

SELECTORS AND SWAGMEN

Early story-tellers for the North Queensland Register seem to have been more interested in the small-holder or selector than in the gentleman squatter. Unlike popular novelists and script-writers now, they did not encourage fantasies about cattle empires, but re-created an actual life-style, and it is from this that meaning emerges: from the people who fought the land, and the land which shaped the people. The life was strenuous and austere, but humour is a feature of the stories and poems in this section, except for "McPhie's Bore."

The swaggies were an almost inevitable complement to the selectors. Lazy and sly where the selectors were battlers, and parasitic where the selectors were independent, their peripatetic profession, whether real or imaginary, provided an observation post for commenting upon most aspects of life in the region.