

1919 to 1935: A pivotal period for the forests of the south west of Western Australia

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ABSTRACT: With the passing of the new *Forests Act* in December 1918 and with a scientifically trained forester in charge, the new Forests Department set out with enthusiasm to redress the chaos caused by the previous 90 years of virtually uncontrolled exploitation of the forests of the south west of Western Australia. The objectives and accomplishments of those sixteen years have had a major influence on the character and extent of today's forests.

1 INTRODUCTION

The dramatic improvement in caring for the forested areas of the south west of Western Australia from 1919 to 1935 can be attributed to three men – Hutchins, Lane Poole and Kessell – each a scientifically trained forester.

This was an era dominated by the vision of Jimmy Mitchell, the member of parliament for Northam and twice premier of the state, who hoped that the south west of Western Australia would become the food bowl of the world and who believed that “man’s noblest work was to increase production, and that rural production was morally and economically superior to any other factor” (Bolton 1972:13). Mitchell was Minister for Agriculture from 1906–1911, and Premier from 1919–1924 and again from 1930–1933. Forested land was considered by Mitchell to be an impediment to the fulfilment of his vision. He wanted it cleared for agriculture and settlement. The recommendations of Hutchins, and the achievements of Lane Poole and Kessell against Mitchell’s opposing vision are therefore all the more commendable.

New policies and practices initiated during the sixteen-year period, from 1919–1935, had a major influence on the establishment of sustainable forestry practice in Western Australia. Not only was 70% of today’s area of secure forest reserved, but regeneration and silvicultural practices were also widely introduced. In addition the following important aspects of forestry were initiated or continued:

- Fire management was initiated;
- Tree marking under group selection replaced minimum girth as the means of controlling cutting;
- Working plans for each area of native forest were initiated;
- Pine plantations continued to be established and researched.

The new *Forests Act*, developed by Lane Poole, was passed by Parliament on 20 December 1918 when Sir Henry Lefroy was Premier and signed into law by Governor MacArtney on 3 January 1919. Led by the enthusiastic Lane Poole, there was a distinct feeling of a new and

dynamic broom sweeping innovative changes into forest management in Western Australia as a result of the passing of the *Forests Act*. In his five-year period as Conservator Lane Poole was keen to get on with regeneration work, fire control, dedicating suitable forested areas as State Forest, and working towards equating the cut from the forest with what the forest could sustain in the long term. In this paper I will expand on these and other objectives and achievements in the period approximately from 1919 to 1935.

1.1 *Who were these three scientifically trained foresters?*

Sir David Hutchins was the pre-eminent forester of the British Empire at the time and a graduate of L'Ecole National des Eaux et Forêts, Nancy, France. Commencing in 1824, the forestry school at Nancy was one of the earliest European forestry schools, and one that many British and some Australian foresters attended. Hutchins had experience in India, had been Conservator of Cape Colony and had reported on the forest situation in a number of non-tropical countries. Recently retired, Hutchins was invited to visit Australia with the British Association in 1914 and to comment on Australia's forestry situation and needs with special reference to Western Australia. Following his visit he made a great many recommendations in his comprehensive 434 page report, published in 1916 by the Forests Department as Bulletin number 5.

Charles Edward Lane Poole held the Diploma of L'Ecole National des Eaux et Forêts, Nancy, France. Lane Poole served as Conservator of Forests in Sierra Leone before being appointed, on 25 September 1916, as Conservator of Forests in Western Australia (the title 'Inspector General of Forests' having been amended to Conservator of Forests when he was appointed). Lane Poole was responsible for drafting the 1918 *Forests Act*. He resigned on 22 October 1921, during Sir James Mitchell's first term as Premier, and later became Director General of the Commonwealth Forestry and Timber Bureau and the first Principal of the Australian Forestry School. Lane Poole and Mitchell disagreed over charges to timber companies. Lane Poole wanted an increase in charges to timber concession holders after World War I whereas Mitchell wanted the concession holders to continue their low rates until their concession period ended later in the 1920s. Mitchell's opposition was a major factor in Lane Poole's resignation.

Stephen Lackey Kessel, was Lane Poole's successor as Conservator and was also a scientifically trained forester with a degree in forestry from Adelaide University and a Diploma (with distinction) in forestry from Oxford University. He carried on Lane Poole's work with distinction and diplomacy and remained Conservator from 1923 until 1941 (Mills 2002:359).

It is worth noting that the achievements in forest management of this period were carried out in the context of few mechanical aids. Trees were felled by hand with an axe and a cross cut saw. Logs were hauled by teams of horses or bullocks. With the machines of today the relatively small number of staff of the 1920s and 1930s would have been able to achieve even more than they did, creditable as that was. By 1929 there were 507 people employed in the Forests Department compared to the 1018 employed in 1968.

Table 1. Numbers of people employed by the Forests Department.

Category/Year	1919	1929	1939	1968
Professional Officers	2	13	18	52
General Field Staff	28	57	63	247
Clerical and Drafting	13	37	31	70
Wages Employees	0	400	400	649
Total	43	507	512	1018

Source: Forests Department Western Australia (1969)

1.2 *The motivation for the Swan River Settlement*

There is a clear connection between the timber resource of the Swan River region and the reason why the British established a settlement on the western part of New Holland. The French and the British were both interested in what was first called The Great South Land, then New Holland and finally Australia. While the French wanted to establish a staging post on the way to both the Spice Islands and to their interests in the Pacific Ocean, their interest in the west coast of New Holland was, due to the motivation of the Enlightenment, probably more for scientific and cultural knowledge than settlement (Marchant 1982).

The British by 1788 had established a colony at Port Jackson on the east coast of New Holland and wanted to prevent the French, their competitor and often their enemy, from establishing a colony in the region of the Swan River. The nervousness of the British was understandable as the French had made five major voyages of discovery around that time (La Perouse 1788; D'Entrecasteaux 1791–1792; Baudin 1801–1804; Freycinet 1817–1820; D'Urville 1822). The sentiments that prompted the British to establish a settlement at the Swan River were also strongly influenced by the existence of the hardwood forests of the area, expressed in this 1927 account:

... the foundation, in 1829 by the British colonial authorities, of a settlement at the entrance to the Swan River was largely due to the reports received in England as to the existence of immense forests of valuable hardwoods in the South-Western portion of what was then generally known as New Holland (Kessell 1927:3).

2 DEDICATION OF STATE FOREST

The forest seemed inexhaustible in the 1800s and early 1900s and was treated as an impediment to settlement and farming. No wonder that the forest's major, and perhaps only value, was considered for many years to be for the timber it would yield and, once cleared, the land that would be made available for settlement and agriculture. The social conditions of forests that were under wealthy private ownership that prevailed in England and Europe and that allowed hunting, did not apply at the Swan River Settlement in the 1800s. The land was owned by the Crown and the emphasis was on survival and settlement.

The premier Sir James Mitchell, had a vision that the south west of Western Australia would become the food bowl of the world. After World War I returned servicemen were placed on Group Settlement schemes, given an axe and a saw and required to clear and cultivate a specified area each year. The forest was considered an impediment to the fulfillment of Mitchell's vision.

By the late 1800s a slight forest 'conscienceness' was developing and some people could see that the forest was a valuable resource and would not last long if it was cleared for settlement or agriculture and if cutting continued at the same rate. There was a need to safeguard the best forest areas (Mueller 1879). A land use exercise was needed.

In fact a land classification project was commenced in 1916. It was a collaborative effort between Lands Department officers representing agricultural interests and Forests Department officers representing forestry interests. The project classified the forest areas of the south west of Western Australia into four classes: *prime timber country*; *second class timber country*; *agricultural land*; and *waste barren land*. The aim was to dedicate the area of *prime timber country* to forestry purposes for all time under the title of "State Forest"; to dedicate the area of *second class timber country* as a timber reserve until all its marketable timber had been removed; to throw open *agricultural land* for selection; and to afforest *waste barren land* where suitable (Kessell 1928a). Under the 1918 *Forests Act* once an area has been declared State Forest it cannot be used for purposes other than forestry or alienated for other uses such as agriculture or settlement without the consent of both Houses of Parliament. This has proven to be a very sound protection. The project was one of the first land use exercises in Western Australia and the field work for this classification exercise was completed in September 1919. Fortunately the classification showed that the bulk of the finest forest areas was not on land with agricultural potential.

Nonetheless it took several years of relentless pressure from the Forests Department before the government implemented the results of the classification and dedicated any substantial areas as State Forest. Sir James Mitchell's well-known attitude of the best use of land being for agricultural selection and settlement almost certainly slowed down the dedication of State Forest. The largest single addition to State Forest was 673 000 hectares in 1929 – a time when Mitchell was not premier. The dedication of forested land as State Forest in the period 1919–1935 provided us with 70% of the secure forest area that we have in the south west of Western Australia today (Figures 1 and 2 and Table 2).

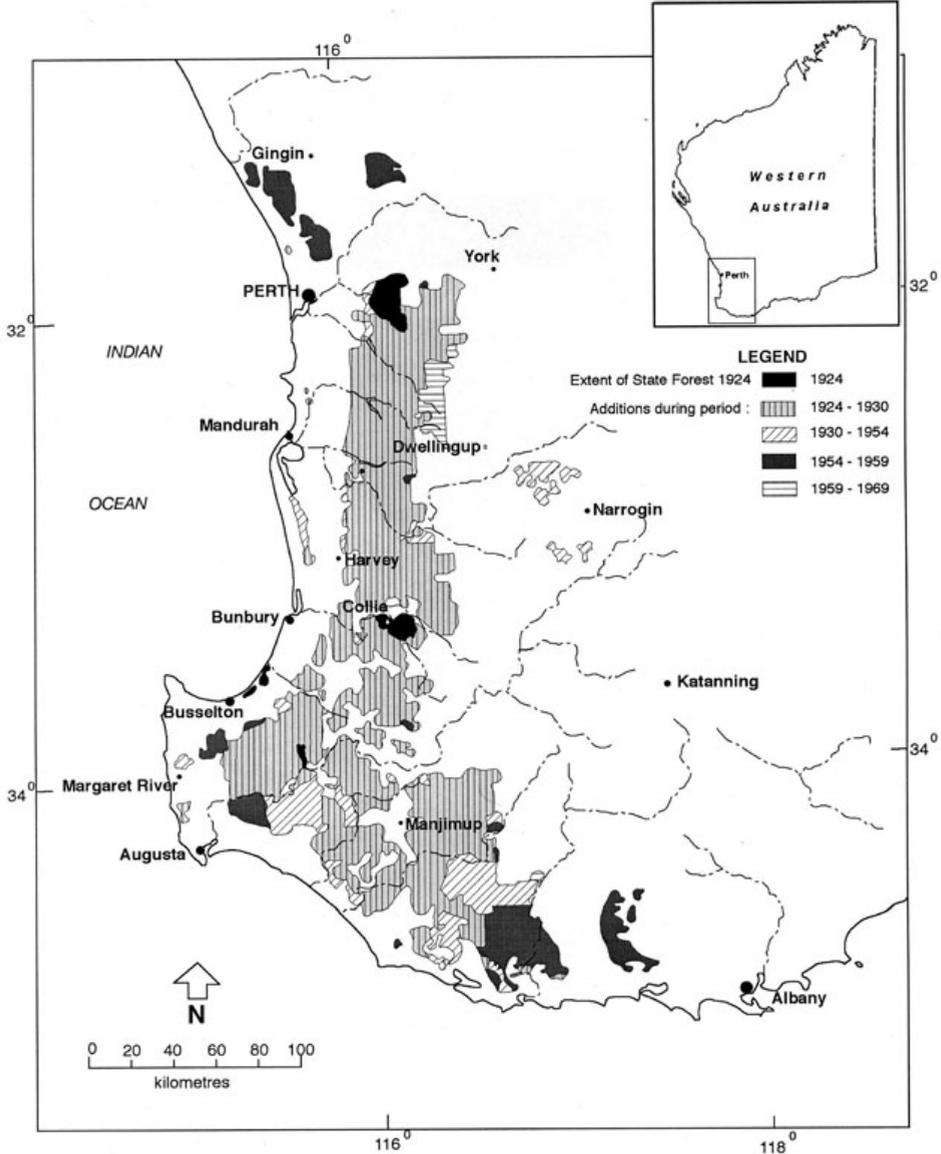


Figure 1. Areas dedicated as State Forest 1924 – 1969 (Redrawn from Jarvis 1979).

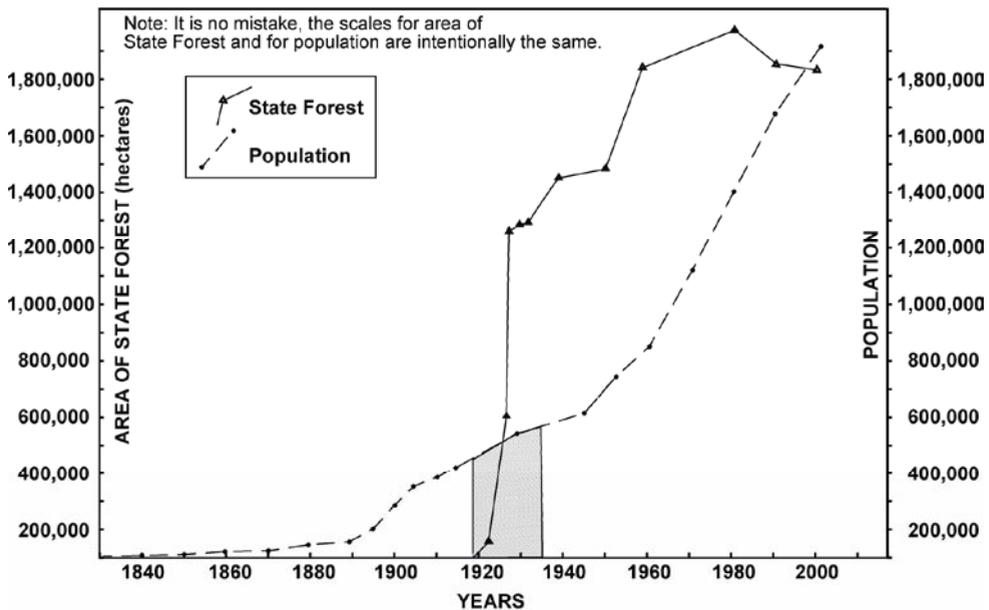


Figure 2: Area of State Forest in Western Australia - (from Forests Department and CALM Annual Reports) and Western Australian Population since 1830.

Table 2. Total area dedicated as State Forest

Year	Total area dedicated as State Forest (hectares)
1920	1374
1925	54 348
1930	1 204 277
1935	1 268 689
2003	1 799 974

(Note: The largest single yearly addition to State Forest was 673 000 hectares in 1929.)
 Source: Forests Department Western Australia - Annual Reports.

This area has been safeguarded since the 1930s by subsequent managers in the Forests Department and later in the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Over the years as the population increased there have been many requests by farmers to extend their farms into State Forest. From a farmer's point of view a small amount of forest added to their farm would make little difference to the forest resource but from the State's and the forester's point of view it would set a precedent for other requests that in total, by "the death of a thousand cuts", would significantly reduce the area of State Forest. By 1935 the whole of the good quality jarrah and karri forests remaining in the possession of the Crown had been permanently dedicated as State Forest (Kessell 1935:12).

3 REGENERATION

From the beginning of European settlement in 1829 until 1920 there was virtually no control over logging in the forest areas of the south west of Western Australia. "The proper control of timber

hewers' operations is most necessary as this is by far the most wasteful form of conversion that is being conducted today", is how the annual report for 1917 of the Woods and Forests Department put it (Woods and Forests Department Annual Report, 1917: 4). "We should not allow this policy of forest butchery to go unchecked" was how Simons, the member for East Perth, expressed his concern in parliament in 1921, about the lack of adequate control of logging in the previous 90 years (Government of Western Australia 1921:691).

During that 90 year period logging removed over 5 000 000 cubic metres of forest produce for export but no effort was put into ensuring that regeneration of the forest occurred (Forests Department Western Australia 1929:37). The regeneration that did occur was by chance not by design. The magnificent stand of karri at Boranup just north of this conference venue is the result of "regeneration by chance" after heavy cutting by Maurice Coleman Davies at his mills at Karridale and Boranup in the 1890s. However, in spite of its problems and waste, the timber industry provided employment and income at a time when the colony was struggling to survive.

To a forester it is second nature to ensure that there is sufficient regeneration to replace any trees that are removed. It is one of the simple foundations of perpetuation of the forest and of sustainable use. Ensuring adequate regeneration became a major motivating force in the overall management activities of the Forests Department for Lane Poole and his successor Stephen Kessell. This project was helped in the 1930s depression years by large teams of men on sustenance relief work.

When the community values the forest mainly for the timber it can produce, the treatment of the forest is aimed at producing regeneration that will result in trees with good quality logs suitable for timber production (Kessell 1928b:10). As a fortunate by product of this focus on healthy regeneration, supported by good forest management, especially the fire control component, the forest will also be suitable for a great many other values that future generations will want from the forest, such as catchment protection, conservation and recreation.

When the new Forests Department was formed in 1919 it began actively carrying out silvicultural operations to produce regeneration in the areas that had been cut over in previous years. It realised that "the axe of industry could become the silvicultural tool of the forester" (Forests Department Western Australia 1969:47). The third Empire Forestry Conference met in Perth and then the eastern states in 1928 and its report included the comment about Western Australia that a reduction in the cut will in itself:

... not achieve the object of a sustained yield unless it is accompanied by an active development of regeneration work over the very large area of the forest cut over in the past. The regeneration methods adopted during the last few years, have given satisfactory results ... (Forests Department Western Australia 1929:49)

By 1929, 18 000 hectares of jarrah and 1 900 hectares of karri had been treated for regeneration (Forests Department Western Australia 1929:vi). By 1936, 142 000 hectares had been treated (Nunn 1957: 12).

4 FIRE CONTROL

Hutchins in his 1916 report named fire control an important matter and offered clear directions about how he considered it should be tackled. To cope with fires he advised having an overseer living in the forest with his house on a hill so that he could easily spot a fire and run or ride his horse downhill and quickly put the fire out. One overseer to about 8 000 hectares would do the job nicely. This was tried in a few places but found wanting in that one man on a horse with a rake was not able to do the job alone. The single overseer's house in the forest was replaced by settlements such as Gleneagle, Willow Springs, Hoffman, Tallanalla, Tone River, Nyamup, and Jarrahwood. These were for many years the first line of defence against the fires in the forest in their area. They have now all been closed down with their fire control function being replaced with better detection

systems (including aircraft), better roads and better vehicles and equipment with which to fight fires.

The fire policy developed during the 1920s was based on the need to protect regenerated areas from fire while the remainder of the forest was prescribed burnt on a three-year cycle (Stoate 1926). The need to protect regeneration from fire was based on observations in the late nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. This included observations in the Mundaring catchment where nearly 7 000 hectares of mainly jarrah forest surrounding the Helena (now Mundaring) reservoir were ringbarked in 1903 to kill the trees with the aim of increasing the run-off of water from the catchment. An extremely good natural regeneration followed the ringbarking, however repeated fires caused the malformation of almost the entire crop (Stoate 1926:12). It was therefore considered essential to exclude fire from areas with seedlings and other older regeneration in jarrah forest in the 1920s. To this end, top disposal burns were carried out after logging operations to provide an ash bed for successful germination of seedlings. In addition those tree-tops lying against future crop trees were moved so that when they were prescribed burnt, the burn would not scar the crop trees.

The Annual Report of the Forests Department for 1929 shows the relationship between prescribed burning and areas treated for regeneration and also the idea of taking advantage of the resident forester or overseer's knowledge of his area of forest to burn when he judged local conditions were suitable. It said:

Safety zones are established around treated areas by means of controlled burning early in the season. To attempt to carry out wholesale early burning by special gangs working according to a set programme would be impossible at anything like reasonable cost, but the resident overseer is able to take advantage of short periods of suitable weather throughout the year to burn portions of the area under his charge. The solution of the whole question of fire control is bound up with the establishment of resident workmen living throughout the forest, each man looking after a defined area which he knows thoroughly, and on which he can choose the best times for carrying out controlled burning. In the jarrah forest the average size for compartments is 500 acres (200 hectares), surrounded by a firebreak belt five chains (100 metres) wide. Such firebreak belts are not treated in the course of regeneration cleaning, being kept for the purpose of burning at regular intervals until such time as the young crop within the compartment is big enough to permit of controlled burning beneath it. (Forests Department Western Australia 1929:20)

Associated with fire control is fire detection and the first two fire lookout towers were built during 1921 at Mt Gungin and Mt Dale. By 1929 two more towers had been erected and additional sites selected. By 1937 a total of 15 towers were in use (Forests Department Western Australia 1969:42). In addition to fire towers, a bush telephone system was established which enabled more rapid communication between fire fighters. The telephone system was supplemented, then gradually replaced with radio in the 1950s and 1960s. It was also in the 1960s that fire research was stepped up following the Dwellingup fire of January 1961. This fire research, consisting of hundreds of experimental fires that were studied to understand fire behaviour under different conditions, forms an important component of the present forest fire management system used by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

5 SUSTAINED YIELD

The simplest explanation of the concept of sustained yield as far as it refers to timber harvesting and regeneration is to liken it to the interest of a bank account. As long as you only remove the interest from your bank account you will never lessen the capital. In the forest as long as you remove no more than a volume equivalent to the growth of the forest then you have achieved sustained yield. To do this you must ensure that you have adequate regeneration.

Hence the overwhelming concern by Hutchins, Lane Poole and Kessell about the lack of regeneration activities before 1919.

Assessments that preceded the production of the general working plans for karri in 1927 and jarrah in 1929 indicated the life of the marketable timber, at the then rate of logging, to be 66 years for karri and 28 years for jarrah (Kessell 1928a:18). That is, the forest was being harvested at a rate greater than sustained yield. It then remained “for a rational reduction in the rate of cutting to be effected with a view to eliminating the gap that otherwise will inevitably occur between the exhaustion of the virgin forest and the first yield from the regenerated forest” (Kessell 1928b: 26).

By 1935 considerable progress had been made towards the goal of sustained yield (Kessell 1935:14).

6 WORKING PLANS

A small amount of timber was first exported from Western Australia in 1836. In the following 90 odd years to 1920 a further 5 700 000 cubic metres was exported (Forests Department Western Australia 1929:1), and nearly one million acres (400 000 hectares) of the jarrah forest were cut over (Wallace 1965: 35). However no effort was put into ensuring that the forest was managed and worked in a satisfactory way or that the necessary regeneration to achieve sustained yield was carried out. There were few written guidelines relating to forest management, apart from not being able to cut trees that were less than a certain girth.

Bad as the situation was in Western Australia Hutchins, in his 1916 report, stated somewhat sardonically that “Western Australia has the best chance of all Australian states for successful forestry because it has gone the shortest distance on the wrong road” (Hutchins 1916:364). The wrong road being clearing accessible forest for settlement. Hutchins recommended that every cultivated forest must have a working plan to set down the basis for its management (Hutchins 1916:383). At several places in his report he emphasises the need for a working plan for each area of forest.

Working plans set out for a given area of forest, how it is to be worked, and can include, amongst other things, guidelines or directions about how much of it is to be cut over, what quantity of timber is to be removed, what regeneration methods are to be used, and what fire management is to be applied. Working plans established how forestry and logging operations were to be implemented and controlled according to sound scientific forestry principles.

In 1925 there were 15 working plans and in 1927 there were 28 working plans covering 267 000 hectares (Kessell, 1927:16). The author of this bulletin No 10, was in fact T. N. Stoate, who was the Department’s working plans officer at the time and was later Conservator from 1946 to 1953. Thirteen working plans in two years is quite a remarkable output. The output continued and by 1928, another eight working plans had been produced making 36 altogether, so the rate of production of working plans was improved slightly (Kessell 1928b:18). The first working plan covered the area of the Helena catchment south of Mundaring that had been ringbarked in 1903 by the Water Supply Department to increase the run-off to help fill the newly constructed Mundaring Reservoir (Stoate 1926:30). The current Forest Management Plan, produced in 2004, retains the same aim of the earlier working plans of setting out how the forest is to be managed but covers the whole forest area rather than smaller components and considers many more values than were considered by the community in the 1920s.

7 PINE PLANTATIONS

Pines, especially radiata pine and pinaster pine, grow much more quickly than jarrah. They produce more wood and reach a marketable size for sawlogs up to ten times more quickly than jarrah. This was the motivation for growing pines. The early foresters – Hutchins, Lane Poole, Kessell and Stoate realised that there was not enough hardwood forest to provide the timber demands for a future population. One solution was therefore to plant the more productive pines. In the working

plan for the Mundaring area the basic approach was spelled out: “To use country unsuitable for jarrah for exotic conifers to supply in part the softwood requirements of the State” (Stoate, 1926:15). The heartening note in that objective is that there was no intention to replace jarrah where jarrah was growing well.

The first step in establishing plantations had to be an experimental one of determining which species of pine were the most suitable to be grown in our climate and on the soil types available. The first trials were of *Pinus pinaster* in sand dunes near Bunbury in 1897 and they failed (Forest Department Western Australia 1929:65). Further trial plots were established and eventually, after much study and testing of over 25 species, two pines stood out - *radiata* pine on the better soils and higher rainfall, and *pinaster* pine on the lesser quality, and often sandy soils, in both the higher and medium rainfall areas. These two pine species are now the backbone of the softwood plantation estate in WA. To the end of 1999, 34 000 hectares of *Pinus radiata* and 30 000 hectares of *Pinus pinaster* had been established in WA. One of the main reasons for planting *Pinus pinaster* at Gnangara was, because of its proximity to Perth as the major market, it would reduce transport costs and so improve the economic viability of the project (Kessell 1928b: 20).

During the period 1919 to 1935 the following objectives and work associated with pines was carried out: selecting suitable species; soil survey to ensure that *Pinus pinaster* and *Pinus radiata* were planted on the sites most suited to them; improving nursery techniques to ensure soil mycorrhizal fungi are present; tailoring ground preparation and planting techniques to our conditions; and adding the appropriate nutrients to our deficient soils. Tree breeding came later – in the 1960s.

8 TOWN PLANNING

A welcome, but unplanned, benefit that the metropolitan pine plantations have contributed to Perth’s civic development is the land that has become available for public buildings and facilities after the pines have been harvested. If the plantations had not already been there the area would almost certainly have become mainly residential. It was easy for town planners and governments to resist the pressure for residential development as the area was already in productive use, and then later approve its use for civic buildings such as schools, hospitals, and government buildings when the demand arose.

Collier plantation now forms part of the Perth suburbs of Como and Kensington and within its former boundaries the following buildings occur: Curtin University, Como High School, Koonawarra Primary School, Penhros College, Collier Park Golf Course, the Herbarium, the Agriculture Department, CALM’s Operational headquarters, CSIRO Petroleum Resources headquarters, and Bentley Technology Park. Somerville plantation now forms part of the Perth suburbs of Winthrop, Kardinya, Bateman and Murdoch and within its former boundaries the following buildings occur: Murdoch University, Murdoch College, Murdoch TAFE, and St John of God Hospital, Murdoch.

These plantations were developed in the 1920s and 1930s and were then ‘in the bush’ on the outskirts of suburbia. From a commercial point of view, when they matured about 40 to 50 years after planting they would be close to the Perth market and so would be an economic proposition.

9 BULLETINS

In his report of 1916, following his visit to Western Australia and Australia with the British Association in 1914, Hutchins found a marked scarcity of books on forestry in Australia. His own report emphasises the timber and economic aspects of forestry, and makes only slight, passing reference to water, recreation, tourism and the beauty of the forests.

Bulletins became the answer to this lack of forestry information in Western Australia. They became the means of conveying the latest information on subjects to do with forest management. They were non-existent from 1899 to 1916, under the caretaker, Inspector General, clerk and tax

collector Richardson, and then reappeared with exuberance under Lane Poole, Kessell and Stoate with Hutchins' 1916 report (Bulletin No.5). Bulletins continued to be produced up to 1985 when the last one, No.94, covered the topic of "Vertebrate fauna in the southern forests of Western Australia". Those produced under Lane Poole and Kessell covered 'scientific' forestry topics and included topics such as:

- the important species in the forest;
- the hardwood properties and seasoning of timber;
- the tannin industry;
- the sandalwood industry;
- fire management;
- the forest situation in Western Australia for the post World War I Empire Forestry Conferences held in London, South Africa, and Australia and New Zealand;
- paper making materials;
- a key to the eucalypts;
- the foresters' manual;
- working plans for different areas;
- the price list for trees sold at the Department's nursery at Drakesbrook (near Waroona);
- syllabus for training apprentices at the forest school at Ludlow;
- and a primer of forestry.

The demand for forest information, especially from schools, was high and in 1921 reprints of several bulletins were necessary. In the 19 years between 1916 and 1935, 48 bulletins were produced. This amounted to approximately half the total of 94 produced in the 86 years to 1985. Since 1985 bulletins have been replaced by other publications such as *CALM Science* and *Landscape*. During the 19-year period to 1935 the bulletins, together with the annual reports, performed the extremely valuable function of explaining forestry to the public and of responding positively to Hutchins' observation that, in 1914, there was virtually no information on forestry in Australia.

10 CONCLUSION

During the period I am focusing on – mainly 1919 to 1935 – the community valued the forests almost exclusively for the timber they produced, with some acknowledgement of their value in providing clean water and a slight interest in their aesthetic and recreation values. Paddy Pallin of Sydney in the 1930s and 1940s was the forerunner in Australia of the now keen interest in bushwalking for recreation in forests.

There was then no such interest in bushwalking in the forests in Western Australia. The Bibbulmun Track, the 950 kilometre-long walking track through the south west forests of Western Australia, was conceived by a forester in the 1970s. Its first stage of 700 kilometres was opened in October 1979 (Forests Department Western Australia 1980:27). Its current 950 kilometre length with updated facilities was opened in 1998.

More recently, and especially from about 1970, the community expects a multitude of values to be provided from forest lands ranging from resources and economic values to spiritual renewal and aesthetic values. Nonetheless the management of the forests, set in train in the 1920s and 1930s for commercial purposes, has enabled a wide range of other values to be experienced in our south-west forests today.

Kessell's words in his notes about the forest resources of the State sums up the situation nicely (Kessell 1927:16):

For 90 years, that is, from the foundation of the colony in 1829 until 1918, the vast forest wealth of Western Australia was to all intents and purposes at the disposal of all and any who cared to avail themselves of it. The restrictions on cutting were few and ineffective, with the

result that there was much wanton and reckless exploitation. With the passing of the *Forests Act* in 1918 a new era was opened in the history of Western Australian forests, as under it, the Executive is able to take measures of conservation and regeneration which in due time will result in a sustained yield of timber. Under the new Act a Forests Department was created which has the control and management of all matters of forest policy, all State forests and timber reserves, and the forest products of other Crown lands.

Once the *Forests Act* was passed in 1918 the activities of the Forests Department in the next 16 years clearly and vigorously set the framework for the extent, appearance and management of the forest areas of the south west of Western Australia that we now enjoy 80 years later on. We owe a debt of gratitude to the recommendations of Hutchins and the enthusiastic work of Lane Poole and Kessell and their staff.

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