns to Lodge, 28th February, 1853. *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/118).

11 *SMH*, 4th May, 1852. Repeated 5th May.

12 *MM*, 13th March, 1852. Repeated 17th and 20th March.

CHINESE EMIGRANTS

THE ELEANOR LANCASTER now lying at Newcastle has on board ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY CHINESE EMIGRANTS, willing to Engage themselves for a period of FIVE YEARS to any person willing to pay their passage, £12.12s., and the rate of wages as per agreement with F. W. Lodge, viz. 12s. per month and rations as per scale attached to the agreement.

Application to

F. W. Lodge on board; or to
Mitchell & Tully.

13th March, 1852.

The most obvious difference between this and the *Nimrod* advertisement is the price asked, with those engaging; the Chinese aboard the *Eleanor Lancaster* paying a lower price for passage but a higher yearly wage, £7 4s as against £6 per annum. The difference in the wage rate may however, be accounted for by the supplying of two suits of clothing for those engaged from the *Nimrod*, whereas there is no mention of clothing being supplied as part of the passage money paid for those engaged from the *Eleanor Lancaster* or any other ships. The engagement rate for the Chinese labourers aboard this ship must have been rather slow, as the *Eleanor Lancaster* arrived in Newcastle the 11th March, with 240 labourers aboard, 79 of which had already been contracted to the Australian Agricultural Company. Of the remaining 120 labourers that Lodge advertised for engagement in March, 67 were subsequently taken to Sydney in April,¹³ indicating that Lodge had only managed to "sell" another 94 of the labourers within this space of time.

When the *Eleanor Lancaster* returned to Newcastle in February 1853 with another cargo of "Chinese Emigrants", the advertisement advertising their availability was of the same size, placement and description as the one above. However, the cost of their passage was £12 plus the £2 already advanced them, with monthly wages starting at 3s. per week, which increased to 4s. per week.¹⁴ This increase in the cost of acquiring the Chinese labourers from Captain Lodge is explainable by the increased advance paid in Amoy to entice men to indenture themselves to an employer in New

¹³ The *Eleanor Lancaster* left Newcastle for Sydney with these 67 labourers, arriving 16th April, 1852, "Shipping Intelligence", *SMH*, 17th April, 1852.

¹⁴ "Chinese Emigrants" *MM*, 12th February, 1853. This advertisement was repeated 16th February, then the wages increased 16s. per month in the 19th February, 1853 notice which was repeated 23rd and 26th February, 1853.

South Wales, an equivalent advance had been paid to those arriving on the *Spartan* in 1853. As to why Lodge increased the wages from 3s. per week to 16s. per month is unknown, unless the wage rate stipulated within the contract, of which no copy has been found, was 16s. per month and Lodge had placed the first advertisement without noting the difference. Although this oversight on the part of Lodge appears to be a rather far-fetched explanation for the increase in wages to be paid to the Chinese, Lodge had obviously experienced difficulties in disposing of the labourers. Towns wrote to Lodge, "Trusting that you are now finding with little difficulty employers for your "Celestials";¹⁵ Lodge in early March requested that Towns purchase some rattans for him in Sydney as a way of keeping the Chinese still on board busy;¹⁶ and then in August Towns requested that Lodge send "... (8) eight of your Chinese...".¹⁷ Conclusive evidence that the engagement rate of the Chinese had been extremely slow even though Lodge had taken the near-desperate step of notifying "Persons requiring Chinese Immigrants" that:

*The remainder of the MEN per Eleanor Lancaster will be conveyed to Sydney per steamer, at the expense of the ship if required.*¹⁸

In such a low demand situation it is not logical that Lodge would increase the wages that had to be paid, as firstly Lodge gained nothing from such an increase, and secondly, an increase would be expected to dissuade any prospective employers who were still deciding as whether or not to engage Chinese labourers.

The amount of information provided and the size and visibility of the advertisements can be seen to diminish over time in direct correlation with the increased level of public antagonism that had been incited by the earlier importations. In comparison to the front page advertisements for the *Nimrod*, and the *Eleanor Lancaster* (1852) in the *Maitland Mercury*, those for the *Eleanor Lancaster* in Sydney were placed on the third page of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and consisted of only three lines.¹⁹ Although those for the 1852 voyage of the *Spartan* occupied more space than this, the advertisements were not placed on the front but on the fifth page of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and provided none of the information carried in the notices reproduced above.²⁰ It must also be realised that three and a half years separated the placement of the advertisement for the *Nimrod* and that for the *Eleanor Lancaster* in

15 Towns to Lodge, 1st March, 1853, *RTC*, (ML MSS307/118).

16 Towns to Lodge, 10th March, 1853, *RTC*, (ML MSS307/118).

17 Towns to Lodge, 15th August, 1853, *RTC*, (ML MSS307/118).

18 "Notice to Persons Requiring Chinese Immigrants", *MM*, 2nd March, 1853. Repeated 5th March, 1853.

19 *SMH*, 24th April, 1852.

20 *SMH*, 4th May, 1852.

1852, a span of years which had wrought major changes in the political landscape of the Middle Districts.

A(ii): SALES BY POST

Newspaper advertisements were only of limited use however in a colony where distances meant that in some regions newspapers were not received until a week or more after publication. Constant complaints as to the non or late arrival of the *Maitland Mercury* published in that paper attest to the delays common in newspaper delivery.²¹ Bad weather and poor road (track) conditions could extend the period between publication of the advertisement and the receiving and reading of the notice by the target market to the extent that the notices were useless. In cases where the population was not covered by a local newspaper, such as the New England, southern Darling Downs and Clarence River regions, other forms of gaining engagements for the Chinese had to be used. To this end the importers included advertising that Chinese labourers were available in their business correspondence to likely employers who used the importer's agencies for the shipping of wool or procurement of supplies for the station.

The importers privately lobbied those squatters and settlers who were presumed to have an interest in, or be amenable to, the employment of Chinese labour. A ledger of possible employers would not have been hard to compile, as firstly, the agents involved in the importation also acted as commercial agents for the squatters, shipping and selling their wool; purchasing and arranging for the delivery of stores. Secondly, the application of one's name as a member of the Coolie Association or on petitions regarding the importation of Chinese or Coolie labour; membership of the exclusive Australian Club, which membership list includes a substantial number of employers of Chinese labourers; and past-career paths in the Indian regiments or the East India Company, were all presumed to indicate one's concord with the notion of cheap, servile labour. This presumption ensured the reception by the signatory of a letter requesting expressions of interest in indentured Chinese labourers from at least one of the agents involved in the shipment of the labourers to the colony. It can confidently be suggested that the author of the 1847 letter reprinted in the *Moreton Bay Courier*²² would have used such a register of names to compile their mailing list of prospective employers.

21 "Armidale- The Mails", *MM*, 7th April, 1852.

22 "Chinese Immigration", *MBC*, 1st April, 1847. This letter was presented and discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

Robert Towns consistently used this more personal approach to acquire engagements for the Chinese and even as an instrument of determining the level of interest amongst prospective employers for Chinese labourers. In a letter to Phillip Ditmus of "Clarevaux", Towns informs his correspondent that he is expecting '...two cargoes of Chinamen...do you require any and if so how many ...', and continues on to request of Ditmus that he enquire amongst his neighbours in order to gauge their level of interest in engaging Chinese labourers.²³ Ditmus however, did not take up Towns's suggestion at that time; as seven months later within a letter to Towns he expressed his concern about "men bolting" but also his determination not to follow his neighbours lead and employ Chinese, as European labourers '...do not like much being on a station with Chinese.'²⁴ Despite his apparent moral weakening by later employing Chinese on his property of "Clarevaux", Ditmus continued to express his dissatisfaction with them as employees by complaining to Towns that '...I do not like Chinese and men do not like working with them.'²⁵

Many of Ditmus's neighbours however, obviously did not feel the same about the idea of employing Chinese labourers and actually lobbied the shipping agents involved to acquire some of the next shipment. Into this category fall Thomas Collins of "Coolmunda" Darling Downs; C. G. H. Chauvel of "Tabulam" Clarence River;²⁶ and R. R. C. Robertson of "Wellington Vale" New England. In the case of Collins a letter was sent to Towns requesting information as to 'When are we to expect your ship with the Chinamen, now is the time they are wanted...';²⁷ and Robertson inquired twice with the company of Robert Tertius Campbell about the possibility of engaging Chinese labourers.²⁸

The use of personal letters had two advantages over public advertising in newspapers. Firstly, the letter writer was able to gauge the level of demand for Chinese labourers and could adjust future importations accordingly. However, this method of gauging the level of demand was not as effective nor as accurate as the writing of letters requesting expressions of interest which had previously been used by the importers. Secondly, the use of personal letters by the importers to sell the

23 R. Towns to P. Ditmus, 13th September, 1851, *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/116).

24 P. Ditmus to R. Towns, 13th April, 1852, *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/192)

25 P. Ditmus to R. Towns, 12th August, 1852, *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/192).

26 Capt. C. G. H. Chauvel to R. Towns, 25th August, (no year), *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/196).

27 T. Collins to R. Towns, 1st September, 1851, *RTC*, (ML MSS 307/192). Captain Collins had been an agent of Robert Brooks, settling in Sydney as a merchant in 1832, and followed the move north establishing himself as a squatter in the Darling Downs in 1845.

28 R. Campbell Snr. and Co. to R. R. C. Robertson, 22nd July, 1851, and J. Milson to R. R. C. Robertson, 24th November, 1852, *Wellington Vale Station*, (UNE A185).

Chinese avoided the publicity and antagonism towards the importations to which open newspapers advertisements were subject.

B: SECTORAL DIFFERENCES IN SALES TECHNIQUES

The diminution in the size and visibility of advertisements, increased use of personal letters to acquire places of engagement and the fact that no letters or advertisements of the nature of those placed in the *Moreton Bay Courier* calling for expressions of interest appeared in the Sydney newspapers can be attributed to two facts. Firstly, the importers interested in establishing and then extending the trade recognised that from the Northern Districts of the colony emanated the strongest demand for Chinese labourers. The establishment of the "Indian Labour Association" and the concerted moves on the part of the northern squatters to have transportation resumed to the Northern Districts to feed the labour market, were extremely strong indicators of the warm reception that the concept of Chinese labourers was likely to receive.

Secondly, the least amount of organised and vocal dissent against the importation of indentured Chinese labourers existed in the Northern Districts. Within Sydney there was a large, and partially organised labouring class which possessed an influential friend in the *People's Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator* which as a self-styled "Working Man's Paper"²⁹ railed against the squatters and the introduction of indentured Chinese labourers from the first:

What will be the condition of the working men of the colony if these Chinese "emigrants" are allowed to flock to our shores. Why they will soon be reduced to a state of downright beggary...But what care the monsters who require the services of these creatures, for religion, for morality, for free institution, or for social comforts amongst the people-absolutely nothing at all. They have only one idea- they have only one aim, and that is to acquire wealth and oppress the labouring man.³⁰

The editor's sentiments on the subject of the squatting interest, their importation of indentured Chinese labourers, and the effect of these on the condition of the labouring class, were echoed within the correspondence to the paper:

29 "To Every Body", *PA*, 2nd December, 1848. The *People's Advocate* first appeared 2nd December 1848 and was published by Francis Cunninghame and edited by Edward Hawksley, the latter having previously been the editor of the *Sydney Chronicle*, a journal owned and operated by the Catholic Church. R. B. Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803-1920*, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1976, p. 40.

30 "Our Social Prospects", *PA*, 3rd March, 1849. This editorial as with all during the relatively short life of the newspaper, was prefaced with a quote by Lamartine that: "Political economy has hitherto occupied itself about the production of wealth. It must now occupy itself about the distribution of wealth; so that the labourer may no longer be left without his fair share of the produce."

*These lawless sons of robbery and spoliation having obtained land for nothing, require labour also for nothing; in short, they wish to revive the slave-trade and the feudal system with all their attendant barbarities.*³¹

The labouring class in Sydney had developed and gained strength during the second half of the 1840s, in a nearly parallel pattern to the growth of the squatting interest. The boost to the numbers of the labouring class that the mass arrival of free and assisted immigrants in the early 1840's was instrumental in this growth, with 10,985 free and 48,092 assisted immigrants arriving in the colony between 1838 and 1843.³² As the cries of the squatters during the early forties testify, the majority of these immigrants remained in Sydney and surrounding districts, as they had '...a distaste for the sedentary employments and monotonous life of a shepherd.'³³ This increase of 59,077 free labourers to the colonial population was the largest increase of free rather than bond labourers to arrive in the colony prior to the gold-rushes and prompted a significant change in the political climate of the colony. The establishment of a number of newspapers in the early 1840s dedicated to that section of the population opposed to the established ruling clique which although short-lived in most cases, heralded the beginning of vocal dissent against Wentworth and the squatting clique in particular.³⁴ Once the franchise was widened with the acceptance of the new Electoral Act which set the rental requirement at £10, a very low figure in Sydney's high rent regime, those standing for election in Sydney had to confront and appease an electorate that had begun to voice its antipathy to the importation of Chinese labourers.

B:(i) DISQUIET IN SYDNEY

The establishment of the *People's Advocate* and then the *Empire* as newspapers dedicated to the cause of the labouring class was one manifestation of the growing strength of this class, politically and financially. Both papers brought together printers and journalists of the earlier newspapers and lasted much longer than the earlier attempts to expand the political orientation of the Fourth Estate.³⁵ These newspapers adopted the cause of the Constitutional Association in opposition to the Patriotic Association, a stance that had rung the death-knell for the *Atlas* which previous to this change of consciousness had been the mouth-piece of the squatters, especially under

31 Original Correspondence, "Chinese Coolies", *PA*, 3rd. March, 1849.

32 For yearly figures refer to Table 1 in Appendix 2.

33 Evidence of Edward Hamilton, 5th July, 1841, Report from the Select Committee on Immigration, *NSWLC V&P*, 1841, p. 15.

34 These newspapers included the *Guardian* (March-October 1844); *Sydney Weekly* (January-May 1846); *Citizen* (August 1846-April 1847); *Colonial Observer* (1841-44); *Star and Working Man's Guardian* (March 1844-December 1845). Walker, *op.cit.*, pp. 40-41. and J. Normington-Rawling, 'Before Eureka', *Labour History*, No. 4, 1963, pp. 16-17.

35 The *People's Advocate* lasted from December 1848 to mid 1856; The *Empire* from 1850 to 1877 with a break during 1858-59 due to the insolvency of Parkes.

the editorship of Robert Lowe.³⁶ The Constitutional Association and its fight for universal manhood suffrage; the fight for the opening up of the Crown Lands; the mass rallies that greeted the arrival of the *Hashemy* and the bitter fight waged by the anti-transportationists against the resumption of transportation in any form, may be cited as other displays of the labouring class flexing its political muscle against the rule of the squatters.

The *People's Advocate* led the way in the agitation against the introduction of Chinese labourers, and gleefully reported that the fellmongers and wool sorters had convened a meeting regarding the arrival, and employment of Chinese labour in that field of employment. At this meeting it was proposed that a trade association be formed in order to '...protect themselves from the fearful and degrading competition of Chinamen and Coolies.'³⁷ The perception that the Chinese would gladly work for lower rates of pay than a European drove a fear that a situation would eventually arise where suitably qualified (even if it was only due to the colour of their skin) Europeans were '...walking about the streets unable to obtain employment.'³⁸ The *People's Advocate* greeted the arrival of the *London* in February 1849 with an editorial that stated that this ship had '...not arrived as a mere matter of experiment to see how such men would go off; but that a regular and systematic trade has been commenced...so that we are likely to have a very large importation of the most accomplished thieves, adroit swindlers, and professed cheats that the world can produce.'³⁹ This editorial continued on to censure the importation of the Chinese without '...a single female of their own country...' and to suggest that the '...only way the People can mark the sense of injustice which has been done to them by the introduction of Coolies' was for:

...every man when he is about to make an engagement, no matter in what capacity, first inquire are there any Coolies or Chinese employed on the establishment, if there are let him not hire. Let him for a time prefer even a less wage with a no-Coolie master, than with a Coolie employer; let him submit to a little temporary convenience, and this vile scheme for the permanent reduction of his wage, this plan for inflicting upon him a lasting injury will very soon be brought to an end.⁴⁰

In contrast to the attempt by the *People's Advocate* to destroy the trade by the withholding of labour to those who employed Chinese labourers, may be cited the experience of Moreton Bay where notices were placed advertising vacancies for

³⁶ Walker, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

³⁷ *PA*, 17th November, 1849.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ "The Chinese and Coolies", *PA*, 0th March, 1849.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

overseers, preferably men who were '...accustomed to the management of Chinese...'.⁴¹

One correspondent to the *People's Advocate*, "A Working Man", was extremely censorious of the importation of Chinese labour, on the basis that:-

*If the rules of European political economy were fearlessly and vigorously carried out in New South Wales, here newspaper journalists would not be ashamed to hold up this iniquitous system of tolerated slavery to the ridicule of an intelligent and industrious people; for I can conscientiously affirm that neither this nor any similar system of Emigration has been made expedient from scarcity of labour or monetary distress, but is simply the offspring of that morbid craving for cheap convict labour which cannot be appeased while hope remains that it may still be supplied.*⁴²

The author continued on to argue that if labour was in such demand then why do employers not look to England which was "overflowing with paupers" to fill the demand. This argument was an extremely common one within the Chinese labour debate, for which the response from the importers was usually that funds were not available to provide for such emigration. The squatters argued that in the absence of a Land Fund to pay for further emigration to the colony, and the agitation against the resumption of transportation, they had been forced to turn to China for the labour that was so desperately required; reviving the argument used earlier by the "Coolie Association".

With the *Herald* remaining silent on the question of Chinese labour and maintaining its rather undemocratic stance;⁴³ the *Maitland Mercury* ignoring the importations; and the *Moreton Bay Courier* wishing that '...the starving and honest poor of our nation should be allowed the first choice of the benefits offered to labourers in this country';⁴⁴ the *People's Advocate* was left on its own until late 1851 to rail against the squatters and the importation of Chinese labour. This labour the newspaper argued, was being imported under the false claims of a labour shortage and high wages. These claims as uttered by the squatters were consistently denied by the *People's Advocate* and the anti-squatter/Chinese movement, which argued that there was not enough employment for the existing population and the immigrants arriving at the time;⁴⁵ if the land tenure system was changed and land was opened up to an

41 "Wanted". *MBFP*, 7th December, 1852.

42 *PA*, Saturday 28th July, 1849.

43 Walker, *op.cit.*, pp. 58-9.

44 "More Chinese", *MBC*, 29th June, 1850.

45 "Chinese Immigration", *PA*, 27th April, 1850.

agricultural population rather than being engrossed by the "cormorant squatters",⁴⁶ employment would be easily found for all who came to the colony.

With the appearance of the *Empire* edited by the redoubtable Henry Parkes, the *People's Advocate* found, even if belated and not as virulent in attack,⁴⁷ at least an ally in the fight against the squatting clique in general and their importation of Chinese labourers. However, the *Empire* and the other newspapers maintained a relatively ambivalent position on the question of Chinese labour until the matter was raised in the Legislative Council, where suggestions were made that the trade was merely an extension of the slave-trade. The result of the inferences made within the Council was a concerted attack on the squatters and the promoters of the Chinese labour trade, an attack which was in most cases more than adequately rebutted.

Relative quietude on the subject of Chinese labourers by the Sydney papers until late 1851 is not surprising as the rate and incidence of Chinese labour importation into Sydney had been comparatively low until the arrival of the *Arabia* in December 1851. Prior to the arrival of this ship most of the Chinese labourers that had arrived in the colony had been destined for Moreton Bay, and the majority of Chinese landed in Sydney had been transferred north in accordance with this. The *Cadet* and the *Duke of Roxburgh* (1850-51) were both supposed to land in Moreton Bay, but weather conditions intervened and the Chinese labourers were landed in Sydney. The next shipment, the *Duke of Roxburgh* (1851) made land at Moreton Bay, and therefore these importations were out of the direct purview of the Sydney newspapers. As the *Moreton Bay Courier* offered little or no attack against these importations it was not until the "Rush of 1852" began with the *Arabia*, that the squatters and importers were called upon to justify their importation and employment of Chinese labourers in the face of concerted attacks on the squatters and Chinese labourers made within the Fourth Estate.

Outside Sydney the labouring class was relatively unorganised and non-vocal, both of which were the result of their dispersal over such a wide region and the lack at the time of any substantial urban centres. Until the working-class developed as an economic, social and political force, urban centres developed and provided places for the congregation of aligned interests, there was little requirement for newspaper editors to heed or take into consideration the ideas and beliefs of this class when composing editorials and deciding on the content of their newspaper.

⁴⁶ "Cormorant Squatters", *Freeman's Journal*, 24th February, 1855.

⁴⁷ One of the most racially vitriolic letters on the subject of Chinese emigration and employment was reprinted and praised by the editors of the *People's Advocate*; "Chinese Coolies" by "Truth", *PA*, 3rd March, 1849; "Our Social Prospects", *PA*, 3rd March, 1849; 17th March, 1849.

B(ii): ACCEPTANCE IN THE NORTH

In the Northern Districts of the Colony the working class was relatively small, weak and unorganised when the importations of Chinese labourers began in 1847-8. The existence of only one newspaper until 1850 [the *Moreton Bay Courier*] and that until 1848 owned and edited by an ardent supporter of the squatting interest, A. S. Lyons, reduced any outward anti-squatting sentiments being expressed. In 1850 it was Lyons who would become editor of the *Moreton Bay Free Press* a journal owned by a consortium of squatters,⁴⁸ justifying on the grounds of *dernier ressort* the squatters' employment of indentured Chinese labourers. That the advertisements and letters presented earlier calling for expressions of interest in the indenting of Chinese labourers were placed within the *Moreton Bay Courier* in the first place, and secondly, that such placement received little editorial comment apart from an "observation made with regret that more Chinese were to be imported into Moreton Bay", gives credence to the argument that in the Northern Districts the squatters held sway longer than around Sydney or the Hunter District.

Once James Swan, the new owner and editor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*⁴⁹ began to show a decided antagonism towards the squatters and their calls for exiles, Chinese labourers and separation, the *Moreton Bay Free Press* was founded as a mouthpiece of the squatters and as a counter to the negative publicity regarding them emanating from the *Moreton Bay Courier*.⁵⁰ Although the *Moreton Bay Courier* openly advertised the importations of Chinese labour, it was a subject that the editor James Swan displayed an increasingly antagonistic attitude towards. The following quote from one of Swan's editorials exposes his attitude towards this exercise on the part of the squatters to acquire labour, which he described as "disastrous and debasing" to the colony:⁵¹

Instead of the task of supplying the labour market being associated with all that is vile and debasing to the country, it might then be instrumental in founding a colony of honest, peaceful, and domesticated people; in which instead of being disfigured by the revolting association and the unimagined atrocities of a labouring population composed of male

48 It was the increasing anti-transportationist stance of the *MBC* that led to a meeting of squatters in Ipswich which meeting concluded that another paper was required in the district in order to '...meet the expectations of its country subscribers...'. Denis Cryle, *The Press In Colonial Queensland*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1989, p. 30.

49 The sale of the *Courier* by A. Sidney Lyons to Swan was noted in that newspaper, 29th July, 1848.

50 *MBC*, 29th June, 1850.

51 The *Moreton Bay Courier* under the editorship of Swan assumed a tone of superiority towards the Chinese labourers very soon after their arrival, in the reporting of incidents involving them, as within the following articles: 'Chin-Ring in a Difficulty', 13th January, 1849; 'Interesting Colloquy', 10th March, 1849. The *Courier's* attitude became more antagonistic as the importations continued, along with the divisive debate on the resumption of transportation, as in: "Chinese Labour", 22nd February, 1851; 'Available Labour', 24th May, 1851; "The Northern Elections", 12th July, 1851.

*Chinamen, the "wilderness and the solitary places" would be made cheerful and beautiful by the presence of a happy and contented peasantry, enjoying, in the midst of the vast forests of Australia, the pleasures arising from family love and domestic peace.*⁵²

In contrast to this was the expression of the editor of the *Moreton Bay Free Press* that he was "delighted to report: that a vessel carrying Chinese labourers '...of a very superior class...'⁵³ was shortly expected to arrive in Moreton Bay. The *Courier*, however, was unable to completely antagonise the squatters by assuming an attitude towards the question of Chinese labourers akin to that of the *People's Advocate*, as its continued profitable existence depended upon the advertising and subscriptions not only of the employers of Chinese, but also the importers of the labour. Too hard a line in this direction would, it can be surmised, have driven more squatters, importers and employers of Chinese labourers to abandon the *Courier* and subscribe solely to the *Free Press*.

Until about the mid-1850s Brisbane, Ipswich and the other small towns such as Armidale and Tenterfield scattered throughout the Northern Districts were little more than the storehouses and trading centres of the sheep stations of the interior, a point continually argued by the squatters and their supporters within the Fourth Estate: '...what will become of Brisbane and Ipswich if the Squatters cannot get their lambs reared, their sheep shorn, or their flocks and herds fattened?'⁵⁴ By 1851 Brisbane could only boast a population 2443; Ipswich, 932; Warwick, 267; Grafton 319; Armidale, 556; Drayton, 200; and Maryborough 299.⁵⁵ The lack of any substantial urban population or organised working-class combined with the efforts of the *Moreton Bay Free Press* on behalf of the squatters, allowed the proposed introduction of Chinese labourers to be advertised and proceed with little opposition being voiced. As the political balance within the Northern Districts tipped against the squatting class even the *Moreton Bay Free Press* and its contributors tempered their decidedly pro-Chinese stance to a position that argued recourse was had to Chinese only because no other labour was available to employers:⁵⁶ and '...there is no alternative but the labour of exiles or Chinamen, or ruin to the producers of capital and to the inhabitants of Brisbane and Ipswich.'⁵⁷

52 "Our Traffic with China", *MBC*, 22nd November, 1851.

53 *MBFP*, 22nd March, 1853.

54 Original Correspondence by "An Ancient Moretonian", *MBFP*, 13th May, 1852; and Original Correspondence, by "A Burnett Squatter", *MBFP*, 5th July, 1853.

55 New South Wales Census, 1851, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 30, Part I, 1851.

56 Editorial, *MBFP*, 18th March, 1852.

57 Original Correspondence by "An Ancient Moretonian", *MBFP*, 13th May, 1852.

The more antagonistic a newspaper editor towards the question of the squatting interest and the importation of Chinese labourers the less likely would it be for an importer to place an advertisement in that paper. The antagonism of the *People's Advocate* and the *Empire* explains why no advertisements regard the employment of Chinese labourers were placed in these newspapers. The *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Maitland Mercury* being more liberal in thought on these subjects, included amongst their readership likely employers of Chinese labourers, the "target market". A grouping whose names were unlikely to be found on the subscriptions list of either the *Advocate* or the *Empire*, yet would have been found on the subscription lists of the *Courier* and more so the *Free Press*.

The antagonism between the *Free Press* and the Sydney newspapers on the question of the squatters was palpable. with an editorial in the *Moreton Bay Free Press* arguing that:

*Our brother the Empire delights to tilt at the Squatters as a pleasant pastime, when on any occasion he is gravelled for lack of matter. (and) The mighty Empire and King-street Advocate make wild work; consequences of their inexperience in rural affairs, and sad ignorance of the country they write about so glibly Oh, for Mr. Parkes, one year a neighbour squatter. He would quickly learn the difference between theory and practice and be taught the rosy game of playing Squatter in earnest.*⁵⁸

In the case of the *Maitland Mercury*, under the control of R. Jones and T. W. Tucker, its liberal line and '...reicent politics did not prevent it circulating widely in the squatting districts...' ⁵⁹ as it presented a balanced viewpoint, more akin to that of the *Sydney Morning Herald* than the *People's Advocate* or the *Empire*.⁶⁰ The *Maitland Mercury* reputedly had the largest circulation in the New England, Darling Downs, Hunter River, Liverpool Plains and Clarence River districts than any other "Colonial Journal".⁶¹ The paper's lack of any competition in most of the districts named placed it in a highly profitable position, yet this situation could rapidly change if the squatters decided to establish a newspaper to advocate their cause in opposition to the existing paper as occurred in Moreton Bay.

58 *MBFP*, 21st February, 1851.

59 Walker, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

60 The *Empire*, which first edition appeared 28th December 1850, was owned and edited by Henry Parkes, with declared aims and values of '...independence, truthfulness, the education and the protection of the people..' *ibid.*, p. 63.

61 "Enlargement of the Maitland Mercury", *Empire*, 21st February, 1852.

C: LEGISLATIVE QUESTIONS AND INTERFERENCE

The New South Wales Legislative Council was to directly and indirectly initiate the public debate into the question of Chinese emigration to the colony when one of its members, Dr Douglass, moved to introduce a bill which would '...limit the further immigration of Chinese into this colony';⁶² voicing fears that a "Chinese slave trade" was being established in the Northern Districts. In concert with the fears expressed by Douglass and his attempt to limit the trade through legislative restraint, was the appearance in the anti-squatting newspapers of a number of extremely anti-Chinese letters and editorials which drew comparisons between the importations and slavery.

One of these letters, authored by R. Orr, was published the day before Douglass placed his Bill before the house and represents that extreme of the debate on Chinese labour importation which believed that the introduction of Chinese into the colony would bring about the "Total ruin of society in Australia".⁶³ To Orr:

*Amoy, Hong Kong and Singapore will be the nurseries to supply us with pirates, and all that the imagination can form to itself as infamous in character. Men so thoroughly debased, that in their own country they speak unblushingly of every moral depravity. If we alter the names of China and Singapore, to those of Sodom and Gomorrah our ideas are then perfectly correct. In those countries live the children of Satan, his own darlings, his pet dearies, destined to be the instructors of Australian youth. Alas! Australians, Britons, and sons of Erin, to what a pass have we arrived, when we stoop to be rivals and associates of the very scum of hell?*⁶⁴

To Orr, the admittance of the Chinese would turn Australian society into an idolatrous hell and reduce all merchants and craftsmen to "beggary", a future vision which played on fears of divine vengeance and unemployment. Such an extreme view as this was admittedly rare at that time, these sentiments being more common later in the decade when post-gold rush legislative moves against Chinese immigration were taken. Further developments of this view of the Chinese arose later in the 1850s and continued throughout the nineteenth century when fears of unemployment were coupled with racist sentiments equal to those of Mr Orr, to produce the infamous White Australia Policy.

⁶² Report of the Legislative Council, 18th November, 1851; *Empire*, 19th November, 1851. Both of Douglass's statements on the existence of a Chinese slave trade and that regarding his intention to introduce the bill into the house were greeted by "a laugh".

⁶³ Original Correspondence, *Empire*, 22nd November, 1851.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

Douglass's move to introduce the Bill in question had been prompted he admitted 'In conformity with a pledge which he had given to his constituents...',⁶⁵ an admission which Wentworth eagerly seized upon to use against Douglass in calling for the Bill to be "kicked out" of the House. Wentworth argued that the Bill's admission had merely been a ploy on the part of Douglass to get himself re-elected; a charge which brought "cheers and laughter".⁶⁶ The proposed bill did not progress very far, as the Colonial Secretary E. P. Thompson declared, that '...he did not consider the subject was one for legislation; nor had this House the power to legislate upon it'.⁶⁷ The Attorney General J. H. Plunkett, upheld Thompson's stand on the inadmissibility of the Bill, as any Bill intended to prohibit or restrict the immigration of Chinese to the colony would have violated the "law of nations". As argued by Plunkett, the treaties signed between England and China at the cessation of the Opium War allowed for the free movement of people between the two nations and within regions or countries over which the nations had sovereignty.⁶⁸

The debate that the introduction of the Bill actuated is interesting on a number of fronts. Firstly, the divisions within the Legislative Council over the question of transportation and Chinese immigration are brought to the fore, yet the manner in which people aligned themselves is not surprising. That Wentworth and John Lamb⁶⁹ would argue against the imposition of any regulations on the immigration of Chinese labourers had to be expected even though the latter was a most vociferous opponent of transportation. Wentworth's involvement in the actual importations as discussed earlier, and his employment of Chinese labourers on his Sydney and pastoral establishments, precluded him from adopting any stance other than one which exhibited a grudging acceptance of the need for Chinese immigration. For John Lamb, the member for Sydney and advocate of Sydney's merchant elite, any moves to regulate the trade in Chinese labourers would have damaged the businesses of his constituents and supporters, and possibly also the pastoralists whose wool and supplies he handled.

Both Lamb and Wentworth spoke against the introduction of the Bill on the basis that any legislation would be illegal, and that Dr. Douglass had not only misrepresented the number of Chinese that had been imported, but also

65 Speech of Dr. Douglass, Chinese Immigration Debate, Report of the Legislative Council, 21st November, 1851; *Empire*, 24th November, 1851.

66 Speech of W. C. Wentworth, Chinese Immigration Debate, Report of the Legislative Council, 21st November, 1851; *op.cit.*

67 Speech of the Colonial Secretary *ibid*

68 *loc.cit.*

69 1790-1862; Merchant, partner in Lamb and Parbury of Sydney, ex-Royal Navy, and son of an East India Company captain, retired to England with a fortune in 1855. *ADB*, Vol. 4, pp. 72-73.

misrepresented the general character of the Chinese. That John Richardson, the member for the "reputed" County of Stanley, which seat encompassed north and south Brisbane, seconded Douglass's motion is also not surprising on one level. Richardson, unlike G. F. Leslie or M. H. Marsh, did not represent a squatting district, but rather an urban area; albeit an urban centre that was only beginning to emerge from beneath the power of the surrounding rural interests. On another level Richardson's approval of the Bill is surprising as this was the same John Richardson at whose establishment in North Brisbane "Parties desirous of obtaining a supply of Labour, from Amoy" could affix their names to a list, stating how many Chinese labourers they required.⁷⁰

The second point of interest within the debate was the fact that all the participants bemoaned the importation of the Chinese, yet, all apart from Plunkett argued that employers had been driven to this end by the impossibility of any emigration flow emanating from England with the exhaustion of the Land Fund. The cessation of transportation, and the negation by the Legislative Council of any resumption of the practice had exacerbated the dearth of servile labour, a situation that could only be overcome by the introduction of Chinese labourers. This argument, that the Chinese were a *dernier ressort* in those times of labour shortage was to be constantly repeated by the supporters of Chinese immigration, and those justifying the actions and position of the squatting class. In combination with these arguments one finds the sentiment expressed so ably by Douglass within his speech to the House that:

*We would rather have these convicts, with all their anticipated pollution's a thousand times over, than that the colony should be inundated with the benighted hordes of Asia, whether Tartar or Hindoo, Musulman or Pagan.*⁷¹

This plea that the colonists would rather have access to the refuse of England's gaols than introduce a corrupting influence into society in the form of the Chinese, was used especially in the Northern Districts in the combined fight that they engaged in for a resumption of transportation and separation from New South Wales. Apart from the contribution of John Richardson, none of the other representatives from the Northern Districts within the Council, Messrs. Leslie, Marsh, Jones and Bigge⁷² spoke on the Bill. A fact which one correspondent to the *Sydney Morning Herald* brought to the attention of the public, and in doing so expressed his dissatisfaction:

70 "Chinese Labour", *MBC*, 22nd June, 1850. This advertisement is reproduced in Chapter Six.

71 Speech of Dr. Douglass, *op.cit.*

72 The members for the pastoral districts of Clarence and Darling Downs; New England and Clarence; and Moreton, Wide Bay, Burnett and Maranoa respectively.

*...as an employer of labour, at the absence of our own member on such an occasion, and at the want of bunkum shown by the member of Wide Bay, &c., in not turning the speeches of honourable members who took part in the discussion to the benefit of his constituents. The former being a staunch supporter of exiles, and the latter an employer of Chinese, and both being large employers, they might have explained to the House, in a most satisfactory manner, the helpless state of the Northern districts for want of labour, for be it remembered the Chinese are our last resort.*⁷³

After regaling the reader with a biting compendium of all the ills that would befall the colony if the emigration of Chinese labourers was to continue, and specifically continue without Government interference to oversee and control the trade, the author concluded:

*Hoping I have alarmed the morals of some of some of my Sydney friends, who are sure, ere long, to have these very men as the outcasts of the north (for they are worse than exiles), I will bid them adieu; and let them then remember that they forced them on us.*⁷⁴

The introduction of Douglass's Bill into the House and the debate that ensued was beneficial to the importers and the employers of Chinese labour, as by calling attention to the extent of the importations that were to soon arrive in the colony, a fair amount of the anticipated objections to the trade were diffused before it had reached its peak. All of the objections that were subsequently raised against the introduction of Chinese labourers had previously been countered during the Legislative Council debate. The cost of the Chinese as against that of an English labourer which at first was stated to be £13 and £9 respectively, was made equivalent by Mr Lamb. Wentworth countered this argument by questioning what right had Douglass, who '...was not an employer of labour...to intrude his opinions on the great employers of labour...'; and '...the smallest liberty that could be allowed those who wanted labour, and were ready to pay for it, was to go for it wherever they thought best, provided they obtained it from a country in amity with Great Britain'.⁷⁵

The arguments that English labourers would not emigrate to the colony, nor work alongside the Chinese were dispelled by Wentworth and Lamb in tandem, the former's experience had shown '...that so far from their disliking their Chinese fellow-workers, they were generally great favourites!'.⁷⁶ Lamb continued on this point

73 Original Correspondence by "Australiensis", *SMH*, 26th December, 1851.

74 *loc.cit.* A letter subscribed to the *ABFP* under the same alias bewailed the introduction of "Idoltrous Pagans" in extremely caustic and racist terms (Original Correspondence by "An Englishman", *MBC*, 15th March, 1851), a stance which had become muted by the December of the same year, if the same person authored both letters.

75 Speeches of Mr Wentworth and Mr Lamb, *cp.cit.*

76 Speeches of Mr Wentworth and Mr Lamb, *cp.cit.*

'...did they [English labourers] not go to the United States, where they were in competition with slaves?'⁷⁷ The charge by Douglass that '...these wretched Chinese, who were known to be given to every abomination, and to the most infamous vices...'⁷⁸ was denied by Wentworth as:

*...they were so generally spread throughout the colony that if, as a body, they were guilty of the abominations with which they had been charged, it would be impossible that they should not have been exposed by the press. He did not believe what was said of the immorality of these people.*⁷⁹

Lamb supported the sentiments of Wentworth by stating that he had '...always observed them to be an orderly and quiet people...', and argued further that he saw no need for legislation to be introduced to protect the Chinese as they:

*...were perfectly competent to look after their own interests,...(and)...it must be remembered that the Chinese were a lettered people long before we were, and they were as well able to understand an agreement as the sharpest lawyer in Sydney.*⁸⁰

After this parliamentary tussle over the merits and demerits of Chinese labour importation the debate was abandoned by the Legislative Council and taken up in the newspapers; the Fourth Estate it was argued must keenly watch the importations in the public's interest as the Government had no legal power to interfere in the trade:

*Just in proportion as the Government is powerless, according to international Law, so does the Press put forth its strength*⁸¹

Despite the ensuing parliamentary debate, Orr's letter, and the *People's Advocate* earlier arguments against the trade, it was not until late February 1852 that the Fourth Estate entered the fray in force.⁸² The arrival of the *Ganges* and then the *General Palmer* which both experienced disastrous voyages, provided those against the importation and employment of Chinese labourers with fuel to argue against "The Chinese Slave Ships".

77 Speech of Mr Lamb, *op.cit.*

78 Speech of Dr Douglass, *op.cit.*

79 Speech of Mr Wentworth, *op.cit.*

80 Speech of Mr Lamb, *op.cit.*

81 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Fax, No. VI, *SMH*, 3rd April, 1852.

82 Gaps within existing copies of the *People's Advocate* may hide articles that had appeared in this newspapers on the subject.

D: THE SQUATTERS AND THEIR "CHINESE SLAVES"

The editorial which carried this title was not dedicated to arguing against the introduction of the Chinese but rather called upon the Government to institute an inquiry into the '...discipline on board the ships employed in the Chinese labour traffic, and the treatment which many of these poor heathen immigrants are said to have received in their passage to this country.'⁸³ In writing this, the editor was obviously referring to the passage of the *Ganges* and threatened that if the Government did nothing to satisfy the public's mind as to the "alleged cruelties and crimes", the *Empire* would '...adopt every measure within our power to bring the real state of things to light.'⁸⁴ It was not exclusively the allegations of "cruelties and crimes" within the Chinese labour trade that worried parts of the Fourth Estate, but also the fact that since 1st January, 1852 nearly a third (687 out of 2457) of the increase in colonial population through immigration had:

*...consisted of the worst description of Chinese- a race as alien to the Anglo-Saxon in faith, tradition, habits, and feeling,...We fear for the country of our adoption, when we see this shameless and wretched traffic in human flesh.'*⁸⁵

Within this editorial the earlier Legislative Council debate and its denunciation of the trade was recalled, with the examples of violence and appearance before the benches by the Chinese located in the Northern Districts being reprinted and used as evidence of their debased ways. Five days later another editorial was dedicated to the importation of Chinese labourers, in which the trade was aligned with the slave trade, and deriding the inability of the Chinese to '...become, to any extent, free and intelligent British subjects.'⁸⁶

The Chinese themselves were not the subject of antipathy within this editorial but rather the importers, who were charged with "sordid avarice" in undertaking the trade, and were '...guilty of all that the old slave traders were guilty of...'⁸⁷ The sympathies of the editor were with the Chinese labourers who were destined to be:

...kept in servitude, ...under the binding force of laws that they cannot possibly be made to understand, and of which they cannot therefore avail themselves in their own defence. The contract is not equal, for they have not British notions on these subjects, and they are therefore hired under, what are to them false representations....They are bound, indeed, by the fetters of ignorance on their own parts; but their importers have taken advantage of that

83 "The Chinese Slave Ships", *Empire*, 6th February, 1852.

84 *loc.cit.*

85 "Our Population", *Empire*, 21st February, 1852.

86 "The Importation of Barbarian Labourers-Savery", *Empire*, 26th February, 1852.

87 *loc.cit.*

*ignorance to extract from them a service, and under circumstances as foreign to their independent and intelligent volition as if they were kidnapped:...*⁸⁸

The distinction between the animosity shown at this time towards the importers and employers of Chinese labourers, and the paternalistic attitude adopted towards the Chinese is extremely important as it provides an indication of the political manoeuvrings being undertaken within colonial society at the time. The Chinese labourers at this stage were merely pawns within the fight for political and social supremacy. The importation of Chinese labourers represented the apex of the squattocracy's power, yet also provided the anti-squatting section of colonial society with a new weapon with which to attack the squatters. The dangers to society which the importation of Chinese labourers threatened were portrayed as being due to the avarice of the importers and employers, and the latter's determination to employ and keep in servitude an "ignorant and barbarian race" in preference to free English labourers. Although the Chinese labourers were continually portrayed as being morally deficient and depraved, a paternalistic attitude was assumed towards them. It was that section of society which promoted and had undertaken their importation and employment that were subjected to the wrath of editors and letter writers in the early months of 1852.

Apart from the *Empire's* editorials on the subject of Chinese labour importation, which were driven by questions of violence during the passage and the propriety of introducing Chinese into the colony, the other sections of the Fourth Estate remained relatively quiet. Even the *Empire* received only one letter on the subject after that subscribed by Orr. This letter, by "A Bushman", lacked the vitriol of Orr's letter and argued that the time and expense of importing Chinese labourers could be easily matched by the importation of "honest industrious Scotchmen". The importation and employment of the latter would not place the lives of the station superintendents and overseers, and their families in jeopardy; however, with Chinese labourers '...no white man's life is safe one minute amongst them.'⁸⁹

The response of the editor *Maitland Mercury* to the importations and the debate initiated in the Legislative Council, was that the labourers had been imported as a necessary and '...temporary measure to meet an unexpected and urgent emergency...' induced by a severe shortage of labour. An attitude which apart from following the arguments of the squatters, set him apart from all other editors in the Middle Districts. The editor however tempered this justification of the trade by stating that there were:

88 *loc.cit.*

89 Original Correspondence by "A Bushman", *Empire*, 6th March, 1852.

...many weighty grounds of a general character to be urged against the introduction into a country like this- already settled as it is by a British community, and for all the industrial pursuits of which British labour is suitable- of a coloured and inferior race, and particularly if that race be distinguished for its vices rather than its virtues.⁹⁰

All members of the press within the colony eventually became involved in the debate on the importation of Chinese labour when the articles of Paul Pax were published. The publication of these articles not only provided the reader with an insight into the mechanics of the trade in Chinese labour but also the pro- and anti-Chinese immigration interests with a point of focus from which to argue their opposing views.

The preceding discussion has highlighted differences within the colony in the marketing and advertising strategies employed by the importers to sell their human cargo. Such marketing strategies had to increasingly both attract potential employers and appease, or at the very least placate that section of society that was opposed to the importations. The appeasement of those opposed to the importations of Chinese labourers became more important as the trade progressed which as discussed above, was partially achieved by reducing the amount of attention drawn to the arrival and transferral of Chinese labourers in the colony.

Another method of achieving this mollification of the public was by increasing the level of positive publicity on the subject of Chinese labourers through the publication in colonial newspapers of reports favourable to the Chinese. One of the most prominent and possibly the most successful of these marketing ploys were the series of articles written by "Paul Pax" that were printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

E: THE LITERARY EFFORTS OF PAUL PAX

The correspondence of Paul Pax⁹¹ may be considered the absolute pinnacle of the attempts made through the Fourth Estate to "sell" the Chinese to the general public. The letters were a marketing or, if one wishes to view the letters in that light, propaganda exercise which were written by someone close to the centre of the importations with the primary aim of proving to the public how innocuous was the trade in Chinese labourers, and how the trade had only been undertaken as a last resort.

⁹⁰ "Chinese Immigration", *MM*, 29th November, 1851.

⁹¹ As noted earlier the identity of Paul Pax is unknown, although the actual name may have been intended to induce some peace or friendship into discussions on the subject of Chinese labour.

The articles of Paul Pax were published at a very fortuitous time for the importers and employers of Chinese labourers appearing just after the arrival of the ill-fated *General Palmer* when animosity towards the trade was beginning to increase in intensity and extent. The objective of the articles it was stated was not to question whether Chinese immigration only benefited '...a numerous, powerful and wealthy class...', nor to consider the '...propriety of imputing and receiving into our community a few hundred Chinese annually...', but rather to:

*...discover, if possible, whether the principle of this immigration is good- how these men are obtained and what were their antecedents ere they consented to become the hired servants of our country-men: whether, when they committed themselves to the protection of the British flag they received proper care, or whether in one word it is a species of slavery on the part of any party concerned, as has often been alleged...*⁹²

The six articles which were published over an equivalent number of weeks had been definitely prompted by the moves of Dr Douglass in the Legislative Council, and given the level of detail contained within the articles Paul Pax had been at his task for a number of weeks at least before the publication of the first article. The inclusion of various pieces of information, however, such as the number of Chinese landed in Sydney up to only eight days before publication;⁹³ and interviews with Captain Thomas Beckford Simpson of the *General Palmer*;⁹⁴ indicates that in some areas the articles were written contemporaneous with objections to the trade being raised in colonial newspapers.⁹⁵

The articles began with a negation of the views espoused during the Legislative Council debate on Chinese immigration, and criticised Dr Douglass for '...the pagan zeal with which the honourable and learned member pursues the Chinamen...'. Paul Pax questioned whether the Chinese possessed some form of '...Eastern witchcraft, by which they can turn a Christian people into pagans and idolaters...' ⁹⁶ which Dr Douglass had alleged they were capable of achieving. The imputation that the importers of the Chinese were merely another form of slave traders, buying and selling "flesh, sinews and bones", was refuted by the citing of the 1847 amendment to the Master and Servants Act, which recognised contracts signed with the Chinese, therefore, the

92 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. I. *SMH*, 28th February, 1852.

93 *ibid.* The number of 1685 Chinese cited by Paul Pax included the 180 that arrived per the *Statesman* on 20th February, 1852.

94 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. V, *SMH*, 27th March, 1852. The *General Palmer* arrived in Sydney 16th February, 1852.

95 Objections to the trade were raised specifically in the three editorials that appeared in the *Empire* which denigrated those involved in the trade. "The Chinese Slave Ships", *Empire*, 6th February, 1852; "Our Population", *Empire* 21st February, 1852; "The Importation of Barbarian Labourers", *Empire*, 26th February, 1852.

96 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. I, *op.cit.*

contracts were '...perfectly fair and legitimate...'.⁹⁷ As further evidence on this point Paul Pax presented the mechanics of the trade undertaken by the importers,⁹⁸ and explained away the violence on the *Ganges* and mortality and disease on the *General Palmer* as being singular aberrations which all precautions had been unable to prevent. Apart from these singular circumstances it was argued by Paul Pax that the Chinese have '...no ground of complaint against those persons holding commands in the emigrant vessels.'⁹⁹

As to the suggestions of immoral acts amongst the Chinese, the '...horrid vice, the very allusion to which brings the blush of shame upon us...', Paul Pax produced the evidence of the Surgeons-Superintendent employed on the ships, who it was stated with "one mind" declared that:

...not only were they unable to discover any just cause for accusation on board the ships, but that they believed the charge as made against "the race" was totally devoid of foundation....[and]...If this crime was general among the Chinese, is it not fair to suppose that perpetrators of it would have been found among eleven hundred of them brought to this country in the four vessels, to the officers of which we have appealed?¹⁰⁰

The fear of Douglass of the moral and uncivilizing effects of the "dusky population of China" mingling with the noble Anglo-Saxon race was dismissed by Paul Pax, as such inter-mingling of races was proof '...that our race is fulfilling the glorious destiny allotted to her in civilizing the world':

Every Chinaman as he returns to his native land from our country will, to some extent, be a missionary, every letter an olive branch; so that as a question of religion there can really be no objection to this immigration.¹⁰¹

The '...only really tangible evil...' raised as an objection to the immigration of Chinese labourers to the colony that Paul Pax was not able to effectively refute, a difficulty which was admitted yet declared not to be insurmountable, was the "non-importation of women".¹⁰² The migration and then employment of so many men in the isolated regions of the colony without a percentage of women was feared by the opponents of Chinese immigration on two levels. Firstly, there was the argument that the congregation of so many men without the "civilizing" influence of women would

97 *ibid.* The fairness and legitimacy of the contracts as asserted by Paul Pax was discussed in Chapter Seven, with that chapter also presenting Paul Pax's evidence on the mechanics of the trade in Chinese labourers.

98 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. II, *SMH*, 6th March, 1852.

99 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. VI, *op.cit.*

100 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. III, *SMH*, 27th March, 1852.

101 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. VI, *op.cit.*

102 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. VI, *op.cit.*

lead to the committal of the '...most appalling vices amongst them'.¹⁰³ Secondly, and of more importance to some sections of society, was the over-riding fear of miscegenation. By importing so many men without the company of their own country-women it was feared that the Chinese might marry European women there being no other '...recourse in this country...'. The Aboriginal population was considered an unlikely source of wives for the Chinese it being argued that '...the difference between a Chinaman and an aboriginal of our colony, is perhaps as great as between the former (and) an Englishman'.¹⁰⁴ To overcome this problem, Paul Pax suggested that women could be brought from Malaya as these two races '...have for centuries consorted well together...', a solution which was hoped to quieten all objections on the importation of males only.

The fear that the congregation of so many men together, without the companionship of women would lead to "appalling vices" was only expressed thus in relation to the introduction of Chinese. The whole colony however, suffered from an extreme imbalance in the sex distribution of the population, hence the constant attempts to increase female emigration. Prior to Chinese emigration increasing dramatically in 1852 the 1851 Census reported that there was an excess of 8391 males over females in the squatting districts of the colony. The breakdown of the population by sex for the Northern Districts for 1851 and 1856 is presented within Table 9a below.

TABLE 9a

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	1851		1856	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
CLARENCE RIVER	1,116	695	1,450	909
DARLING DOWNS	1,704	469	2,637	1,340
MORETON	234	38	374	153
NEW ENGLAND	2,895	1,302	3,525	1,983
BURNETT	740	112	1,028	281
MARANOA	74	11	88	22
WIDE BAY	319	87	484	185
TOTAL	7,082	2,714	9,586	4,873

SOURCE: New South Wales Census, 1851, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 30, Part I, 1851. New South Wales Census, 1856, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 47, 1857.

¹⁰³ "Chinese Immigration", *MBC*, 20th September, 1851.

¹⁰⁴ "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. VI, *op.cit.* Some measures were taken to import Chinese women with Thacker & Company in a letter to Jardine Matheson suggesting the importation of '...Chinese labourers with their wives and children.' Thacker & Co. to Jardine Matheson, 4th June, 1851, in Phyllis Mander-Jones (ed.), *Manuscripts in the British Isles Relating to Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific*, Canberra, A. N. U. Press, 1972, p. 390. In a letter three weeks later, Thacker requested the engagement of a Chinese cook, carpenter and overseer for Edward Hamilton of "Collaroy" (the nephew of W. S. Davidsor), Thacker & Co. to Jardine Matheson, 27th June, 1852, *ibid.*

The figures within this table highlight a number of misconceptions that were propagated as to the impact of "hordes" of Chinese labourers arriving in the Northern Districts. Firstly, the rush of Chinese labourers to these districts in 1851-52 did not create an imbalance within the population, the sex imbalance already existed. Secondly, the idea that the presence of the Chinese would prevent any Europeans from settling, especially European women, is shown to be wrong. The ratio of men to women within these districts decreased from a mean of 4:1 in 1851, to about $2\frac{1}{2}$:1 in 1856, proof that contrary to common opinion the Chinese did not keep women from exercising their "civilizing influence" on the Northern Districts, and also did not endanger the settlement or lives of families. To the editor of the *Moreton Bay Free Press* it was folly to argue that '...any immigrants have been, or will be, deterred from coming out to the colony, from the fact that a few pagans are temporarily domiciled in it', as it was highly unlikely that prospective immigrants would have any notion of whether this '...class of people form any proportion of its population or not.'¹⁰⁵

Obviously the employment of significant numbers of Chinese labourers in the Northern Districts would have increased this sex imbalance, yet it must be remembered that the Chinese imported into these districts did not cause this sex imbalance, nor would this imbalance have been drastically exacerbated. The imbalance in the sex distribution of the squatting districts had arisen through the squatters dislike of employing families, preferring single men as the former usually contained members who could not be profitably employed and therefore would become a drain on the station.

In concluding the series of articles, Paul Pax reiterated that the facts laid before the reader had refuted all the claims made by the opponents to the importation of Chinese labourers and declared that there was no '...case for Legislative interferences, for the purpose of its suppression.'¹⁰⁶ In stating this Paul Pax uttered what was to become the maxim for those justifying the importation and employment of Chinese labourers: the scarcity of labour produced a situation where '...in every house is, "Wanted a servant"...'; and the sad state of the Land Fund precluded the arrival of a sufficient number of English immigrants, any arriving '...our capital of Sydney could monopolize the whole of them as household servants'. In this dire situation, Chinese labourers had been imported as a last resort, in order to save the colony from the economic ruin that would attend the collapse of the pastoral industry. The scarcity of labour threatened the continued viability of the squatters, and if this scarcity was exacerbated by the suppression of the trade in Chinese labourers:

¹⁰⁵ *MBFP*, 16th March, 1852.

¹⁰⁶ "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. VI, *op.cit.*

*Will any one tell us how the great landed interests of the colony are to benefit thereby? Are the exports in wool, tallow, hides, &c., by which the colony has hitherto been maintained, to be given up for the want of labour? Are we in a position to sacrifice these three or four million per annum, and to involve in ruin the interests that produced them?*¹⁰⁷

The weaving together of the landed interests with the interests of the colony was a major argument used by the squatters and their supporters in the on-going debate on the question of the importation of Chinese labourers. A debate, that in some respects the articles of Paul Pax more than any other one incident, including the rush of Chinese importation during 1852, served to ignite.

F: ATTITUDES, RESPONSES AND REJOINDERS

Responses to the claims and declarations of Paul Pax were quick to emerge in the newspapers with the *Empire* leading the charge against Paul Pax on the basis that a "thousand shames" should be invoked on those men of '...high standing...they sit in our Legislature and on our magisterial benches, and from their wealth and position they must be looked up to as the leading men of the colony...'.¹⁰⁸ Who having:

*...put themselves into such functions, should employ them, to defend themselves in the perpetration of a practice, which if largely pursued, and promoted by our "leading men", must dissolve all the social and moral virtues of the colony, into "thin air"...To take advantage of the non-existence of a law, which should punish an evil practice, in order to perpetuate that practice and profit by it is an act of more detestable dishonour...; and for the men to do it, who are put in places of trust, to be without selfishness, the guardians of the rights and virtues of society, is a moral criminality which is not easily surpassed.*¹⁰⁹

The *Empire* also attacked the amount of space that the *Sydney Morning Herald* had allocated to the publication of Paul Pax's articles, posing the question 'Would that journal take up so much room at the simple request of a writer on the other side? A question which the editor answered in the negative "judging from historical recollection".¹¹⁰ The identity of Paul Pax was also queried and after deciding that the author was definitely no "amateur scribbler", the editor suggested that Paul Pax was either directly and personally interested in the promotion of the trade or was a "paid advocate", concluding:

*It is surely interest of some kind that mounts our doughty champion to his saddle lance in hand.*¹¹¹

107 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. VI, *op.cit.*

108 "Chinese Immigration", by Paul Pax, No. II, *op.cit.*

109 "Paul Pax and the Pagans", *Empire*, 11th March, 1852.

110 "Chinese Labour and Paul Pax Again", *Empire*, 3rd April, 1852.

111 *loc.cit.*

After attacking all of the claims and suppositions of Paul Pax, including that it was an act of humanity to bring the Chinese to the colony from their homeland where over-population and starvation were common facets of life, the editor berated those in the colony who had introduced his "Pariah Caste" to satisfy their desire for '...a serf-like peasantry, doomed to a never-to-be-improved servility.'¹¹² The *Empire* attacked the Chinese on the basis of their lack of morals and inability to understand and conform to the agreements that they had signed, yet continually directed most of its hostility towards the squatters. The importation of Chinese labourers was portrayed as just another attempt by this clique to make the labouring population subservient to their will, the Master and Servants and Vagrancy Acts being cited as other examples. The introduction of low-wage workers in the form of Chinese labourers was believed to reduce the wages of all labourers, and would stifle the emigration of other labourers from England; creating and perpetuating a vicious circle where the squatters could again argue that the labour shortage had driven them to the importation and employment of Chinese labourers. It was the fact that the squatters had abused their high standing within society and the Legislature to undertake, and then justify the importation of Chinese labourers which was the main focus of the *Empire's* attack on the trade. An act on the part of the squatting clique which was constantly portrayed as "immoral", a "breach of trust", and disinterest by the squatters in the future of the colony.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* in contrast accepted the arguments of Paul Pax that no aspects of the slave-trade to be found in the Chinese labour trade, yet gave equal voice to the belief that the trade would be unprofitable and '...politically, and socially, the employment of an inferior race of men as labourers is a great evil.'¹¹³ The *Herald* maintained a comparatively balanced stance in the debate, deprecating the introduction of Chinese labourers and alluding to all the evils which would befall the colony from the importations, yet argued that

*The "sordid traffic" in Chinese labour is the result, not of a tyrannous disposition in those who employ that labour, but of the ruinous policy of the Marplots of the Colonial Office, who have for so long misused and misgoverned these splendid dependencies.*¹¹⁴

The assumption on the part of the *Herald* that the squatters had not imported and employed Chinese labour through avarice or a wish '...to gratify the "infernal spirit of the slave-master" but simply because they must get labour or be ruined'¹¹⁵ was in direct opposition to the views on the subject expressed by the *Empire* cited above. The

112 *loc.cit.*

113 "Chinese Immigration", *SMH*, 2nd April, 1852.

114 "Immigration: Chinese or English?", *SMH*, 24th April, 1852.

115 *loc.cit.*

political leanings of the proprietors and editor of the *Herald* were with the squatters rather than the labouring classes as evidenced in its promotion of the idea that property and "interests" rather than manhood suffrage should be represented in the Legislature.¹¹⁶

However, even the comparatively mild remonstrances of the *Herald* regarding the importation of Chinese labourers brought rebukes from one reader who proudly stated that 'I have during the last few years, thanks to my Chinese, been a successful sheep farmer...'.¹¹⁷ In recommending the Chinese and condemning their opponents the author declared that the Chinese are more suited to the light work of shepherding than English labourers who are neither '...inclined to or adapted for shepherding...'; that '...nine out of ten will complete their contracts...' the reverse being the case with English labourers; that all "new" species of labour introduced into the colony had been opposed, with the original "bond" labourers even opposing the introduction of free labourers; and cited the example of Manila which had prospered with the introduction of Chinese labourers as evidence that the Northern Districts could also prosper by the cultivation of sugar cane and cotton by the Chinese.¹¹⁸ To "A Settler" the arguments against the introduction of Chinese labourers had no basis in fact, and that rather than destroying the future prosperity of the colony:

*...the public will feel the advantage of population increased by my Chinese, long after the connexion between us shall have been severed; whether as I hope, they will continue to assist the prosperity of the colony by labouring for themselves therein, or whether as successful adventurers, they return home, and thereby encourage fresh streams of their countrymen to our shores.*¹¹⁹

Interestingly, "A Settler" was the only correspondent on the subject of Chinese emigration to the colony who severely criticised those who offered objections to the trade on the basis of propagating a "mongrel race", most contributors on the pro-importation side of the debate neglecting to counter this objection. In arguing against those promoting fears of a "mongrel race" "A Settler" ridiculed those who '...feared the good sense, or could influence the choice of our daughters, or does not know that these may, in spite of us, select from amongst their own countrymen worse husbands than a successful Chinaman.'¹²⁰ Any other attempts to counter the complaints of the vices that may arise by the importing of only male labourers tended to revolve around

116 Walker, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

117 Original Correspondence, "Chinese Emigration" by A Settler, *SMH*, 8th May, 1852.

118 *loc.cit.*

119 Original Correspondence, "Chinese Emigration" by A Settler, *SMH*, 8th May, 1852.

120 *loc.cit.*

suggestions that Chinese women would arrive soon after the men.¹²¹ An argument that, other than being totally incorrect as Chinese women rarely emigrated, was violently opposed on the grounds that an "inferior race" would be allowed to establish itself in the colony.¹²²

The greatest amount of support for the squatters and their importation and employment of Chinese labourers was naturally found within those newspapers servicing the Northern Districts, that is the *Maitland Mercury*, the *Moreton Bay Courier* and the *Moreton Bay Free Press*. The degree of support increasing as one moved north and closer to the Tropic of Capricorn.

F(i): THE HUNTER REGION

When the importation of indentured Chinese labourers began in 1847-48 the labouring class within the Hunter region was only beginning to grow and flex its public and political muscles through the press and later the ballot box, as population increased and the urban centres, particularly Maitland developed. Between 1846 and 1851 the population of Maitland increased from 3319 to 4230, an increase of 27.5%,¹²³ whereas the whole of Durham County increased by only 374 or 4.95%,¹²⁴ a clear indication of where population growth was occurring during this period. The very weak position of the labouring class in the Hunter region at the beginning of the importation of Chinese labourers is epitomised within the election speech for the seat for the County of Durham in 1848 of Stuart Donaldson, a noted squatter in the New England region, prominent merchant and permanent resident of Sydney. In his speech Donaldson averred that he would do his best to serve the interests of his constituents by in part "strenuously exerting himself to promote the establishment of a steam ship service between the colony and Singapore", as:

*...any one who looked at the soil and capabilities of the county could not doubt that it could grow cotton, and other similar productions, while the steamers from Singapore could be made available to introduce Coolies and Chinamen skilled in their culture.*¹²⁵

A promise needless to say that Donaldson did not repeat when standing for re-election in 1851 with the dissolution of parliament, as it would have taken a very brave individual by that time to openly promote the introduction of Chinese labourers as part of an election platform. The fact that the legislature had voted £10,000 to assist

121 "Chinese Immigration" by Paul P. x, No. VI, *SMH*, 3rd April, 1852.

122 Original Correspondence by "An Australian", *MM*, 13th March, 1852.

123 New South Wales Census, 1851, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 30, Part I, 1851.

124 New South Wales Census, 1851, *Supplement to the Government Gazette*, No. 30, Part I, 1851.

125 "The Nomination", Extraordinary to *MM*, 17th February, 1848.

in the establishment of this stearn service raised the ire of the *People's Advocate* who argued that the service would soon be bringing '...five hundred Coolies every trip!'¹²⁶

Even Richard Jones when facing the electors for the Stanley Boroughs in 1851 denigrated the importation and employment of Chinese labourers, despite having employed 16 from the *Nimrod*, an occurrence which he stated he had not repeated, nor had any intention to repeat.¹²⁷ Henry Hughes, who unsuccessfully ran against Jones, was proudly acclaimed as a person who '...has from the beginning been strongly opposed to the introduction of Chinese labour, does not employ, nor ever has employed Chinamen.'¹²⁸ These "battle-cries of No Chinese" were dismissed by the *Moreton Bay Courier* as pure electioneering insincerity on the part of the candidates as '...we had seen their names in legible black ink on the list of those who had sent the *Duke of Roxburgh* for a cargo of the miserable immigrants whose introduction they affected such indignation at.'¹²⁹

The increasing level of organisation and strength within the labouring classes within Newcastle and the Hunter district can be observed through the responses to the importation of Chinese labourers printed in the *Maitland Mercury*. Although a significant number of Chinese labourers were brought through Newcastle on their way to properties in the Hunter and New England districts, the arrival of the *Eleanor Lancaster* in Newcastle in March 1852 prompted a very quick and bitter response. The antagonism within this response had not been apparent, or at least as publicly expressed earlier.

Men of Newcastle, will you be indifferent and tolerate the outrage imposed upon you, and the infraction of the rights of the colony, by allowing a disguised slave trade to disgrace your port, to the present ruin of our working population, and the moral degeneration of future generations!

Unite, assemble together, and institute such means as will effectively put a stop to a slave trade fraught with so much injury. Justice and humanity are on your side, for it is not likely that England would pay millions as compensation to slave owners, and expend millions more to prevent other nations dealing in slaves, and that she would now connive at a slave trade in her best and wealthiest colony, to gratify the avarice of an insignificant amount of its population, and thereby seriously injure nine-tenths of the colony- I remain, men of Newcastle, yours most truly,

*T. McCormack*¹³⁰

126 "Chinese Coolies" by Truth, *PA*, 3rd March, 1849.

127 "To the Independent Electors of the County of Stanley", *MBC*, 12th July, 1851.

128 Domestic Intelligence, Ipswich, *ABC*, 21st June, 1851.

129 "Chinese Immigration", *MBC*, 20th September, 1851.

130 Original Correspondence, "To the Men of Newcastle", *MM*, 20th March, 1852.

The growing strength of the working class in the Hunter region is also apparent in the signing by 139 individuals and presentation to the Governor of a petition requesting '...the adoption of such measures as may effectually prevent the introduction of Chinese labourers into this Colony.'¹³¹ Although the numbers signing the petition was small, the actual forgoing of the petitioners, framing of the petition and its eventual presentation, and the formation of a society for the '...moral and intellectual improvement of the working classes of Newcastle and its neighbourhood'¹³², indicates that the degree of organisation amongst the labouring classes in the Hunter region was increasing, and beginning to assert itself in the public arena.

In contrast to this may be stated the fact that at the public meeting called to protest against the arrival of the *Hleanor Lancaster* Mr Simon Kemp¹³³ charged that the previous speakers were attempting to '...incite the minds of the working classes against their employers.' Kemp then moved an amendment to the original resolution (that the importation of Chinese labourers was to be deplored and would impede the social, moral and political advancement of the colony), and '...that Captain Lodge be invited to a public dinner for bringing his vessel with Chinese labourers into this port.'¹³⁴

The *Maitland Mercury* carried a number of letters on the subject of Chinese labour importation and the squatters prompted by McCormack's call to arms and the public meeting held to protest against the importation of Chinese labourers, and others in response to the articles of Paul Pax. The first letters received by the editor of the *Maitland Mercury* on the subject of Chinese immigration and the squatters were antagonistic, yet ambiguous within this antagonism. That by "Cognos & Co." denigrated the Chinese in an extremely racist manner, describing the Chinese labourers that had been imported as the '...disciples of Fo, outcasts of an nation, surpassing all the kingdoms of the earth in cunning, deceit and treachery...'. The author exclaimed in conclusion that the colony should be populated only by '...men who have been brought up in a Christian land, and no admixture of Heathens and Tartars...'.¹³⁵ Although the author of this letter exhibited a decided bias against the Chinese labourers there is no equivalent stance taken towards the squatters, the object

131 Petition from certain Inhabitants of Newcastle to prevent further Chinese Immigration, No. 19, 8th July, 1852, *NSWLC V&P*, 1852, Vol. I, p. 337.

132 "Hunter River District News", Newcastle, *MM*, 20th March, 1852.

133 Kemp (d. 5-2-1869 aged 76) was the father of Charles Kemp, who in partnership with John Fairfax owned the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Kemp senior owned "Mulimba" and other squatting runs around Singleton and Jerry's Plains. See W. Champion, *Hunter Valley Register 1843-1884*, Vol. 3, 1973, pp. 481-82.

134 "Newcastle- Public Meeting", *M.A.*, 27th March, 1852.

135 Original Correspondence by "Cognos & Co.", *MM*, 13th March, 1852.

of the letter apparently from its contents was to bring to the notice of the public that the '...Moreton bay and Downs men were right in their cry for convicts.'¹³⁶

The manner in which this letter is written gives the impression on first reading that the author was arguing against the squatting clique and their importation and employment of Chinese labourers. The opposite intention was the case however, as upon close reading the letter is simply a variation on the argument that the squatters were in desperate need of labour. As argued by Cognos, when the colonists as one '...turned up our noses at the Van Diemen expeerees, and shouted away with them away...' the only recourse available to those requiring labourers was the '...immigration of his celestial majesty's convicts...'.¹³⁷ This was a restoration of the argument voiced by "Australensis" six months earlier for the resumption of transportation.¹³⁸

A second letter reprinted in the same issue of the *Maitland Mercury* as "Cognos & Co." left no allusions as to the intentions or political leanings of the author. This letter by "An Australian" began by quoting "an eminent moralist of the present day" who had argued that:

*No man or class of men are justified in promoting their pecuniary interests if by doing so they endanger the morals of the community.*¹³⁹

On the basis of this axiom the author severely censured the squatters as '...those short-sighted individuals who have shown themselves so regardless of the public morals as to introduce into this colony, where morality is respected and freedom upheld, a class of men who have hitherto been accustomed to live in the midst of slavery and idolatry I mean the Chinese.'¹⁴⁰ After detailing numerous "outrages" perpetrated by the Chinese labourers, which detail it must be noted had been drawn from the earlier legislative debate on Chinese labour and editorials in the *Empire*, the author countered the argument that without the labour of the Chinese the squatters and therefore the whole colony would be ruined, by proposing that the squatters should '...contract their flocks and herds...'.¹⁴¹ By citing the example of "owners of large establishments in the settled districts" who had by '...industry, energy, and perseverance carried on their business with fewer hands than previously...', the

136 *loc.cit.*

137 *loc.cit.*

138 Original Correspondence by "Australiensis", *SMH*, 26th December, 1851.

139 Original Correspondence by "An Australian", *MM*, 13th March, 1852.

140 *loc.cit.*

141 *loc.cit.*

author suggested that by practicing economy and "putting their shoulders to the wheel" the squatters could also carry on without employing Chinese labourers.¹⁴²

This suggestion by "An Australian" was not that outlandish as the squatters had practiced little or no economy, constantly increasing their flocks and therefore constantly requiring more shepherds to care for the sheep. The table below provides an idea of the rapid rate of growth in sheep numbers within four of the Northern Districts between 1847 and 1851.¹⁴³

TABLE 9b
SHEEP NUMBERS IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS
1847-1852

DISTRICT	1847	1850	% CHANGE 1847-1850	1852	% CHANGE 1847-1852
Clarence River	179,561	130,816	-27.2	124,144	-30.8
Darling Downs	317,958	580,000	+82.4	713,658	+224.5
Moreton Bay	218,622	279,500	+27.8	322,101	+147.3
New England	570,000	905,969	+58.9	951,725	+166.9

SOURCE: Statistical Returns of New South Wales, *NSWLC V&P*, 1847, Vol. I; 1850, Vol. II; 1852, Vol. II.

Apart from the decrease in sheep numbers within the Clarence region which is possibly explained by a move away from the coastal districts and into cattle grazing, the growth in sheep numbers over this period is quite astounding. Particularly astounding considering that it was from 1847 on that the northern sheep-owners began to loudly bemoan the lack of labour. As it was recognised by those who cried the loudest that there was little hope that the labour shortage would be quickly rectified, it would seem logical for those most in need of labour to reduce their requirements for labour by reducing the extent of their flocks, and halt their expansion further north and west into the interior. That this did not happen can be related to the acquisitiveness of the squatters who realised that they could with little difficulty acquire labour from China. The increase in wool prices experienced after 1847 after a prolonged period of low prices in combination with this realisation dictated that no reduction in sheep flocks would be undertaken.

Also, many of the northern squatters either resided in Sydney, caring little for the rigours of life in the bush, and taking relatively frequent journeys "home" to

¹⁴² *loc.cit.*

¹⁴³ The squatting districts of Wide Bay, Maranoa, Burnett and the county of Stanley have not been included in this table as the figures on sheep numbers for these districts are incomplete.

England, suggesting two areas where the squatters could have instituted some measures of economy, which may have impacted on their need to import Chinese labourers. The economic straits to which the squatters had been reduced by the effects of the dearth of labour on the profitable operation of the station, and the economies they practiced to alleviate the financial pressures, is illustrated perfectly in the following description of M. H. Marsh's New England station of "Salisbury Court":

*The present establishment affords evidence of affluence, good taste, and mental cultivation. An excellent library is not the least of luxuries in so lonely and distant a dwelling-place. Mr Marsh and his amiable lady do not usually confine themselves to the bush the entire round of the year. At the commencement of winter the transit van is put into requisition, and the family migrates in a body to the milder and gayer habitat of Sydney.*¹⁴⁴

No other subscribers to the debate were so disloyal as "An Australian" as to suggest that the squatters could exist profitably without Chinese labour. The majority of letters subscribed to the *Maitland Mercury* were supportive of the squatters, although most, as became customary within the debate, regretted the employment of Chinese labour. The first of these letters took issue with M^CCormack who "An Observer" believed had by insinuating that the squatters were avaricious and '...perfectly careless of the of the spiritual welfare of the colony', imputed '...improper conduct to so valuable and respectable a class as the squatters...'.¹⁴⁵ To this letter writer, the squatters '...are fully admitted to be the bulwark of the country, and are to a considerable extent, the salvation of the colony, entitled to the respect and sympathy from all classes.'¹⁴⁶ Again the spectre of exile labour was raised in the context that it was the denial of one which led to the importation of the other:

*...it is the colonists themselves who are to blame for all the evils these foreigners may bring upon our land. The parents government proposed a class of labour that would have saved the colony, which was by seventy per cent of the population rejected, and the rejection of the one was the birth of the other*¹⁴⁷

One subscriber to the debate "Y. Q." argued that being '...neither a laborer, nor an employer of labor...', they wished to inject a measure of dispassion and impartiality into the discussion.¹⁴⁸ On the question of the squatters as a political group the author had nothing to say reserving all comments to the Chinese labourers themselves. Unlike many letters on the Chinese that date from this time, Y. Q. was openly commendatory of the Chinese and argued that when Singapore and Manila had

144 "The Member for New England at Home", *MBFP*, 9th November, 1852.

145 Original Correspondence, "Chinese Immigration", by "An Observer", *MM*, 24th March, 1852.

146 *loc. cit.*

147 *loc. cit.*

148 Original Correspondence, "Chinese Immigrants", by "Y. Q.", *MM*, 24th March, 1852.

gained so much from the useful and industrious natures of Chinese labourers, '...why should they not make good citizens and good servants here?'; citing as evidence an "establishment" whose proprietor had informed Y. Q. that '...they were the best working men he had...'.¹⁴⁹ The paganism and heathen ways of the Chinese is portrayed by Y. Q. as an advantage, rather than a reason for persecuting and rejecting them, as the importation of the Chinese provided '...opportunities of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and perhaps of Christianizing them...a more favourable opportunity of doing good never presented before.'¹⁵⁰

It is within the letter of Y. Q. that is again found the belief that the importation of Chinese labourers would raise the "intelligent European labourer" from the lowly status of only having their labour to sell to that of a small land-holder, as they would with the assistance of cheap Chinese labour, find their '...chances of success increased...'.¹⁵¹ This argument, combined with that which argued that Chinese labour was more suitable for employment in the hotter regions and in the cultivation of sugar and cotton was to become more prevalent as the debate over the importation of Chinese labourers continued. The 1841 Inquiry into Immigration first expressed the idea that '...occupations of a shepherd are so light and simple, that to employ therein the great bodily power of British labourers would be a misapplication of strength.'¹⁵² Gordon Sandemann utilised this argument to justify his earlier, and proposed importations of Asiatic labour stating that the character of European labourers would be improved as:

*It would make them more independent. If you introduce a class of people to engage in the common and despised (or distasteful, if the term may be more appropriate in some cases) occupation of shepherding, for it is now, more especially, an occupation despised or disliked by Europeans. You place the European in a better position for the development of his energies in a higher sphere.*¹⁵³

The overwhelming number of letters published for rather than against the squatters and the introduction of Chinese labourers defined the readership of the *Maitland Mercury*. The lack of any editorial prejudice towards these subjects until about 1853, can be conjectured to be a recognition on the part of the owners that survival depended upon not alienating the squatters, a situation that changed within a short period of time. By 1853 when the *Eleanor Lancaster* arrived in port the

149 *loc.cit.*

150 *loc.cit.*

151 *loc.cit.*

152 Petition from 206 Landholders and other Employers in the Colony of New South Wales, 20th July, 1841, *NSWLC V&P*, 1841, p. 19

153 Evidence of Gordon Sandemann, 29th August, 1854. Report from the Select Committee on Asiatic Labour, *NSWLC V&P*, 1854, Vol II, p. 7.

labouring interest was gaining in numbers and importance, politically and economically, with the squatting interest losing some of its power in this regard, making the *Maitland Mercury* more beholden to the working-man for its continued profitable existence than previously.

F(ii): THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS

A change in the debate can be detected during the middle of 1852, with the subject disappearing from the newspapers of the middle districts and only being a matter of concern in the Northern Districts. Two reasons for this change in focus may be presented. Firstly, the decrease in the number and rate at which Chinese labourers were imported after April 1852, with only three more ships arriving, and those in early 1853, reducing the visibility of the Chinese. It appears that as long as the labourers were arriving in Sydney and were therefore visible to those opposed to the importation of Chinese labourers, interest in this subject was maintained. Once importations ceased the subject was no longer of significant interest to warrant comment. The only time that the Chinese labourers made the newspapers of the Middle Districts after this date was through the reporting of Bench of Magistrate proceedings, and any commentary offered in conjunction with these reports was of the "we told you so" nature.

Secondly, the Chinese labourers were replaced in the newspapers by the debate over the form that the new Constitution was to take, early disagreement centring around whether both houses were to be elected. Wentworth chaired the Select Committee which formulated the draft Constitution that provided for an elected Assembly and an hereditary upper house, and presented the landed interests with the majority of the power, combined with a minimum amount of accountability. This draft was viewed by the anti-squatting interests as a more invidious attempt by the squatters to entrench themselves at the expense of the rest of society than the importation of Chinese labourers.¹⁵⁴

Within the Northern Districts the justification for importing Chinese labourers continued to revolve around the scarcity of labour and if exiles could not be obtained, Chinese labourers would continue to be imported and employed.¹⁵⁵ The squatters renewed and strengthened their calls for separation in order to protect their interests

¹⁵⁴ Wentworth's draft underwent major revisions through the intervention of public opinion, debates in the Legislative Council, and major changes made by the British government to the provisions: both houses were to be elected, and no peerage system was to be established to reward the "Bunyip Aristocracy" in New South Wales for services to the colony. J. B. Hirst, *The Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1988, pp. 32-45.

¹⁵⁵ "Public Meeting to Petition for Direct Immigration", *MBFP*, 11th March, 1852; Editorial, *MBFP*, 6th May, 1852; "The Means of Supplying Labour", *MBFP*, 13th May, 1852; Original Correspondence by "W. H. W.", *MBFP*, 3rd June, 1852.

from the government in Sydney which was described by one of the northern squatters as '...the worst and most aggressive form of centralization which has ever existed.'¹⁵⁶ The centralization of power so far in distance and ideology from the northern squatters was perceived as detrimental to the interests of this clique; placing the northern squatters in a subservient position;¹⁵⁷ absorbing the majority of any labour arriving; preventing the transportation of exiles; fighting to have the "waste lands" opened up; and establishing an '...antagonism between the Pastoral class,...and the heterogeneous mass of adventurers now assuming a distinct position as Diggers of gold.'¹⁵⁸ It was argued that separation of the Northern from the Middle Districts was the only way in which the former could remove itself from the stranglehold of Sydney, and obtain sufficient labour:

*In this emergency the only recourse seems to be, as regards these districts, in Exiles or Chinamen; and if the former are withheld, and free emigrants in sufficient numbers found to be unattainable, it is expected that "Chow Chows" will be brought in to supply the deficiency.*¹⁵⁹

With the spectre of further importations of Chinese labourers being constantly offered as a threat within the separation debate, the labourers did not disappear from the pages of the northern newspapers, the *Courier* and the *Free Press*. The former newspaper became more antagonistic towards the Chinese labourers, rather than just patronising, and increasingly dismissive of the intrinsicity of the squatters to the continued economic viability of the Northern Districts the stronger the squatters pushed their case for labour and separation.¹⁶⁰ The calls for the formation of a League to protect the "rights" of the squatters, and the establishment of a newspaper dedicated to promoting these rights and interests made by "A Burnett Squatter" were lampooned by the *Courier*¹⁶¹ an attitude which would not have been printed 12 months earlier.

One piece of "Original Correspondence" to the *Empire* arguing the cause of the squatters signed by "Index",¹⁶² ably describes the political leanings of the various newspapers, especially on the question of the squatting interest:

156 M. H. Marsh, *A Letter to the Colonists of Queensland*, Salisbury, Bennett, 1859.

157 Michael Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1965, p. 65.

158 "The Wool Grower and the Gold Digger", *MBFP*, 3rd May, 1853.

159 "The Reports Regarding Separation", *MBFP*, 15th April, 1852.

160 "The "Courier" and the "Squatters", *MBC*, 19th February, 1853; "Supply of Labour". *MBC*, 23rd April, 1853.

161 "A Liberal Squatter", *MBC*, 6th August, 1853.

162 As with all of the correspondence submitted to the various newspapers under non de plumes the identity of "Index" is unknown although a letter addressed to the editor of the *MBFP*, 30th August, 1853, signed with this non de plume and written as a resident of Drayton, may provide some indication that the author of both letters was the same person and that this person was a squatter on the Darling Downs.

...the Herald sallies forth, and in 'large emblazoned letter....' he publishes "Unlock the Waste Lands." Up gets the rising Empire, and thunders in the index rather strong and not overcourteous language- denouncing the whole system vica voce,...Thirdly, follows the King-street Advocate, who...is supremely indignant that the public lands, as the term is applied, should be held by a few thousand men, but he does not say who are to succeed: and we challenge the whole array to find any more competent than the present holders to make better use of the lands.

The Maitland Mercury, with prudential wisdom, won't speak out distinctly, as the editor knows right well who are his best subscribers, and their status. What are the views of Mr. Swan and the Moreton Bay Courier on this knotty question is not quite plain; but the Free Press talks clearly in favour of the squatters, and brings considerable ability to bear on the subject, and to support the cause of the almost defenceless.¹⁶³

A letter to the editor of the *Moreton Bay Free Press* expanded upon this argument by proposing that:

...a daily newspaper, be started in Sydney to watch over the squatter's interests and advocate his cause. We have seen that all the papers in the colony- with I believe only one exception, are against the squatters...¹⁶⁴

That this one exception was the *Moreton Bay Free Press* cannot be doubted, especially when editorials of that paper proudly stated that 'Regarding the pastoral interest as the strength and the stay of the colony, it is both our duty and our pleasure to advocate its cause.'¹⁶⁵ The "Burnett Squatter" cited above was to soon have his wish for a Sydney based paper that was on the side of the squatters fulfilled, with the *Free Press* reporting in July 1853 that a weekly paper '...devoted to the interests of the Squatters...'¹⁶⁶ called the *Leader* was to begin publication in Sydney.

A newspaper devoted to representing this section of society did commence publication in 1853-4 as promised under the editorship of H. E. Watts,¹⁶⁷ although under the title *The Englishman* with its avowed aims being:

...to advocate the rights of the Grazier community, as far as is compatible with justice and impartiality to defend the present system of tenure, under which Crown Lands are held, and which has contributed so much to the prosperity of the colony; and generally to act as the exponent of the opinions of the Pastoral class. On all public questions, the principles of the "Englishman" are to be liberal and independent, free from any bias of sect or party, and ever in

163 "The Squatters and the Waste Lands" *MBFP*, 28th June, 1853. Reprinted from the *Empire*.

164 Original Correspondence by "A Burnett Squatter", *MBFP*, 2nd August, 1853.

165 Editorial, *MBFP*, 22nd February, 1853.

166 *MBFP*, 12th July, 1853.

167 Henry Edward Watts had previously been involved in the publication of the *Moreton Bay Free Press* in partnership with A. S. Lyons until October 1852.

*accordance with the progressive spirit of the age, and the novel circumstance of a young country like New South Wales.*¹⁶⁸

When suggestions were made regarding the importation of Chinese labour in 1854 the *Courier* was unequivocal in its condemnation of any attempt made in this direction to ease the labour scarcity.¹⁶⁹ It must not be assumed however, that this newspaper had assumed an attitude towards the squatters or the cries of a labour shortage equivalent to that of the *Empire* or the earlier *People's Advocate*. The *Courier* recognised the lack of labour in the Northern Districts at the height of the gold-rush, but reminded those requiring labour that the experiment of Chinese labour '...has already been tried, with very questionable success', and offered the suggestions promoted by Dr Lang as an alternative.¹⁷⁰

The comparative conformity of interests in the Northern Districts which sprang from the fight for separation was to continue until the end of the 1850s. This allowed the *Free Press* to continue openly supporting the squatters and argue against the "Sydney League" comprised of a '...few worthless and unprincipled demagogues...'¹⁷¹ who stymied their attempts to acquire labour. The arguments of free trade and the importance of pastoralism to the success of the colony were invoked by the squatters that is, they should have the right to acquire labour from wherever it was available without encountering the "clogging trammels" imposed by those in Sydney with an interest to protect.¹⁷² Despite the statements issuing from the north that Chinese labourers would only be imported as a last resort, the 1854 moves to re-establish the trade indicates that the squatters had not given up completely on the idea of Chinese labour. One enterprising editorial even went as far as detailing the Chinese labour trade to the West Indies concluding:

*Were the Chinese population not exceedingly ignorant of what is going on in a country much nearer to them than the West Indies they would never dream of taking so long a voyage, and binding themselves to work for 1s a day.*¹⁷³

168 "Prospectus of the *Englishman*", *MBFP*, 19th July, 1853. Only three copies of the *Englishman* are known to still be in existence: Vol. 1 No. 13, Nov. 5, 1853; Vol. 1 No. 4, Sept. 2, 1854; August 26 1854. Due to the contradictory nature of these volume numbers and dates, the actual years that the *Englishman* began and ceased publication remain in doubt. It is unknown how long the *Englishman* remained in publication, yet it could not have been for any substantial length of time as R. B. Walker makes no reference to the paper, nor sadly to which members of squatting society were subscribers. All of which combined with the low rate of copy retention, tends to indicate that its lifespan was very short, and its impact on and distribution throughout colonial society limited.

169 "Immigration and Labour", *MBC* 20th May, 1854.

170 "Restart of Importation", *MBC*, 4th February, 1854.

171 "The Wool Grower and the Gold Digger", *MBFP*, 3rd May, 1853.

172 "Mr Lord and German Immigration", *MBFP*, 2nd August, 1853.

173 "More Labour", *MBFP*, 2nd May 1854.

Apart from the growth of northern towns, the growth of the labouring class is illustrated by the distancing of past employers of Chinese labour from any notions that the trade would be re-established. In 1854 in his battle against Dr J. D. Lang for the seat of Stanley, Arthur Hodgson fervently stated that he '...would never ask for another exile, or import another Chinaman as long as he lived.'¹⁷⁴ It was really quite inevitable that Hodgson would lose to Lang as the County of Stanley encompassed Brisbane where hostile attitudes towards the squatters predominated, and the importation of Chinese labourers was anathema. To many of the residents and electors of Stanley Hodgson epitomised the squatting ideal, an ideal at odds with the lives and aspirations of the majority of labourers. Even that most ardent employer of Indian and then Chinese labourers Gordon Sandemann, tempered his attitude towards the employment of the latter when standing for election for the Pastoral District of Clarence and Darling Downs. This seat had been vacated by the resignation of George F. Leslie and was subsequently won by Thomas Hood¹⁷⁵ despite Sandemann's declaration that his '...experience of Chinamen for pastoral employment would not induce me to encourage the introduction of that class of labor.'¹⁷⁶

That this "blue ribbon" squatting electorate could be lost by one of the leading members of the northern squattocracy, and to someone described as a "comparative stranger to these districts" whose interests lay within the middle districts,¹⁷⁷ illustrates perfectly the impact that population and urban growth had on the position of the squatters. This growth and the underlying antipathy led to all future plans for the importation of Chinese labourers to be abandoned, however such abandonment on the part of the northern squatters was not due to an increasing preference for free rather than "servile" labour. The renewed interest within the Northern Districts in 1853 in the importation of German labourers proves this point. The German labourers as with the Chinese could have their contracts enforced by the Master and Servants Act and most importantly for their isolation from the rest of the labouring population, "They do not know the language and cannot get mischief making."¹⁷⁸ The squatters primarily turned against Chinese labourers as the '...re-introduction of these men would, in my opinion, be impolitic, and unprofitable...' as the cost of their passage to the colony

174 "Hodgson's Address to Electors", *MBFP*, 8th August, 1854; Editorial, *MBFP*, 1st August, 1854.

175 Hood, in partnership with John Douglas purchased "Talgai" (64,000 acres) and "Tulburra" (48,000 acres) from George Gammie in 1854.

176 "To the Electors of the Pastoral Districts of Clarence and Darling Downs", *MBFP*, 30th January, 1855. A good overview of these elections and the growing rifts between town and country and within the ranks of the squatters can be found in M. French, *A Pastoral Romance*, Toowoomba, USQ Press, 1990, pp. 127-156.

177 "The Clarence and Downs Election", *MBC*, 24th March, 1855.

178 Evidence of M. H. Marsh, 9th July, 1852, Report from the Select Committee on Immigration, *NSWLC V&P*, 1852, Vol. II, p. 56.

had increased to £17 per head¹⁷⁹ through the impact of increased demand for labourers, and tighter control of the trade by British authorities in China.

While these debates and battles were continuing in the Legislature and the Fourth Estate on the questions of the propriety of importing Chinese labourers into the colony, and the position of the squatters in the economic and political sphere of the colony, the Chinese labourers laboured on. The work that the Chinese undertook and how their labours were received and manipulated by the law are the subjects of the next chapter.

¹⁷⁹ "To the Squatters in the Northern Districts" by Arthur Hodgson, *MBFP*, 7th March, 1854.