

# Charles Lane Poole in the transition from Empire

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ABSTRACT: Charles Edward Lane Poole (1885-1970) was a true servant of an Empire that ended. His life was swept up in its transition from power to memory. His career took him from Ireland through France, the Cape, the Transvaal, Sierra Leone, Western Australia, Papua and New Guinea, until the Australian Government made him its Inspector-General of Forests in 1927 and head of its new Forestry Bureau and School. Lane Poole's intelligence, energy, commitment to a policy of state forestry, and contributions to forest science gained him the respect of his professional peers across the world. However, his temper, contempt for foresters without his level of professional training and his political naïveté marred his career. The paper examines the extent to which the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau and the Australian Forestry School under his direction 'acclimatised' an imperial forestry to Australia, and how a 'vernacular' forestry related to it.

## 1 HABITS OF MIND

When Charles Edward Lane Poole was born in England in 1885, the British Empire was parading across the world and its distant Australian domains were thriving, confident, self-governing colonies, predominantly white and loyal to the Crown, yet already sounding their own voice. When he died in Sydney in 1970, the Empire had ended in decolonisation and Australia was a busy, industrialising nation that, while it welcomed the British Royal family, looked to the United States for security and investment, and to Japan for trade. His world had changed.

'Imperialism was more than a set of economic, political and military phenomena, it was a habit of mind, a dominant idea of European world supremacy which had widespread intellectual, cultural and technical expressions', as Mackenzie (1988, p. ix) has written. But although its political end was decisive, its other expressions changed more slowly, were swept up in wider changes, were irreversible, lingered on, or were retained. Habits of mind, though, are as much individual and familial as they are constructs of their time and place. They too remained or changed according to personality or circumstance. Lane Poole was a man with strong, firmly held principles and an unwavering belief in the importance of science. In a dark hour of World War II, he was to write that 'science ... alone can pull humanity back from the brink and ... lead to higher evolution' (Lane Poole 1941). Such habits of mind set his place in forestry during the transition from Empire.

## 2 FAMILY AND EDUCATION

Charles Lane Poole was born into an intellectual and widely travelled family. His paternal grandfather, Edward (1830-1867), was an Arabic scholar, his uncle Reginald Lane Poole (1832-1895), was keeper of the archives at Oxford, and his father, Stanley (1854-1931) was a distinguished archeologist and historian who published widely on India, China, Egypt, Spain, the Middle East, numismatics and biography. Stanley spent several years in Egypt before he moved to Dublin as Professor of Arabic, Persian and Hindustani in Trinity College in 1898. Charles came to Dublin and was sent to school in the Protestant St Columba's College in 1901 when he was 16 years old. Dublin's relatively small, well-to-do, Anglo-Irish Protestant ruling class provided his social milieu at its liberal end where literature, arts and crafts flourished. Certainly, he met Ruth Pollexfen who was being brought up in the artistic Yeats family and was to be his future wife (Lewis 1994; Murphy 1995).

Charles' bent was more to applied science than to historical scholarship and on leaving school, he started studying engineering. When he lost his left hand in a shooting accident, he felt he could not continue as an engineer and turned to forestry. It had opportunities for employment in the Empire, and for training in France's National Forestry School at Nancy (under an exchange scheme in which French students were trained in British shipbuilding). He applied successfully and completed the two-year course there in 1906.

The 'intellectual, cultural and technical expressions' of the Nancy training were inculcated into its French and British students. Three of its strands wove through Lane Poole's later life. In the French forest service, the Nancy graduates constituted an elite stream of commissioned forest *officers* who were placed above the *non-commissioned* staff and guards who were trained elsewhere. The service was centrally organised, prestigious and uniformed—in war it mobilised as an army unit and its officers had legal powers—and at the time Lane Poole was at Nancy, it was considered an appropriate occupation for upper-class men (Reed 1954, pp.64-65). Britain echoed these differences of class, education and status: on one side were the *forest officers* with tertiary training in Europe and who were employed in the Indian and Colonial services; on the other side were the estate and Crown *foresters* who worked their way up and studied at night to pass the exams of the Forestry Societies. The related second strand was the strong *national* direction applied by the large French forest service over regional and commercial interests. It loosely matched Britain's *imperial* direction of its colonies—but not, as Lane Poole was to find, in a federal nation, like Australia. The third strand was the assertion of silviculture over economics. Although it should not be overstated, the Nancy school emphasised the management of hardwood forests on long rotations, rather than their conversion to the more economically profitable conifer plantations that were emphasised in Germany. Lane Poole apparently recognised the importance of selection management in some natural forests by translating one of Biolley's (1905) papers from French.

## 3 TRANSVAAL

Britain's Colonial Forest Service functioned as a central recruitment and employment agency that sent foresters to India and the colonies where they were appointed to positions by the authorities of the various territories. It also served as a clearing-house for reports and technical information across the Empire. The origins of the imperial model of forestry in India and its extension to other parts of the Empire is well known (see for example Schlich 1906 or Grove 1995). Although many of its early foresters were German, or had trained there, varied techniques had been developed to suit different regions. However, the demarcation of the best forests, and their reservation as state forests, the exclusion or control of any inhabitants was common throughout. Scientifically trained foresters were sent by the Colonial service to staff the various forest services as they were set up.

Lane Poole was sent to the South African forest service in 1906, probably as part of Britain's policy of recruiting well-qualified graduates for post-war reconstruction (Thompson 1971, p.331). He was placed under David Hutchins (1850-1920), an early graduate from Nancy and an

experienced Empire forester who was later to recommend his appointment to Western Australia. Energetic, knowledgeable, intense, passionate and sometimes over-zealous about forestry, their habits of mind seem oddly similar (Darrow 1977). Hutchins had just set up the South African Forest College at Tokai in the Cape. Lane Poole probably both studied South African forest practice there and helped run it when the Colonial Office sent Hutchins off to report on East Africa (now Kenya) and Uganda.

In May 1907, Lane Poole was appointed to the Transvaal Forest Department that had been set up by C.E. Legat after a major report by Hutchins in 1903. Lane Poole was posted to Woodbush, placed in charge as District Forest Officer and appointed a Justice of the Peace. He had to manage native forests that had been cut over with only very limited control for many years and establish new plantations. Legat (1910a) found him 'so zealous, enthusiastic and able'. To Lane Poole nothing was more important than forestry: but there was to the Premier. The Transvaal had just elected the former Boer general, Louis Botha, as its first Premier and Minister of Forests. While he kept the best English officials, like Legat and Lane Poole, he recruited the often less-educated Boers to the public service to help reconcile them to the new order (Spender 1916, pp. 191-192). In 1910, he appointed a Mr Bosman, a Boer from his name, to Woodbush. Lane Poole complained not only that Bosman was 'useless', but that the South African forest policy gave too much attention to plantations and not enough to natural forests. When this had no effect, and even though Ruth Pollexfen had just agreed to marry him, he resigned. It was a rash move, as Legat pointed out telling him 'not write me down a fiery letter which will do no good and only embarrass me'. However, Lane Poole departed.

#### 4 SIERRA LEONE

The Colonial Office placed Lane Poole in Sierra Leone in November 1910. It was a small, backwater posting, with little trade, an unhealthy climate and few white women (Sierra Leone 1910). Palm oil was the main export, there were some trial plantings of rubber, but little was known of the forests or their economic potential. Lane Poole was to investigate, report and organise a Forestry Department, as Hutchins had done elsewhere (Lucas 1910).

Within three weeks of landing he was off to inspect the forests of the Peninsula and quickly reported that some areas could be planted to rubber and others cultivated. In forthright words from a 26-year-old that portended things to come in Western Australia, he went on to write that:

I am of the opinion that it is not in the best interests of the country to give a concession to a private person or company, if that concession carries with it the exclusive right to a large tract of country ... All concessions granted over forests should be for very short periods, not more than five years; and during that time the Forestry Department should have control over the concessionaires. (Lane Poole 1911, Appendix I, p.28)

Taking only a fortnight to report and recover, he was off again on an arduous three-month tour through the country's forests and within a month of his return had completed his report. It describes the major forests, the trees of economic value, the trial plantings of rubber, and the sources of timber. He claimed that 'ninety-nine per cent of the Rain Forests have been destroyed by the Natives in their wasteful method of farming' and that the montane forests were in similar danger (*ibid*, pp.4,7). They could be protected only by creating forest reserves, to which end he recommended copying the Southern Nigerian Forest Ordinance, but without giving Native Councils any power to reject its regulations, as, 'This aims at the very life of the forests, which rely on continuity of management and certainty of purpose for their proper administration' (*ibid*, p.23). With such an imperial and technical habit of mind, he felt:

... convinced that the appointment of a sufficient staff of competent and energetic foresters who will give their whole time to the Forestry problems and work hand in hand with similar

staff in the Agricultural Department will go a long way to solving the serious question [of economic dependence on palm oil exports] before the colony. (*ibid*, Appendix II)

He proposed a Forestry Department with a Conservator, three Assistant Conservators and the existing Overseer. He handed his report to the Governor and promptly sailed home where on 20th July 1911 he was married in his old school's chapel to Ruth, given away by her resplendent cousin, the famous Irish poet and playwright, W.B. Yeats.

His report was to good effect. The *Forest Ordinance* was gazetted and in June 1912 he was appointed Conservator in charge of his own Forest Department with Assistants, a Clerk and a slender budget. But he returned without Ruth. Perhaps it was as well, for he set to at a furious pace. He established his Headquarters, a forest tree nursery and an arboretum in the hills at Heddles Cottage, and leaving his Assistant, Guy Aylmer, in charge, proceeded to 'demarcate' the forest reserves. In a country without an established trigonometric grid, surveying the mountain forests might have daunted a lesser man, but he persuaded Chiefs, hired native labour, cut lines, placed markers and took sightings on distant mountain tops where beacons had been lit. He even took star sightings to fix his latitude, as he was to do later in New Guinea.

He managed a short home leave over Christmas 1912, but was back camped in the forests when he heard that Ruth was expecting their first baby (Lane Poole 1913a). He finished the survey in July 1913. And he was in his Heddles house with his pets—a python, a leopard, a monkey, a cat and an armidillo lizard—when he heard that their daughter Charlotte had been born in England in October. He had no leave that Christmas and ruefully watched the ship home depart.

Almost repeating his Transvaal behaviour, he became 'much annoyed' when he heard that Kenneth Burbridge had been appointed as an Assistant Conservator. He fumed that Burbridge was 'an agricultural man and a Kew man ... and we don't want either in our show'. However, the Governor calmed him down, suggested that Burbridge should not be damned before he had even landed, and asked Lane Poole to report on his work in due course (Lane Poole 1913b). When Burbridge finally landed in April 1914, Lane Poole noted that he was 'very glad he has come, takes a weight off my mind' (Lane Poole 1914). He must have been even more so when war broke out and both Aylmer and the expected third Assistant joined the British army. Lane Poole was already a member of Sierra Leone's Legislative Council and the war added the burden of having to be the Censor in Freetown, a job he hated. Nevertheless, he continued to work on his botanical specimens, many of which he had sent to Kew for definite identification, and prepared a plant list for publication (Lane Poole 1916). Although he had leave in Ireland at the end of 1914, he was unable to find war work and had to return to Sierra Leone, frustrated because his assistants had enlisted, and separated from his family.

## 5 WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Meanwhile, the Western Australian Government commissioned Hutchins (1916) to report on forestry there. He believed that the demarcation of state forests should have been the 'duty owed to the country by the first Englishmen when they came into their inheritance', but had been largely neglected due to the 'pernicious' political influence of the 'overgrown' towns (pp.1-2). It was a *national* problem that it should be administered federally by forest officers trained in a federal Forestry School. The Western Australian Government agreed that they needed a qualified forest officer to head their Forestry Department and Hutchins recommended Lane Poole who jumped at the chance (Hutchins 1914). Once appointed, he was able set up home in Perth with Ruth and their, by then, two children.

He again set to with furious energy: inspecting the forests; re-organising the Department, arranging surveys; advocating forestry to the public in talks, articles, and pamphlets; and above all drafting the 1918 *Forests Act*, subsequently regarded by foresters as exemplary legislation. It gave the Department and its Conservator control over reservations, plans, sawmilling permits and the royalty system; all necessary measures, but they were a sharp change from previous practice. Lane

Poole seemed to have little sympathy with sawmillers and some were treated inequitably (Mills 1986, pp. 68-72). Carron put it that:

In his attempts to implement the policy which the Act set out, he seemed to have few friends and little support. He certainly received none from agriculturalists, sawmillers or hewers, nor from members of the government or the public, all of whom were somewhat sensitive to articulate Anglo-Irishmen of forcible views and missionary zeal in colonial situations. (Carron 1985, pp.146-147)

But he did make some important friends with people who shared his enthusiasm for trees and passion for forestry: the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson; the Melbourne industrialist, Russell Grimwade; and the Western Australian Senator, Walter Kingsmill. They were later to stand him in good stead. He also started to build an international reputation as one of the two Australian delegates to the first Empire Forestry Conference in London where he moved—with Munro-Ferguson, by then Lord Novar—to start the Empire Forestry Association.

The resolutions of an Empire conference and the good intentions of the *Forestry Act* did not match Western Australian reality because the State Government relied heavily on British capital, and was looking anxiously over its shoulder at Queensland. When the Theodore Government there had tried to curtail pastoral leases, British financiers had forced it to back down and stopped loan money for public works, virtually bankrupting the State (Radi 1974, pp.372-374). In Western Australia, sawmilling was dominated a British company—Millars, known locally as 'the combine'—whose extensive forest concessions were being curtailed by Lane Poole's new regime. Rather than support him, the fearful Government extended Millars' concessions. This, he could not stomach and on 22 October 1921 again resigned. Ruth, pregnant with their third daughter, sailed back to Ireland in June leaving their only seemingly stable home behind.

## 6 PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

Fortunately for Lane Poole he had work to go to. He had been asked to report on the forest resources of Papua and, after giving evidence to a Royal Commission, left Perth in March 1922. Extended to New Guinea, the work engaged him for the next two and a half years. His report reveals his remarkable energy, ability and initiative (Lane Poole 1925a). The Papuan administration thought his researches 'most valuable' and recorded that:

He has examined many areas and gets about the country with the speed, absence of fuss, and economy of transport of an experienced District Officer. He requires no escort. (Papua Official Secretary 1923)

His work there warrants a paper on its own, and here we can only note three features related to the theme of this paper. Lane Poole was an actor in the extension of empire, albeit a latter-day Australian version with its own features. The Territories' Administrations wanted to know if there were large forests that could be exploited commercially. He searched where 'the King's Writ ran', through the difficult 'intermediate belt', and mounted expeditions to 'where no white man had been before' (Lane Poole 1925a, p.1). But it was his mind for science that shaped what he did there: classifying forest regions, measuring trees on strip surveys, calculating their timber volumes, and collecting eight hundred herbarium specimens. Although some were lost when his camp was raided, he sent the rest to the Queensland botanist for formal identification.

While his surveys did not reveal resources for immediate development, they provided a sound description, substantial botanical information and an assessment of the possibilities for establishing plantations. For many, that would have been enough. But for Lane Poole, the case for legislation to conserve and manage forests still had to be argued in his report. He did so in the vein of a popular lecture with engaging references to Justinian, the Code Napoleon and Rousseau. More surprisingly

in a report to a Parliament, he aired a view, that had doubtless been strengthened by his Western Australian experience, that forestry and democracy—or at least 'young democracies'—were incompatible. He wrote that:

The Government of Papua is not democratic ... Papua, has therefore, a chance, even in this democratic age, of establishing a forest policy which will be appreciated by the people when they have reached the stage of civilization which is expected of them. (Lane Poole 1925a, p.45)

He went on to outline a Forest Ordinance that would give a Conservator of Forests 'exclusive control and management of all matters of forest policy, and administration ... [and] all power of appointing, promoting, and dismissing staff': no Bosmans or Burbridges for Lane Poole! His report was tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament in August 1925 without discussion.

## 7 ADVISING THE COMMONWEALTH

Senator Kingsmill persuaded the Commonwealth to take more interest in forests. Not only was it directly responsible for those in the Northern Territory, Norfolk Island and the Federal Capital, New Guinea and Papua, but a national interest had built up in Interstate Forestry Conferences. It gave Lane Poole a three-year appointment as its Forestry Advisor based in the Department of Home and Territories. At last, Ruth and their three daughters were able to set up home with him again, this time in Melbourne where she flourished as an interior designer.

Lane Poole quickly set out the 'Forestry Position in Australia' in a paper for Parliament with his typically forthright manner. After highlighting Australia's reliance on softwood imports and the States' lack of progress in demarcating state forests, he drew on the Nancy model and Hutchins' report to urge professional training in a national school:

The States are cramped for funds, except Victoria and New South Wales, and all except Western Australia lack trained foresters. She has six, and the remainder of Australia has four experts. There is a great need for a high-class forest school. Attempts at co-operation between States and Federal Government having failed [to agree on funding arrangements], the question arises whether the Central Government should not establish the school. (Lane Poole 1925b, p.3)

His assertion that there were only ten trained foresters caused great offence to those running the States' forest services who had learnt their forestry the hard way, by experience, private study, or in Victoria's course at Creswick. Distinguishing the 'trained foresters'—the forest *officers*—from the *other ranks* of foresters clearly irked them. It was no way to create co-operation with the Commonwealth, and it rapidly worsened in furious quarrel with the Commissioner for Forests in NSW, R. Dalrymple Hay, that found its way into the *Australian Forestry Journal* (November 1925) and a complaint from the Premier to the Prime Minister (McKell 1926). Apparently undaunted, Lane Poole inspected the Commonwealth's forests and advised that pines should be planted to protect Canberra's water catchment and to create a 'city forest'. He recommended pine planting at Jervis Bay, where the dunes should also be fixed, and the protection of the native pines at Norfolk Island for their seed (Lane Poole 1925c).

His advice continued to be sought in public inquiries of which only the Royal Commission on the Constitution can be noted here. Opinion was divided over forests: Lane Poole thought that they should all be under Commonwealth control, but surprisingly, Hay did not discount some Commonwealth involvement although other State witnesses rejected it (Royal Commission on the Constitution 1929, p. 223). Forests remained with the States and Lane Poole had to develop Commonwealth forestry and negotiate Commonwealth-State relationships as best he could.

## 8 COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY

The Commonwealth gave Lane Poole considerable status by appointing him as its Inspector-General of Forests in 1927, a position whose international prestige was enhanced when the Third British Empire Forestry Conference was held in Australia and New Zealand in 1928. The Conference required a major organisational effort as it took several weeks to visit New Zealand and all the States, as well as Lane Poole's domain, the new Commonwealth Forestry Bureau and its Australian Forestry School in Canberra. The Conference, like those before it, functioned for both scientific interchange and policy deliberation. Notably, it made detailed recommendations that were sometimes specific to particular countries. For example, it endorsed the establishment of the Australian Forestry School as the only viable one for training professional foresters in Australia. Doubtless, Lane Poole was behind the motion; he certainly cited it and the recommendations of earlier inter-state forestry conferences to legitimise the policy he espoused.

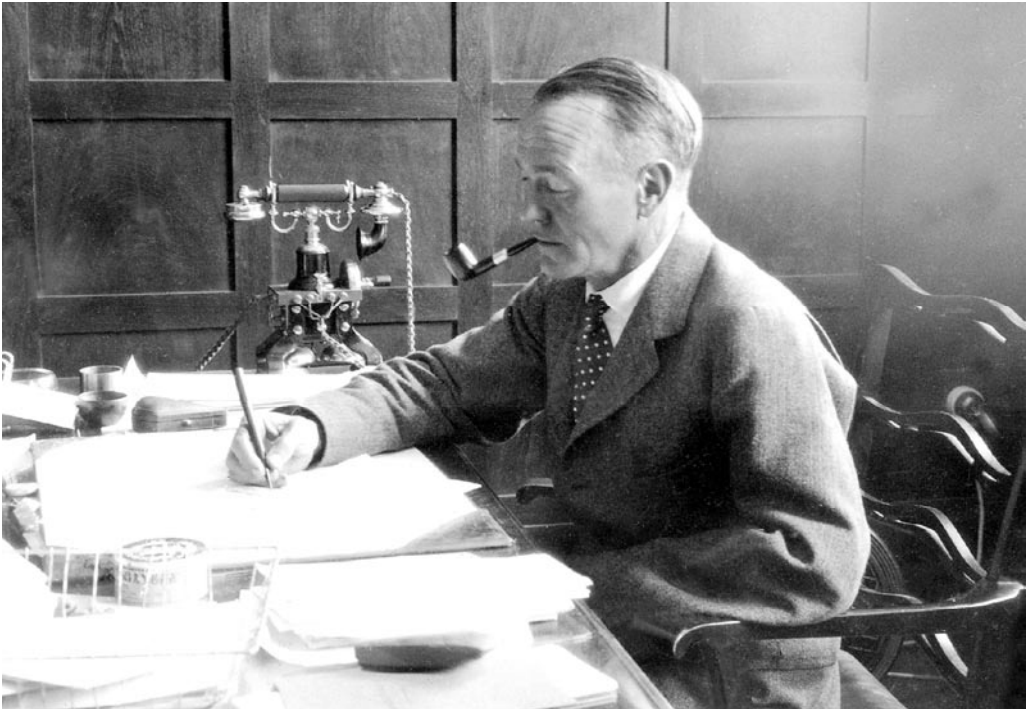


Figure 1. Charles Lane Poole in the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau, Canberra, 1930s (*Photo: Collection late D.A.N Cromer*).

The general history of the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau and the Australian Forestry School has been described elsewhere (Carron 1995, 2000). Lane Poole had to negotiate a place for his new institution within the evolving and sometimes contentious relationship between the Commonwealth and the States. This would always have been difficult but although they had been started on only a modest scale, they barely survived the Depression. Lane Poole had to take on the extra position as Principal of the Forestry School—although he insisted it was only ‘Acting’, while the Bureau lost its research positions and could not fill them for many years. The difficulties were exacerbated at times by his prickly relationships with the heads of some of the State forest services. Not only had

he denigrated their qualifications, he envisaged his position in Australia as being similar to that in India, one in which an eminent senior forester provided professional mentoring to colleagues in subordinate jurisdictions, particularly over their relationships with their governments. It was an underlying attitude that easily caused resentments.

However, his inquisitive, scientific attitude readily accommodated the varied concerns that involved the Bureau and the School. The propagation of plants, the establishment of an experimental arboretum in the Brindabella Hills, south of Canberra, and the flowering times of trees were personal interests, but the range of matters that had to be dealt with was greater than can be discussed in one paper: seed from Norfolk Island, soil erosion, plantation growth, leaf fall and decomposition, fire protection and any forestry project that involved the Commonwealth and States. There were several such projects involving the Development and Migration Commission, Unemployment relief, Timber Control and Post-war Reconstruction, among others.

The effects of the inherent tensions between the levels of government, the Depression and the inter-personal differences were felt in many ways. Two examples can be mentioned. The 1928 Empire Forestry Conference had discussed catchment erosion and considered the problem of siltation of the new Hume reservoir on the Murray River. Noting that this was a national project, Lane Poole proposed a national scheme to control fires and afforest the headwaters of the Murray. However, the River Murray Agreement placed catchment management and erosion as State, not national responsibilities. Nothing daunted, Lane Poole proposed a joint Committee of foresters and engineers from New South Wales, Victoria and the Commonwealth to plan a reconnaissance survey. He had planned it with Norman Jolly, then Forestry Commissioner in New South Wales whose academic credentials he regarded highly. However, Lane Poole was not trusted in Victoria which rejected the proposal seeing it as a Commonwealth ruse to assume control. Lane Poole's Minister first scotched the idea, but then allowed a survey on the NSW part of the catchment, provided it came from the Bureau's budget. Baldur Byles made the detailed survey over the summer of 1931-1932, before his position was abolished (he went on to have a distinguished career in New South Wales Forest Commission).

The second example is that of the Australian Forestry School. It was established to provide two years free training in forestry for students who had already completed two years of tertiary training in their own State. The States had to nominate the students and provide for their upkeep while in Canberra. However, the promised numbers of students never arrived, partly because States couldn't fund the scholarships during the Depression, and partly because of Commonwealth-State rivalries and personal hostilities. Victoria maintained its own school at Creswick, although it sent a few students for further training in the first few years. More serious was the withdrawal of New South Wales from sending students once Harold Swain had become its Commissioner for Forests. This was hardly surprising as Lane Poole had been heavily involved in political lobbying during the passage of that State's *Forestry (Amendment) Act* in 1935, to try and prevent Swain being appointed. The overall result was that the number of students sent to the School each year dropped to 3 or 4 and to none in 1936. It was only with difficulty that the Commonwealth was persuaded not to close it.

In both examples, we can see how Lane Poole's firm and uncompromising adherence to what he held to be important not only gave him the dogged persistence to achieve a result, but also hindered its full realisation through its rigidity.

## 9 TRANSITION

We can distinguish between the two routes that Australian forestry took in its transition from the imperial forestry model: an 'acclimatisation' of bringing the 'intellectual, cultural and technical expressions' of Empire to Australia; and a 'vernacular' route of expressions originating in Australia. In the overall political economy, the imperial model of demarcating state forests and managing them by state forest services was clearly acclimatised, indeed it became virtually the sole concept of Australian forestry, even though there were greater areas of forest outside it. In Lane



Poole's life, we can see the acclimatisation route most clearly in his establishing the Australian Forestry School in Canberra, keeping it going, and having it recognised at the university level. By the time he retired in 1945, it had created a cadre of 80 graduates employed in the Territories and States (only a few were in Victoria) with their own professional institute and journal. Its links with Empire were maintained through the Empire Forestry Association and scholarships endowed by Russell Grimwade that helped some graduates study further in the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford.

The vernacular route mostly ran alongside the acclimatisation route during Lane Poole's time. For example, he directed Forestry Bureau research into the fuel loads in burnt and unburnt native forests—a particularly Australian problem—that provided a scientific basis for some of his evidence to Judge Stretton's inquiry into the 1939 bushfires (Lane Poole 1939). More important was his long support for Max Jacob's work on the growth habits of the eucalypts that contributed to the development of distinctive silvicultural systems.

Divergence between the assimilation and vernacular routes can be seen in Lane Poole's and the State services' insistence on the student foresters gaining substantial practical experience before they graduated from the Australian Forestry School. In Queensland, for example, the students spent a year working in the forests before attending the School and usually a period in assessment camps afterwards. The elitist personal attitudes of Empire or Nancy got short shrift in the bush, and theoretical studies were little regarded by mountain graziers, as Byles found out. A greater divergence can be seen in Lane Poole's opposition to the forest management developed by Harold Swain in Queensland and New South Wales, partly because Swain drew on a more economically-focussed American forestry, and partly from an extraordinarily bitter personal hostility (Lane Poole 1936).

This paper started with Charles Lane Poole's boyhood and his familial setting in the heart of Empire. His father had returned from Egypt to Dublin and to London when he retired; and most servants of the Empire returned to Britain when their work was done. But Charles and Ruth Lane Poole did not. Two of their three daughters and their grandchildren were in Australia; they had become an Australian family. When he retired in 1945, they left the Principal's house, 'Westridge', and settled in Sydney.

Retirement seems to have been an active, but calmer period in Lane Poole's life. In 1947, his old friend Russell Grimwade invited him and a few others on an enjoyable, semi-scientific expedition across the Nullarbor (Poynter 1967, pp. 290-294). He continued to work in forestry as a consultant and in his late 70s was scrambling through the forests of northern NSW with the veneer miller Jack Lever, with whom he built up a friendly relationship. He advised Commonwealth-New Guinea Timbers in Bulolo on their resources. His scientific habit of mind led him to be involved with one of the very early applications of computers in forestry when CSIRO was engaged, in collaboration with the Forestry Bureau, to undertake a statistical analysis of tree volumes there. He died in a Sydney nursing home in 1970.

His transition across continents, time and political systems had been an eventful one. His passion for forestry, energy, persistence in the face of great difficulties had been remarkable. He had made both enemies and friends, and had gained the respect of leading men in his day. Max Jacobs, who of all the Australian foresters, knew him best and succeeded him as Inspector-General, was to write:

I worked for Lane-Poole for 18 years and would have happily worked for him for another 18. I would be a biased author [for an entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography] and he was a controversial character. ... I consider him the most important man after F.E.H.W. Krichauff [the founder of plantation forestry in South Australia]. (Jacobs 1975)

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