As with most of the people, who live near the Condamine River, Daniel accepts its vagaries as a part of life. "I guess it's got a natural personality. It changes within the seasons," he points out. "Generally if you come here and it's in the middle of a drought it doesn't look too good. But it's been a very good winter and I always try to keep it fairly lightly stocked along the river so that it's looked after a bit. It's good to know that you've got this much water so close. And I suppose at times, you know, it's not that convenient in a flood. The thing that amazes me about floods is that there is just so much water, day after day. We're sort of isolated, and you can't go anywhere for a few weeks, and day after day, just that sound, you can just hear the water gurgling, and hear it flowing. But it's just not the river, it's a flood."

"A lot of the people who haven't got a river are not affected at all and they can just carry on their life as normal, but when you live on the river and when a flood comes you have to know how high it's going to get and shift your cattle out to higher country. Things like that. So, it's always in the back of my mind, especially in the summer time. Like if I'm going away for a week or something, I'll always think: 'well I just hope there's not big rain before I go' ... It does have a fairly big impact upon your life, how you live your life, I think. I guess it becomes a part of your life."

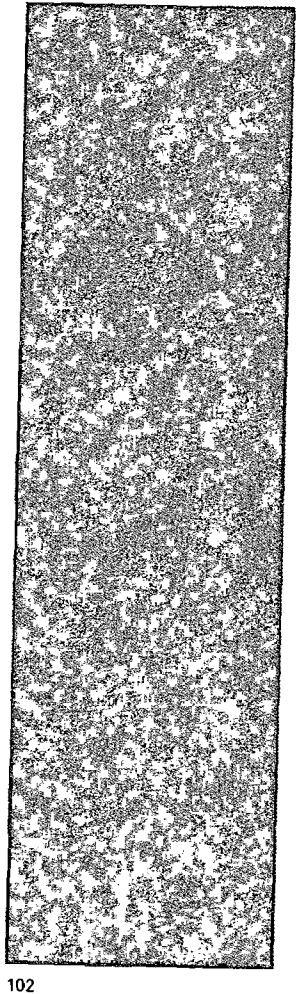
7 policy and practice

I come from the northern plains
Where girls and grass are scanty;
Where the creeks run dry or ten feet high,
And it's either drought or plenty.

So goes one verse from a nineteenth century Queensland droving ballad, 'The Overlander'. It is an interesting reminder that the collection of stories in this book with their affectionate insights into home life and childhoods spent in the Condamine catchment were no accident. Government and community support sustained the introduction and subsequent success of family farming on the Darling Downs.

The role of this last chapter is to put the oral history into a policy context so that the combination of factors that formed this environment can be understood. It looks firstly at the social reasons behind the determination to introduce farming on the Darling Downs. This vision was sustained for more than 100 years but had to overcome a series of commercial and environmental problems. Government leaders gave financial and political backing, and agricultural scientists helped to make family farms viable by developing modern farming systems.

This final chapter briefly reviews the technical advice and support that government departments disseminated to the farming community. Just as it seemed the vision was being realised, changing international trade relationships and new and difficult environmental problems began to undermine the foundations that had been laid so carefully. The chapter ends with the 1970s as the problems that that decade ushered in are still



very much part of contemporary debate. However it does draw some conclusions about how this history can help inform a new vision for the catchment.

The rejection of pastoralist dominance on the Darling Downs is a tale that has been often told.[1] Democratic movements in the 1850s began to agitate for land reform to break up the vast pastoral leases that underpinned the fortunes and pretensions of a select rural gentry and the harsh and isolated lives of their stockmen and shepherds. Radicals began to represent pastoralists as lazy monopolists whose use of the land was little more than that of the Indigenous clans whom they had usurped. If working the land gave moral justification of ownership, then only farmers had the right to claim ownership of Australian lands. Hard work, not income or birth, should define manhood and suffrage in the Australian colonies.[2]

Northern pastoralists viewed these radical movements with horror and began to lobby for a separate northern colony that they could be confident of controlling. Their fears were confirmed when New South Wales not only introduced manhood suffrage in 1858 but its new parliament also began to draft land legislation that would allow free selection over leased pastoral lands. Northern separation however was already in train and when Queensland became a colony in its own right, the pastoralists ensured their political influence over the new parliament was secure. The first few years of Queensland parliamentary politics would address their most pressing concerns as they successfully overturned manhood suffrage, fought over control and policy of the Native Police Force as the appropriation of indigenous lands continued to the north and west, and quarreled over land legislation.[3]

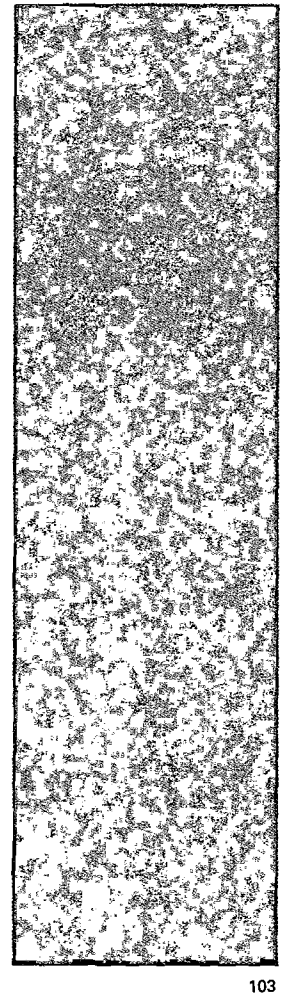
In the face of these pressures, the day 'when wheat shall grow on the Darling Downs' certainly must have seemed a distant dream for the many

migrants who were pinning their hopes on the new colony in the 1860s. The vision of family farms retained its powerful political symbolism in the face of this raw class politics; it stood for opposition to privilege, to monopolistic control over a crucial resource, for greater social equality and for democracy. Its power would continue to drive land reform in the nineteenth century and formed a central and defining plank of the Labor Party for more than fifty years. Indeed the Country Party also championed this agrarian dream when it formed two decades later.

Queensland historians have often pointed to the dominance of this agrarian ideology in Queensland politics in the twentieth century[4] but one aspect that has perhaps been neglected is the role of women in the pattern of development. Although nineteenth century politics repeatedly marginalised women, they were in fact central to its struggles. One of the reasons that men rejected pastoral dominance was because it doomed them to bachelorhood through poor wages and isolation, its deprivation so well expressed in the folk ballad, 'The Banks of the Condamine'.[5] While fencing reduced the need for lonely hutkeeping work, the seasonal nature of pastoralism continued to demand an itinerant male labour force.

The farming dream was thus also a dream of female companionship. It was a dream of women and children and family life. The families would mean towns and towns in turn would build community and bring services. Pastoral estates had been vast and self-contained creating a geography of distance and isolation for the workers. Although squatters themselves enjoyed a cosy social world, for their workers it represented physical and social alienation. The replacement of pastoralism by farming was not just a political and economic dream, it was a personal one too.

That was the dream but the question was how to make it work. As the selectors of the nineteenth century soon found, it was not enough to carve



The Banks of the Condamine

O hark! The dogs are barking, love, I can no longer stay,
The men have all gone mustering and it is nearly day;
And I must be off by the morning light before the sun doth shine,
To meet the Sydney shearers on the banks of the Condamine.

O Willie, dearest Willie, I'll go along with you,
I'll cut off all my auburn fringe and be a shearer, too;
I'll cook and count your tally, love, while ringer you will shine;
And I'll wash your greasy moleskins on the banks of the Condamine.

O Nancy, dearest Nancy, with me you cannot go,
The squatters have given orders, love, no woman should do so,
Your delicate constitution is not equal unto mine,
To stand the constant tigering on the banks of the Condamine.

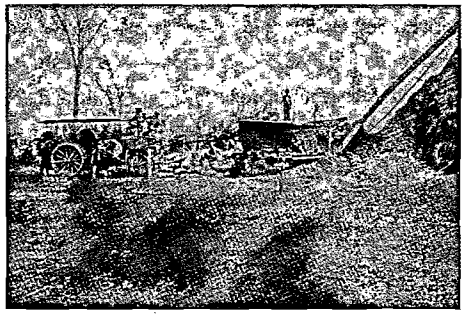
O Willie, dearest Willie, then stay at home with me,
We'll take up a selection and a farmer's wife I'll be,
I'll help you husk the corn, love, I'll cook your meals so fine,
You'll forget the ram-stag mutton on the banks of the Condamine.

O Nancy, dearest Nancy, please do not hold me back,
Down there the boys are waiting, and I must be on the track,
So here's a good-bye kiss, love, back home I will incline
When we've shorn the last of the jumbucks on the banks
of the Condamine.

ANON.

up the pastoral runs into 80, 160 or even 320 acre blocks. Even farming the rich floodplains of the Condamine could not sustain a family if they had no income while they awaited the harvest or if parrots or kangaroos or drought or flood destroyed the crop. It was clear that the selection system would never work until a less uncertain and inexpensive cash crop was found and a minimum farm size to carry on these activities could be established. The solution was the promotion of dairying which would bring in a regular income and the reduction of land prices for those on holdings of less than 160 acres which were of doubtful economic viability.[6]

In the 1870s the Queensland government imposed a tariff on New South Wales butter and cheese.[7] It also established a Department of Agriculture in 1887 to conduct research into and promotion of viable commercial crops. The department instigated a travelling horse-drawn dairy plant to train farmers and introduced them to new equipment



Cereal threshing, 1932
Courtesy: Nicholls Family

and techniques.[8] Hence the prominence of dairying in the oral history of the catchment from Killarney to Chinchilla. Within three decades cattle and horse herds across the basin had increased many times over and in turn were outstripped by the grain production required to feed them. By World War One the region was exporting grain.[9] Wheat *was* growing on the Darling Downs.

Cultivation had the capacity to cause significant harm to the river through siltation and changes to the floodplain. However the slow pace of agricultural expansion softened the impact of this more intensive use of the land. Horse-drawn ploughs and harvesters required heavy manual labour and imposed a physical limit on the number of acres that one farmer could sow and reap in a season. Hills and depressions could not be leveled without many hours of hard work and so natural features acted as boundaries to tilled fields.

Government land legislation did however require selectors to carry out 'improvements' before freeholding could be approved. Aware of the problems the small holders faced on the Condamine, Queensland legislators set very low requirements on the proportion of selections to be cultivated and eventually settled for proof of residence and a broad

"We used to plough with eight horses and a three furrow plough. I could do my four acres every day between milkings."

Bob Much

"Before us were the undulating open Darling Downs ... In spring time, when they are green, they may perhaps be prairie-like, and beautiful to the eye of the farmer, but as I saw them with their miles of wire fencing, they were not so interesting as the desert of Arabia."

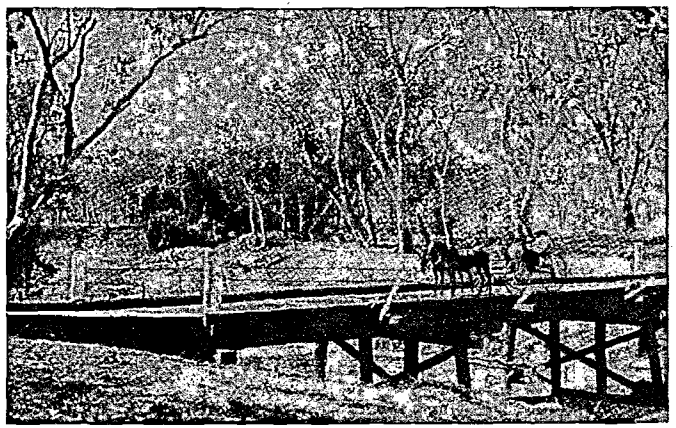
Mark Kershaw, ca 1885, cited in Maurice French, *Travellers in a Landscape*, p. 228

definition of what constituted 'improvements'. As most selectors survived on a combination of grazing and dairying, fencing became the standard by which the officers of the Lands Department evaluated improvements.[10]

An immense number of trees were felled to meet the demand for fencing in the nineteenth century. As well as selectors felling for their own use the forested uplands of the catchment sustained over 120 sawmills in the period up to the 1940s.[11]

Public concern about depletion of the forest resource led to the introduction of the state's first forests and national parks legislation in 1906. Among the first national parks declared in the state were Cunningham's Gap and the Bunya Mountains. Both these national parks are sources for the Condamine; other unlogged crown lands in the headwaters were made state forest reserves and opened to licensed selective logging under the legislation.

Yandilla Bridge, 1910. Courtesy: June Hood



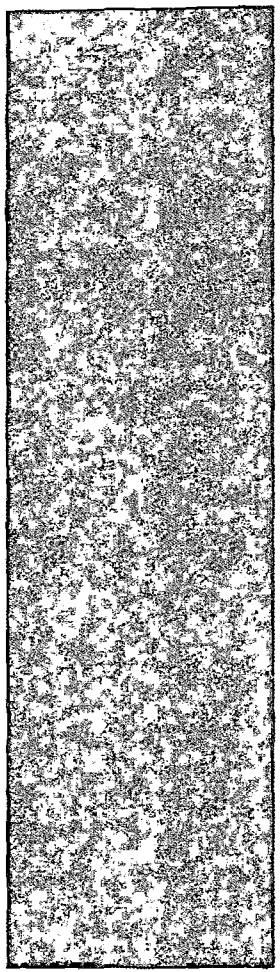
The remnant forest cover of the steepest lands of the catchment was crucial, as tree-clearing and increasing stock numbers became the measures of successful farming on the lower gradients and floodplain. On the stony ridges stock caused sheet erosion while on the floodplain they trampled protective river vegetation and damaged creek banks.

Population increases in the 1870s and 1880s caused the first pollution crisis in the catchment. Toowoomba had been established on a wetland system that was part of the Gowrie Creek sub-catchment. Urban residents set about chopping down trees to plant orchards causing the water table to rise and the swampy ground spread. The much-maligned "swamp" soon crossed roadways that had been dry land twenty years earlier. The removal of marshland vegetation had already disturbed the filtration of fresh water through the wetland and now the thoroughfare of horses and carriage wheels added to the problem. Residents began to complain of the smell. There was also the problem of the slaughterhouses and tanneries disposing of animal refuse straight into the creek.

Toowoomba had the advantage of a plentiful supply of freshwater and numerous wells drew on the aquifers that also fed the wetlands. Problems arose when residents dug cesspits in their backyards for their privvies. In heavy downpours it was not uncommon for these to overflow but an even greater problem was human sewage contaminating the groundwater supplies. The result was a series of typhoid epidemics in the 1870s and 1880s from the polluted water supply. This public health crisis forced the first engineering solution to the catchment's hydrology; civil engineers drained the swamps and re-channeled sections of Gowrie Creek.[12] Sewerage systems were also introduced, although urban and industrial pollution of Gowrie Creek would continue to be a problem for those living downstream from Toowoomba.

"The first settlers [in Warwick] had to dip their drinking water from the Condamine by buckets. At that stage spouting was not used on any buildings, most of the shingles being hardwood, which discoloured the water. ...With the arrival of the Railway on January 31, 1871, galvanised iron and spouting became available."

Thomas Hall, *The Early History of Warwick District*, pp. 146–47.



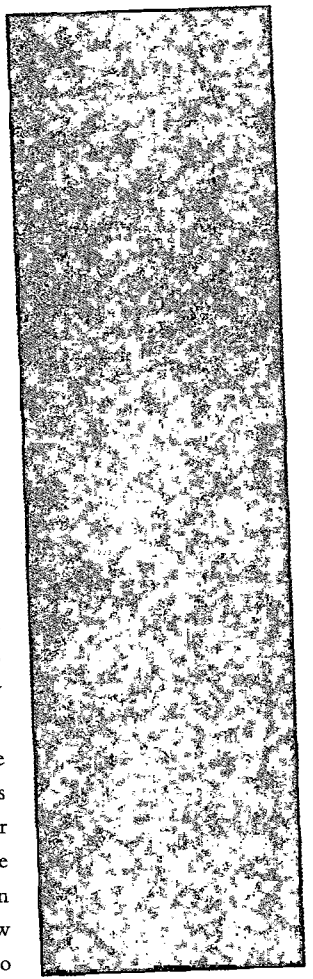
The towns had another important effect on the hydrology of the basin. As hard road surfaces and hundreds of iron and tin roofs replaced the former floodplain vegetation the run-off flowed to the main river channels at a far greater rate. The result was an increase in flash flooding which became a common experience in the main towns.

While Toowoomba was visited by 'plagues', other subsections of the catchment had their own 'pestilence' to deal with. On the lighter soils of the southwestern Darling Downs pastures were degraded by rabbits which had followed the Darling River north from the western lands of New South Wales. It was clear that individual landholders could do little to halt the rabbit invasion. Queensland extended the New South Wales and South Australian rabbit fences and the state's Central Rabbit Board made an annual provision of £10,000 just to maintain the rabbit fences. They were of limited use. Nothing it seemed could halt the rabbits until the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Organisation released the deadly rabbit virus, myxomatosis, in 1950.

Although the heavier soils of the Upper Condamine were less susceptible to rabbit infestations, another new pest, various forms of cactus commonly known as prickly pear, soon halted selector expansion in the brigalow country. As wool prices rose in the years before World War One there were attempts at establishing family grazing farms based on a large perpetual lease-holding capable of providing a family with a 'living area' – a social equity concept that R.L. Heathcote suggests mirrored the idea of the basic wage.[13] Settlers cut, burnt and poisoned the pear but could not match the rate of infestation. By 1900 settlers were walking off runs and selections which could not be grazed because of the density of pear coverage. In 1910 it was declared a noxious weed and the following year the Queensland government established a Board of Advice on Prickly Pear Destruction. Although the government offered land rewards, a viable method of controlling the cactus was beyond the means of selectors.

In 1920 the Commonwealth Prickly Pear Board released the moth larvae, *Cactoblastis cactorum*, which burrowed into the prickly pear flesh with spectacular results. In the mid-1920s, a concerted government campaign to distribute the larvae via the post successfully spread the cactoblastis moth throughout the catchment.[14] The advantage of cactoblastis was that the mature moth flew in search of a new host so that it was self-perpetuating. Within ten years the pear was under control and the government was re-leasing abandoned pear selections. The state's Prickly Pear Commission was still operating in 1950 when it reported that cactoblastis was effectively controlling cactus in most areas. However, tiger pear infestations in Warwick, Toowoomba and Dalby regions required distribution of the Argentine cochineal insect that had to be moved by hand. Rather than wait for the insects to control regrowth many landholders preferred to use poisons to clear, a practice supported by the Prickly Pear Commission which sold arsenic pentoxide and equipment to apply it. The Biological Section of the Commission was also conducting research to control Noogoora Burr and woody weeds using new herbicides such as 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T which it also made available to primary producers.[15]

The Prickly Pear Commission was one of a number of bodies that the state government had appointed to manage rural development. As early as the 1880s the Queensland government had identified unreliable water supply as an obstacle to more intensive agriculture. In 1889 the government commissioned engineering reports on potential irrigation schemes for the Warrego, Barwon-Macintyre-Severn from below Goondiwindi to Texas and the Balonne-Condamine from St George to



Introduction of New Herbicides, 1950

The improved position in regard to the supply of arsenic pentoxide, as mentioned in the last report, has been maintained throughout the year, and the Commission was enabled to meet all landholders' orders promptly... As at 30th June, 1950, there were no unfulfilled orders on hand. This is a great improvement over the position that prevailed during recent years when stocks were most difficult to obtain...

Sales have fallen off to some extent, due to the advent of various hormone weedicides now on the market...

Experiments are being conducted with a new hormone weedkiller, known as 2,4,5-T, which is being used extensively to destroy blackberry in the Southern States, and is reputed to be more effective against woody plants than the 2,4-D preparations...

Hormones have been made available to landowners and Local Authorities at cost price, railage free, for the destruction of noxious plants.

Distribution of arsenic pentoxide:

1950	111 tons
1949	66 tons
1948	113 tons
1947	72 tons 6cwt

Annual Report of the Prickly-pear Land Commission, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, volume 2, 1950-51, pp. 113-114.

Warwick. The engineer praised the silt-bearing floods of the Condamine as being 'as good as the Nile waters' but favoured development of the Dawson in central Queensland.[16]

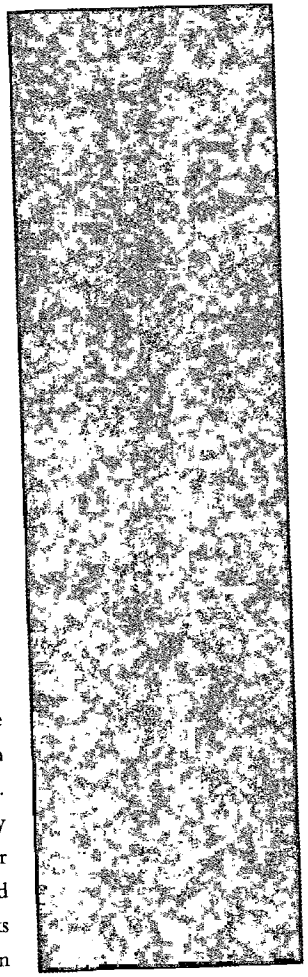
The Dawson Scheme was underway in the 1920s but otherwise water development in the south of the state was slow. Irrigation and water supply were the responsibility of the Lands Department and most of its works in the 1930s were taken up with towns, sewerage and stock route supplies. In 1946 the State Bureau of Investigation made a recommendation to the government that a separate agency be appointed with responsibility for the expansion of irrigation programs across the state. Premier Ned Hanlon embraced the idea and established the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. In 1948 he travelled out to St George for the opening ceremony to mark the commencement of the Jack Taylor Weir on the Balonne. Although irrigation from the weir was to be small – 1,200 acres to provide improved pasture for a mere twenty farms – detonating the first explosive gave the Premier an opportunity to articulate his vision of rural development:

> This task is only a part of the giant scheme that is to be brought into operation following the formation of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission... When the government realised how important was this task of supplying water to our soil, it was thought desirable to appoint an Irrigation Commissioner, directly responsible to a Minister, so that he could have the same authority and access to the government as an Under Secretary or Commissioner for Railways... The task is a survey of the whole of the water resources of the State and the planning of major storages to supply weirs and water supply works for irrigation and other purposes. When the Government took this step of forming the Irrigation Commission, it took one of the major steps in the history of the development of Queensland.[17]

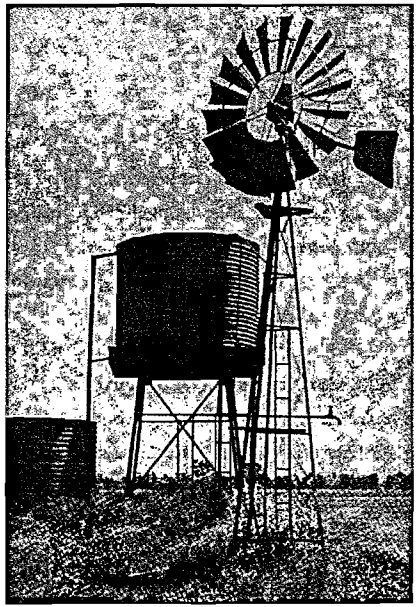
Despite the ambitious plans the department struggled to appoint qualified staff in the postwar years when demands for engineers were high. In 1947 the equivalent government agency in Victoria employed over 1,000 officers, in New South Wales over 600 staff, while in Queensland the Commission made do with 142 officers and only eight qualified engineers. These figures reflect the greater pace of irrigation development in the southern states.

Despite ambitious political backing, the Commission of Irrigation and Water Supply was cautious, recognising the flat nature of the Queensland terrain west of the Divide, the lack of water storage sites and problems of siltation and water logging which had already been identified overseas. Nonetheless the government research stations at Gatton, Ayr and Theodore pressed ahead with their research into irrigable crops. Their greatest successes were with pastures. Cotton trials in the Lockyer proved to be disastrous because of pests, but wheat, oats, linseed and sorghum were recommended to farmers with access to irrigation.[18]

In 1948, only 4,460 acres were under irrigation on the Downs and the largest water user was tobacco followed by fodder. Over the next seventeen years irrigated land on the Darling Downs increased four-fold. Government helped to push the expansion with a new Farm Advisory Service in 1958. The service provided technical and financial assistance for water supply development on farms. Under the scheme the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission prepared designs and plans for dams, ring tanks and weirs, pumping equipment, bores, sprinkler and surface irrigation



systems and drainage proposals for individual farms.[19] Government research also assisted this expansion through its support for agricultural science which developed new strains of wheat which could be sown on the black soils of the lower Condamine. Without any sizeable storages on the Condamine, growers took the Commission's advice and developed their own on-site supplies. Those on river and creek frontages pumped directly from the stream while other irrigators were able to develop their groundwater supplies thanks to the Condamine's extensive aquifer system. The value of farm production rose considerably. As the Irrigation and



A common feature of the catchment. Courtesy: Department of Natural Resources and Mines

Storages on the Condamine

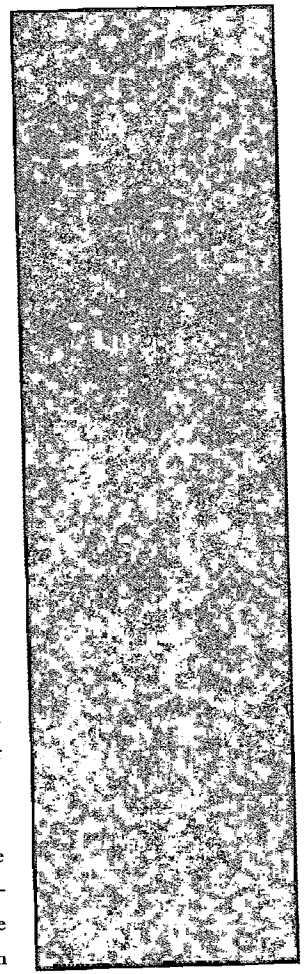
Weir/Storage	Date of Construction	Capacity	Purpose
Connolly Dam	1927	2810 ML	Warwick water supply
Allora Weir	1928		Allora water supply
Warra Weir	Pre 1939	120 ML	Warra water supply
Surat Weir	1940	430 ML	Surat water supply
Cooby Creek Dam	1942	23100 ML	Toowoomba water supply
Tipton Weir	1945 (approx)	120 ML	
Cecil Plains Weir	1947	1040 ML	
Chinchilla Town Weir	1955	580 ML	Chinchilla water supply
Louden Weir	1958	320 ML	Dalby water supply
Leslie Dam Stage 1	1965	47100 ML	Town water supply and irrigation
Chinchilla Weir	1973	9780 ML	
Dogwood Creek Weir	1980	255 ML	Miles water supply
Talgai Weir	1980	640 ML	
Lemontree Weir	1980	270 ML	
Leslie Dam Stage 2	1985	106250 ML	
Yarramalong Weir	1989	390 ML	

Queensland Water Resources Commission

Water Supply Commission repeatedly emphasised in its annual reports, irrigated produce was far more valuable than other rural production.

The Commission's attitude to exploitation of the groundwater was ambivalent. For example, as early as 1949 it had warned that groundwater supplies were finite.

> It is commonly thought that underground waters are independent of surface supplies. This is incorrect. In any river basin there is one fund of water – surface and underground – and the underground resources can only be safely utilised to the extent that they are replenished by recharge from

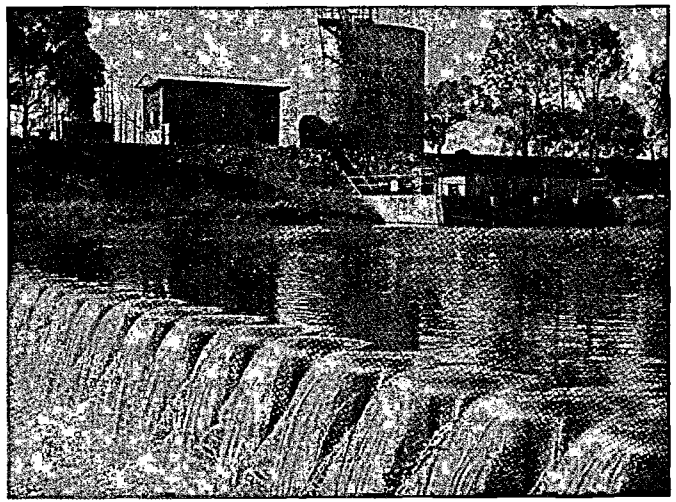


surface supplies – viz., streams and rainfall. Striking evidence of this basic hydrological fact has been found from the investigations made in the Lockyer Valley and the Burdekin and Pioneer deltas.

Experience in other countries has shown the disastrous consequences that follow development beyond the capacity of the underground resources and care must be taken to ensure that such conditions cannot occur here.[20]

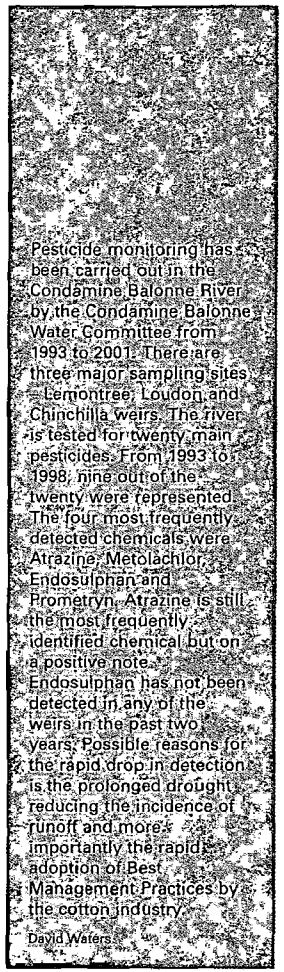
Yet ten years later its report noted that "on many streams, the licensed demand exceeds the available supply during the early summer, when demand is highest and supply lowest." The Commission's solution was to urge landowners to construct ring tanks to trap the very overland flows that recharge the underground aquifers.[21]

Yarramalong Weir. Courtesy: Department of Natural Resources and Mines



By 1965 the total area under irrigation on the Downs had increased to 16,819 acres and fodder and improved pastures together accounted for more than fifty percent of irrigated production.[22] The supply of either ground or surface water for irrigation, however, had reached its limit. In that year the first stage of the Leslie Dam was completed and so private irrigation along Sandy Creek and on the Condamine between Sandy Creek and Cecil Plains Weir was secured. The dam also provided an assured water supply for the town of Warwick. Within nine months its total waters had been allocated before engineering investigations to divert flows into the North Branch of the Upper Condamine had even been completed.[23]

In the words of the Environmental Impact Study for Stage II of the Leslie Dam, irrigation adjacent to the Condamine increased 'spectacularly' between 1965 and 1970.[24] Groundwater supplies had been in decline since January 1966. The environmental impact study claimed that groundwater was being mined at more than four times the rate of its natural recharge. Even flooding across the Darling Downs in 1971 had failed to replenish the aquifers.[25] The expansion of the previous seven years marked a shift from dryland grain production to irrigated crops including cotton. By 1971 fodder and improved pasture represented less than ten percent of irrigated production in the shires of Pittsworth, Millmerran, Jondaryan and Wambo, while cereals and cotton comprised more than 80 percent.[26] The value of this production was high. According to the Commission's figures, irrigation areas constituted less than 0.1 percent of the state's rural lands but irrigated production accounted for 15.9 percent of rural production or $115.6 million out of $723.5 million in 1972 dollar values.[27] The second stage expansion of the Leslie Dam was required to maintain valuable production. On the Condamine, government storages supported pre-existing private development of water resources.



Pesticide monitoring has been carried out in the Condamine Balonne River by the Condamine Balonne Water Committee from 1993 to 2001. There are three major sampling sites, Lemontree, Loudon and Chinchilla weirs. The river is tested for twenty main pesticides. From 1993 to 1998, nine out of the twenty were represented. The four most frequently detected chemicals were Atrazine, Metolachlor, Endosulphan and Prometryn. Atrazine is still the most frequently identified chemical but on a positive note, Endosulphan has not been detected in any of the weirs in the past two years. Possible reasons for the rapid drop in detection is the prolonged drought, reducing the incidence of runoff and more importantly the rapid adoption of Best Management Practices by the cotton industry.

David Waters

This seems an apt year to finish this history. By 1972 the family farm ideal had come to fruition. On the Darling Downs country towns were providing the schools and medical services dreamed of by the democratic visionaries of the nineteenth century. Through government support, economically viable farming had become a reality. Scientific interventions had overcome threats of inappropriate species, climate and even, it seemed, hydrology to establish a modern system of agriculture on the Condamine. In 1974, F.B. Haigh died; he had been Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply for nineteen of the Commission's twenty-seven year history. The tributes to him echoed the language of nineteenth century pioneering. Premier Bjelke-Petersen said that "Mr Haigh, more than any other man, could be described as the person who liberated much of Queensland from the threat of drought."[28] The state's rivers were still seen as resources to be overcome, to be dominated and controlled just as the land had been in the nineteenth century.

In the next few years the certainties which had driven these social, political and economic goals would fall apart. Britain joined the Common Market, now known as the European Union, and new markets with new tastes and demands had to be found. The new agricultural technology cleared, ploughed and leveled new terrain with a speed that a man with horses and plough in the 1920s or 1930s could never have contemplated. The Condamine's proximity to the Port of Brisbane – a gateway to Asian markets – fuelled intensive animal production rather than traditional grazing. Earthmovers enabled harvesting of water at a new scale and chemicals that had been in such short supply after World War Two were distributed with largesse. Erosion and toxic residues threw up new resource problems. Finally in the 1990s governments shunned their century-old obligation to build community and instead redefined their role as enforcing market competition even in areas of life where the market had not previously existed. Whereas for more than a century there had been an agreed social and moral vision for the catchment, economic, physical and political factors now seemed to defeat it.

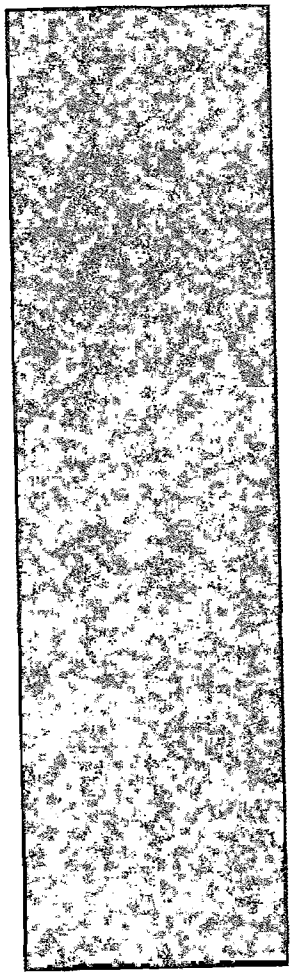
Where does that leave the management of the river?

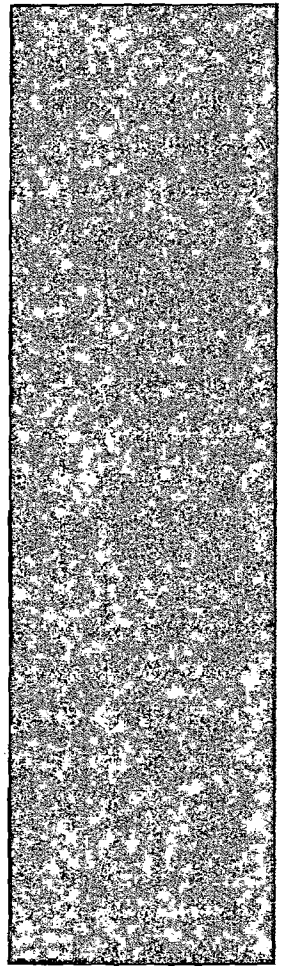
The physical data on the river's flow, turbidity, faecal and residue levels are assiduously recorded by a number of organisations such as the Condamine-Balonne Water Committee. High levels of some pollutants appear to be declining, but the issue of water quality remains a pressing concern, with the Condamine-Balonne identified as a priority catchment for the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. Various 'interest groups' staunchly argue for their respective concerns. Irrigators, government officers, scientists, indigenous representatives and environmentalists frequently have opportunities to represent their views, publicly and in official forums.

The river has a value beyond its physical character and is more than just the possession of its respected interests.

We need to appreciate its historical, recreational and natural values if we are to move towards a new shared vision for the catchment. There are no easy answers and it is not the role of this brief history to offer any. What we hope this project has achieved is a better insight into the diverse character of the river and the personal experience of those who have lived closest to it.

From its beginnings at The Head to the juncture where it becomes the Balonne, the Condamine performs many roles. It is a site of scenic relaxation, a home for fish, birds and invertebrates, a children's playground, a source of drinking water for towns, a cultural artefact, an outlet for treated waste water, a repository of valuable displaced soils and a physical





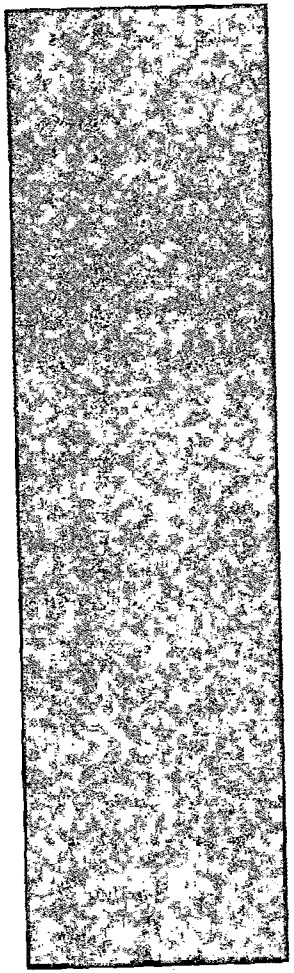
resource for agriculture. These diverse characteristics now come into potential conflict. Debates about how best to manage the Condamine basin, however, have been an integral part of its European history. Government policy makers of the late nineteenth century wrestled with the optimum size and use of *land* holdings to meet the goal of *economically* sustainable farms. In the twenty-first century political debates look likely to revolve around the optimum size and use of *water* entitlements to guarantee *ecologically* and *financially* sustainable agriculture.

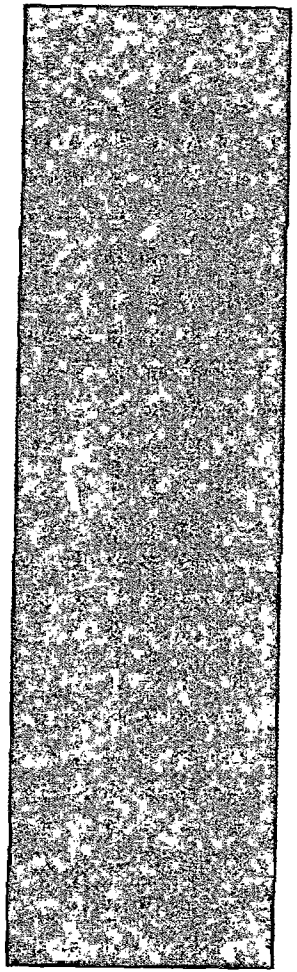
Like the generations who lived along its banks and streams pre- and post-European arrival, we need a way forward that will preserve the resource while guaranteeing social and economic security. Such a goal may seem idealistic but the Condamine River has been a place of dreaming and romantic visions throughout its human history. For the sake of the river and the communities who live within its catchment, we need a new vision for the twenty-first century that melds economic and ecological criteria with much older values of community and aesthetic enjoyment.

notes

Introducing the Condamine and its oral history

1. WAMP is the abbreviation for Water Allocation Management Plans; *E.coli* are bacteria from human and animal faecal matter. The amount of sediment in the water, which affects the river's muddy appearance or turbidity, and *E.coli* are regularly measured.
2. See the research of Les and Eric Newbery in *The Camp at Dogwood Crossing: Miles 1878-1978*, Miles, n.p., 1978, pp. 91-94.
3. *Saddles, Sand Burr, Speech Nights and Software: A Collection of memories from 100 years of education in Cecil Plains*, Cecil Plains Q., Cecil Plains School Centenary Committee, 1998, p. 38.
4. *Saddles, Sand Burr, Speech Nights*, p. 40.
5. Barbara Allen & William Lynwood Montell, *From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research*, Nashville Tennessee, American Association for State and Local History, 1981, pp. 40-45.
6. Maurice French, *Conflict on the Condamine*, Toowoomba, Darling Downs Institute Press, 1989, p. 113 & p. 154 n. 89.
7. Duncan Waterson, *Squatter, Selector and Storekeeper*, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1968, p.124 n.117.
8. Jack Bennie, "White Settlement," in Gillian Scott (ed.), *Lake Broadwater: The Natural History of an Inland Lake and its Environs*, Dalby, Lake Broadwater Natural History Association, 1988, p. 335.
9. Bennie, "White Settlement" on pp. 335-38, gives an account of the loss and campaign to regain the lake as a public reserve.
10. M.J.Morwood, "The Archaeology of Art: Evacuations at Maidenwell and Gatton Shelters, S.E. Queensland," *Queensland Archaeological Research*, vol.3, 1986, pp. 88-132.





11. Bob Dansie, *A Short History of Gowrie Creek*, Toowoomba, Toowoomba City Council, 1998, p.2; M.Wilson & H. Hall, "The Aborigines" in *Lake Broadwater*, p. 325; J.G. Steele, *Aboriginal Pathways in Southeast Queensland and the Richmond River*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1984, pp. 42-44.
12. Archibald Meston cited in Dansie, *Gowrie Creek*, p.2.
13. A.B. & J.W. Cribb, *Wild Food in Australia*, Sydney, Fontana/Collins, 1982 (rev.ed.) pp. 71-72; J. Cribb "Aboriginal Uses of Plants" in *Lake Broadwater*, pp. 329-30.
14. Wilson & Hall in *Lake Broadwater*, p. 325.
15. Thomas Hall, *A Short History of the Downs Blacks known as "The Blucher Tribe"*, Warwick, n.d. [ca 1922.], pp.43-44.
16. Wilson & Hall, *Lake Broadwater*, pp. 319-22.
17. Steele, *Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 43.
18. Hall, *A Short History*, pp.39-41.
19. Steele, *Aboriginal Pathways*, pp. 43-44; Hazel McKellar, *Matya-Mundu: A History of the Aboriginal People of South West Queensland*, Cunnamulla, Cunnamulla Australian Native Welfare Association, 1984; Pamela Lukin Watson, *Frontier Lands and Pioneer Legends: How Pastoralism gained Karuwali Land*, St Leonards NSW, Allen & Unwin, 1998, pp. 49-51.
20. Wilson & Hall, *Lake Broadwater*, p. 319; Cribb, *Lake Broadwater*, pp. 329-39.

1 The Head

1. Maurice French, *Explorations in Frontier History: Darling Downs, 1840-1860*, Toowoomba, University of Southern Queensland Press, 1997, pp. 93-102.
2. Joseph McKey, *Dawn over the Darling Downs*, Warwick, Warwick Newspapers, 1977, p. 126.
3. The role of the Tick Board was to prevent the spread of cattle ticks which are largely confined to coastal areas.

2 Globe Farm

1. See Maurice French's comprehensive examination of the histories of the "Darkey Flat Massacre" in *Explorations in Frontier History*, pp. 23-42.
2. Jan Ward-Brown (ed.) *Rosenthal: Historic Shire 1889-1989*, Warwick, Rosenthal Shire Council, 1989, p. 60.

5 Apsley Meadow

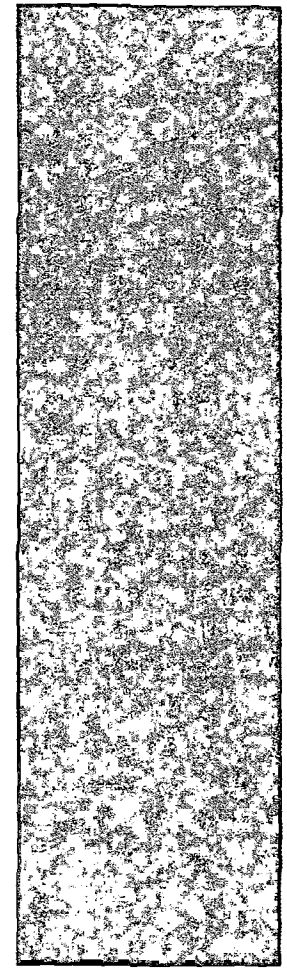
1. Maurice French, *Conflict on the Condamine: Aborigines and the European Invasion*, Toowoomba, Darling Downs Institute Press, 1989, p. 109.
2. Ludwig Leichhardt, *Journal of an Overland Expedition in Australia from Moreton Bay to Port Essington ...*, London, T & W Boone, 1847, p. 4.

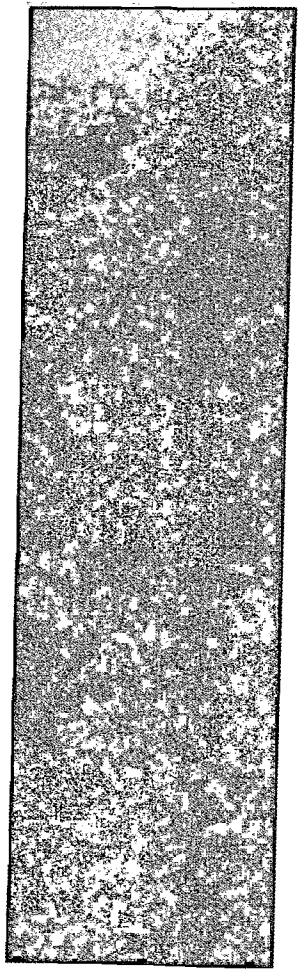
6 Riverlea

1. Kathleen Emmerson, *A History of Condamine*, Chinchilla, Chinchilla Newspaper, 1963, pp. 8, 10.

7 Policy and Practice

1. The most important sources are D. B. Waterson, *Squatter, Selector, and Storekeeper: A History of the Darling Downs, 1859-93*, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1968; Maurice French, *Pubs, Ploughs and 'Peculiar People': Towns, Farms and Social Life*, Toowoomba, University of Southern Queensland Press, 1992.
2. Stuart Macintyre discusses the rhetoric of the land debates in S. Macintyre, *Winners and Losers*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1985, pp.19-39.
3. G. P. Shaw, "The 'Tangled Web' of Separation," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 29 no.2, 1983, pp. 245-261; Libby Connors, "Did Queensland deserve separation? The failed prosecution of William Young", paper presented to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, July 2000, (unpublished).
4. Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s: A History of Queensland*, St Lucia,





University of Queensland Press, 1984, esp. pp. 55-65; Ross Johnston, *A Documentary History of Queensland*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1988.

5. This ballad was popular throughout the eastern colonies in the nineteenth century. In the south of the country it was sometimes known as 'On the Banks of the Riverine'.
6. Waterson, *Squatter, Selector*, pp. 117, 120-125.
7. Waterson, *Squatter, Selector*, p. 188 fn31 & pp. 190-91.
8. Rae Pennycuick, *The Cambooya Story 1840-1990*, Greenmount Qld, Cambooya Shire Council, 1991, p. 96; Doreen O'Sullivan, *Dairying History of the Darling Downs*, Toowoomba, University of Southern Queensland Press, 1992, p.37.
9. Maurice French & Duncan Waterson, *The Darling Downs: A Pictorial History 1850-1950*, Toowoomba, Darling Downs Institute Press, 1982, pp. 49-50.
10. Waterson, *Squatter, Selector*, pp. 116-20.
11. French & Waterson, *Pictorial History*, p. 88.
12. See Bob Dansie's interesting history of Gowrie Creek for more detail on this sub-catchment's problems in the nineteenth century. Bob Dansie, *A Short History of Gowrie Creek*, Toowoomba, Toowoomba City Council, 1998.
13. R.L. Heathcote, *Back of Bourke: A Study of Land Appraisal and Settlement in Semi-Arid Australia*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1965, pp.75-77.
14. Nell Macqueen (ed.) *Back Creek and Beyond: Millmerran's Story of Change 1881-1981*, Toowoomba, Darling Downs Institute Press, 1981, p. 102.
15. Annual Report of the Prickly Pear Land Commission, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1950-51, vol.2, pp.112-14.
16. J.M.Powell, *Plains of Promise, Rivers of Destiny: Water Management and the Development of Queensland 1824-1990*, Bowen Hills Q., Boolarong, 1991, p. 60.
17. Cited in Annual Report of the Commissioner of Irrigation and Water Supply, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, vol.1 1948-49, p.328.
18. Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Investigation under The Land and Water Resources Development Acts, 1943 to 1946 (for the year 1949), *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, vol.2 1950-51, p.189.
19. Annual Report of the Commissioner for Irrigation and Water Supply, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1959-60, volume 2 part 2, pp. 811-813.
20. Annual Report ... Irrigation and Water Supply, *QPP*, vol.1, 1948-1949, p. 349.
21. Annual Report ... Irrigation and Water Supply, *QPP*, vol.2, part 2, 1959-1960, p. 811.
22. Annual Report of the Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1966-1967, p. 1391.
23. Annual Report ... Irrigation and Water Supply, *QPP*, 1966-1967, p. 1387.
24. *Upper Condamine Irrigation Project: Leslie Dam Stage II: Environmental Impact Study*, Irrigation & Water Supply Commission, Brisbane, 1972, p.2.
25. *Upper Condamine Irrigation Project*, pp. 2-3, 7.
26. *Upper Condamine Irrigation Project*, p. 8.
27. Annual Report Queensland Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1973-74, p.1907.
28. Eulogy for F. B. Haigh, John Oxley Library.