A Brief History of the Sandalwood Industry of Western Australia

by

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Sandalwood has been used extensively in the Orient for many centuries; particularly in India and China where, because of its aromatic properties, it is highly prized for use on ceremonial occasions when joss sticks made from it are burned as incense. It has also been valued in Europe as a fine cabinet wood.

Just when the sandalwood trade between India, China and the Indonesian Archipelago began, no-one seems to really know, but it is known that Europeans became involved in the trade almost as soon as they appeared in the area. In 1511 the Portuguese occupied Malacca and established a trading base there from which they hoped to be able to monopolize the spice trade between the East Indies and Europe. It wasn't long before Portuguese merchants from Malacca were sending their ships down to Timor and Flores to buy sandalwood for the trade they had established with China.[1]

By the early part of the nineteenth century the British were involved in the trade, to the extent of having established sandalwood plantations in Mysore, India. Their chief market for the wood was Singapore and it was this trade that indirectly led to the establishment of a sandalwood industry in Western Australia.

This came about when in 1843 a report reached Perth, via a ship from India calling at Fremantle, of the high prices being obtained in Singapore for the wood of a tree very similar to one found growing east of the Darling Range.

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1 Donald F. Lach, Asia In The Making of Europe, Vol. 1 p. 113.

Bernard H.M. Vlekke, Nusantara, A History of Indonesia, p. 104.

Up until that time the settlers in the Avon Valley, being ignorant of its value, had been using sandalwood for firewood and as a building and fencing material, or else simply grubbing it out and burning it when clearing their land. This was occurring at a time when the colony was desperate for an increase in exports to help balance its trade.

Governor Hutt, delivering a speech at the opening of the Legislative Council on June 15, 1843, spoke of the enormous imbalance of trade against the colony, which, he explained, had to be paid for by sending specie out of the colony, or by issuing extra Treasury Bills. He emphasised that the colony could not continue to trade under such circumstances and that it was essential that some additional commodity be exported to help overcome the imbalance.

It is no wonder then, that upon receiving the report from India, the Governor hastened to initiate enquiries into the possibility of exporting sandalwood to the Far East. At the same time he notified the settlers of the report and instructed them not to burn or use sandalwood for any other purpose, but when clearing to stack it aside and have it available for export when required.

It was thought that the best chance of increasing exports would be to use the limited capital available in exploiting the still untapped, but abundant, resources of the forests. However, although several former colonists, particularly Sir James Stirling, Mr Dale and Mr Bland, had been working zealously to popularize the colony's timbers in the Old Country, very little had come of the several attempts made to start a jarrah export industry. Sandalwood had been tested by an expert in England and pronounced equal to the East Indian wood, and settlers were advised that it should be possible to sell large quantities of it in England at "enormous prices".

Then in early 1845 a group of settlers set about establishing a sandalwood trade themselves. As an experiment they shipped four tons to the Far East and were delighted to receive for it what was then the excellent price of $20 per ton. So began Western Australia's sandalwood industry.

By the end of 1846 another 32 tons had been exported and sold for $640, and an additional 200 tons were cut and ready for export. In 1847 the 370 tons exported earned $8 888 at an average price of $24 per ton.

By then the industry was booming - the young colony's first real financial boom - and all those who were able to do so, mainly Avon Valley settlers, became involved in sandalwood getting. Consequently, in 1848 exports leapt to 1 335 tons and earned $26 706 of the colony's total exports of $59 196. The other main items of export were: wool $19 332 and whale oil $7 142. Sandalwood, therefore, only three years after the initial experimental export shipment, had become the colony's primary industry.

In spite of the success being enjoyed in the industry and the prosperity it was bringing to the colony, it was not without its critics. It was claimed that the zealousness with which sandalwood getting was being pursued by settlers, was to the detriment of other industries, and that settlers in the Avon Valley were neglecting their properties and flocks while they were away in the bush cutting sandalwood.

It was, indeed, a very time-consuming occupation and it would often have been necessary for a settler to be away from home for a fortnight at a time, or even longer. For, after having cut and cleaned the wood, it had to be loaded into wagons or drays and hauled to the coast by bullock or horse teams.

Even in those early days when the white population was still below 5 000, there were probably independent

teamsters available to cart produce down to Perth; but it is unlikely that there were anywhere near enough of them to handle all the sandalwood plus the usual freight of wheat, wool, flour, etc. Wool was the main export commodity but in 1844, the year before the sandalwood trade began, the amount exported was only 80 tons. So the 1 335 tons of sandalwood exported in 1848 would have been more than existing teamsters could possibly cope with. In any case several early accounts indicate that many settlers carted their own wood. They would have had their own wagons and drays to cart equipment to and from their properties and teams, not only to pull the wagons, but also to help in clearing and ploughing their land.

From those early accounts too, it is apparent that bullock teams were used in preference to horse teams. Bullocks, although much slower than horses, were better suited to this type of work, especially in the very early days when the roads were at best mere winding, narrow tracks. While horses needed a fairly straight line to work and tended to become frightened and excited in soft ground, bullocks were easier to handle, could weave around obstacles better, work in awkward places, and would pull steadily under any circumstances. They could live mainly off the rough bush plants whereas horses required good grass, or else bran and chaff had to be carted to feed them, thus taking up valuable freight space. [2]

Many accounts of journeys with bullock teams show that on the rough roads, 16 kilometres a day was about a normal day's journey. There are some accounts of teams averaging twice that distance over two or three days, but that was much later when, no doubt, the roads had been much improved.

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2 T. W. Doyle, Bullock Teams And Their Drovers In The South-West. Battye Library.

In the 1840's the roads from York and Toodyay to Fremantle were very rough indeed. There was little money or labour available to improve or maintain them and consequently they were just winding tracks rather than roads. It would have been almost impossible to cart heavy loads over them in winter, and the wandoo flats and the creek crossings would have remained soft and boggy until the country dried out in early summer. It is unlikely that any culverts or bridges had been constructed before convict labour and more money became available after 1850; so the teamsters would have found it necessary to dodge the boggy flats when they could do so, or when there was no way around, to corduroy them, and the soft creek crossings, with small logs and blackboys.

For the sake of their animals, they would likewise have had to avoid the rough, stony, high ground and, as they weaved their way among the giant trees of the then virgin jarrah forest, would often have found it necessary to "swamp" a track around fallen logs. In summer the deep, soft sand of the coastal plain, between the foot of the range and Fremantle, would have been no less difficult to traverse than the boggy flats and creeks in the hills during spring and winter. No wonder then that the plodding, but steady pulling bullocks were preferred to the faster but more nervous and excitable horses.

Even so, teamsters often travelled in groups so that they could help each other through the difficult stretches, sometimes having to hitch two teams together to pull the wagons through the worst patches.

There were other difficulties to be contended with too. Bushfires, for instance, must often have caused concern by burning up the scrub on which the bullocks could be grazed, and therefore making it necessary to locate new overnight stopping places where there was still feed for the team. Camp sites where there was

sufficient water for the team were essential, and sometimes it would have been necessary to erect a temporary yard to stop the animals straying during the night. Perhaps the worst problem of all would have been the dreaded York Road Poison, a pretty pea-flowered plant that was fatal to stock and which grew abundantly in the Darling Range.

In time, regular stopping places and roadside inns were established along the roads; but the pioneeer sandalwooders of the 1840's would have had to fend for themselves. It is not to be wondered at then that, under such conditions, a return journey by bullock team to Perth or Fremantle took a fortnight or even longer. No doubt the critics were justified in claiming that sandalwood getters were neglecting their properties and flocks. Very likely though, the money they made compensated for it. Certainly it helped the colony at a time when such help was sorely needed.

Governor Hutt had been succeeded by Governor Clarke in 1846 and the new Governor, desperately short of funds for public works, early in 1847 put an export tax of $2 per ton on sandalwood. The money thus raised was to be spent on the upkeep of roads. This provoked such a public outcry that the tax was soon dropped, but in its place a system of sandalwood licences was instituted and then, only three weeks later, another Bill was passed imposing a toll of $1 per ton on all sandalwood prepared for export. The penalty for failure to pay the toll was a fine of $100.

Not long afterwards the Governor reintroduced, and had passed into law, his tax on sandalwood.

For the settlers this was the last straw. Some even threatened to leave the colony over the harsh taxes. They claimed that after paying taxes, tolls and licences plus freight, which was $8.25 to China and $4.50 to Singapore, and commission on sales, there was not much

left for them. It was shown that expenses, without the Government's charges, amounted to $17 per ton.

A meeting was held in July, 1848, between the Governor, the Chief Secretary, the Chairman of the Central Board of Works and representatives of the farmers and cutters. It was pointed out that the price had fallen slightly recently because of competition mainly from India. The Governor was reminded that sandalwood had virtually saved the colony and that it was ridiculous to aggravate the people engaged in the trade.

The Governor agreed to drop the tax again but he retained the licences and the toll. It was also agreed at the meeting to meet the challenge from competitors by exporting a better class of log, and to put an end to the practice of bartering sandalwood for tea. A practice, it seems, that was more advantageous to the merchants in China than to local exporters.

Perhaps the Governor's harsh taxes helped to kill the industry, or perhaps it was entirely due to the competition from India, which was very favourably positioned to undercut competition from Australia, but whatever the cause the sandalwood bubble had burst so far as Western Australia was concerned. After 1848 no more sandalwood was exported for eight years; except for 219 tons in 1851.

The trade was resumed in 1857 when 280 tons were exported. The next year 745 tons valued at $14 910 were shipped away. In 1859 the figures were 1 278 tons worth $34 518; in 1860 1 687 tons worth $32 720. After that, except for 1865 when the demand fell slightly because of a war in China, exports never again fell below 2 000 tons until the Great Depression of 1930.

In between the collapse of the trade in 1849 and its resumption in 1857, many significant changes had

occurred in the colony. The most important change was that Western Australia had become a penal colony. By 1857 about 5 000 convicts had arrived and in the same period a similar number of free immigrants came, thus trebling the 1848 white population of 4 622. The wool industry had prospered and grown, more land had been opened up for farming and flocks and herds had also increased considerably. Gangs of convicts had been put to work on the main roads, such as the York, Toodyay and Albany roads, building small bridges and widening, straightening and realigning them. Overall, there was a general air of prosperity that had been lacking a decade earlier.

It is certain that by this time many of the original sandalwooders would have become prosperous farmers and graziers, or at least have been well on the way to becoming such. This being so, it is doubtful that many of them would have been interested in returning to the sandalwood trade. One imagines that they would be fully occupied and happy enough now, nurturing their flocks and improving their properties.

But, there were new settlers who would still have been struggling to develop their farms and who would, like so many of the original settlers, have welcomed the opportunity to make some quick money to help tide them over until their farms became viable. So, although there was now a new type of cutter entering the trade, the majority of sandalwooders would still have been settlers. At least for another decade or so. There were, surely by now, more full-time teamsters who could be hired to cart wood for them so that long absences from home would no longer be so necessary.

But, as time went on, more and more full-time cutters joined the industry. There are on record descriptions of some of these men, that give us a few glimpses into their life style. They were mainly itinerants, living in tents or some similar temporary

dwelling, who moved mainly along the rivers at first, but later as the wood got scarcer moving further and further out in their search for new sandalwood country.[3] Often, it seems , they were married men who took their families with them.

They lived a hard life. There was no schooling for their children, nor was there any doctor or nurse closer than a day or two's travel. They lived off the land as much as they could, depending mainly on kangaroo for their meat. All cooking was done in camp ovens over an open fire.

It is difficult for us in the 1980's to imagine how harsh life was for people who lived like this over a century ago. Life must have been especially hard for the women. There is an account recorded of a cutter's wife who bore seven children, two of them being born in sandalwood drays on the way to seek a midwife.[4]

Often a woman would be left alone with her children while the husband carted the wood, perhaps all the way to Perth, but more often to the nearest town, where he sold it to the local storekeeper or agent in exchange for stores. It was said that storekeepers did very well out of such trade. Some women spent much of the time they were alone at the backbreaking work of cleaning the sandalwood their husbands had already cut ready for the next trip.

Heat and flies in summer, cold and damp in flimsy dwellings in winter, loneliness, sickness in themselves and among their children, and certainly sometimes even the death of a child through diphtheria or whooping cough, was their lot. And yet they must have had their happy

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3 Arthur Clamp, The Story of Sandalwood. Battye Library, PR. 8071.

4 Ibid.

times too; whatever they might have been. Unfortunately, the records are all too scanty and tell us little or nothing of that side of their life. We are left to use our imagination.

Sometime about the 1870's restrictions were placed on the export of sandalwood from India. The Mysore plantations had failed, the wood produced being of an inferior quality.[5] With the competition from India thus reduced, local exports increased dramatically, almost trebling between 1872 and 1882. In the latter year, 9 605 tons were exported and earned $192 000 (up from 3 942 tons and $63 072 in 1872). This peak was not surpassed for almost forty years, until in 1919 8 998 tons exported brought in $234 144 and the next year 13 945 tons earned $467 162.

After 1882 exports dropped away and though this was sometimes due to market factors, such as a fall in demand following oversupply, or outside events like the Sino-Japanese War of 1884, the main cause was the increasing difficulty cutters were having in locating new stands of sandalwood; it having been almost cut out in accessible areas.

Cutters were going back over the same ground again and again, cutting smaller regrowth trees and pulling up stumps and roots left by the earlier cutters. In the early days only the log part of the tree was utilised, but later, limbs, butts and roots were utilised too, and then it became customary to pull the tree out by its roots.

This was done by means of a horse and dray and a long chain. One end of the chain was fixed around the tree and the other end attached to the dray, then the

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5 Report by Forest Ranger Kelso in Forests Department file 1507/09. State Archives.

horse was made to pull the tree out. Stumps and stubborn trees were loosened by grubbing around them, then a long pole was used to lever under the roots to assist in the pulling.

The more determined cutters - or pullers - were pushing further out beyond the settled areas in their search for virgin sandalwood country. Some wells had been sunk for their benefit, but as they continued to push further out they camped on waterholes and gnamma holes they found, or were led to by aborigines, or else dug and timbered their own wells. In this way, the sandalwooders pioneered the way into much of the country that was later to become the wheatbelt. The surveyors, who came later, were able to follow the tracks they had made and to set up their bases on the wells and water holes the cutters had pioneered.

Meanwhile, things had changed down in the capital, too. By the 1860's there were many boats on the river plying between the bustling river ports of Guildford and Perth and the seaport at Fremantle, transporting cargo from overseas vessels up the river, and taking down to them produce from the inland.

Guildford was the port for sandalwood. In one eight-month period in 1868, 3 000 of the 3 256 tons exported that year were shipped down the river from there. When sandalwood exports doubled over the next decade, it is reasonable to assume that Guildford retained its share of the trade.

Teams coming down from Toodyay, the Victoria Plains, York and Northam and beyond, and Beverley and the Dale would there transfer their wood on to the boats at the busy riverside wharf, thus saving themselves the long trek down to Fremantle. Whatever merchandise they required for back loading could be purchased too, from stores at Guildford. It goes without saying that the colourful, hard-drinking teamsters would have patronised

the local inns during their stopover in town, and certainly ale, porter, wines and spirits would have featured prominently in their purchases for back loading. Even so, the journey back over the hills would not have been unnecessarily dry, for by that time there were roadside inns at Mahogany Creek, The Lakes and the Nineteen Mile on the York Road and at Bailup on the Toodyay Road.

However, this whole scene was to change again quite dramatically after the opening of the Guildford to Fremantle railway in 1881. Within a few years the lines had snaked up through the hills, first to Chidlows and then by 1888 on to York, Northam, Toodyay and Beverley. The transportation of inland freight by rail quickly led to the demise of the river traffic and the importance of the river ports. By the end of the century the railways had been extended eastwards beyond Kalgoorlie to Kanowna, south to Albany and Busselton, north to Northampton, to link up with the first Government line established there in 1879, and from Geraldton inland to the Murchison goldfields. Those railways were to play an important and lasting role in the expansion of the sandalwood industry.

The opening of the Eastern Goldfields Railway in 1896 gave access to vast areas of virgin sandalwood country hitherto inaccessible and the cutters were quick to capitalise on this. The effect is clearly reflected in the export figures for the decade 1892 to 1901, which show how the trade had been declining in the early 90's and then the sudden pick-up that came with the opening of the railways.

Year	Tons	Value in $
1892	5 716	85 740
1893	3 893	64 320
1894	2 784	46 860
1895	3 851	61 726
1896	6 848	131 600
1897	5 852	98 960
1898	4 349	63 624
1899	4 084	59 438
1900	5 095	78 076
1901	8 864	147 862

Perhaps the temporary wane in the late nineties was due to cutters joining in the gold rushes while the easily won surface gold lasted.

By 1918 a whole network of branch lines had been constructed throughout the wheatbelt. Branches extended eastwards from the Great Southern line to Narembeen, Bruce Rock, Lake Grace and Ongerup and northwards from the Goldfields line to Dowerin and Bencubbin, with a trunk line through Goomalling to Mullewa.

The life of sandalwooders in the Goldfields and Great Southern districts before the Great War would not have been so very different to that of the cutters of the 1870's and 80's; except of course for the advantages brought by the railways. However, the wood close to the lines was soon cut out and the cutters had to move further and further out from the towns; so it was still a hard, lonely life. They still, of necessity, had to keep moving camp and to live in tents or makeshift homes. Furniture consisted largely of kerosene cases. Water, always a problem in the dry inland areas, had to be carted from the railway or else some other supply located. In the goldfields in particular there was much sickness: barcoo rot, dysentery and, in the towns at

least, typhoid. Accidents and infection were not infrequent. Poor diet, bad water and flies were the main causes of illness - not just for sandalwooders of course, but for the many thousands of men who had flocked to the area during the gold rushes. Damper and "tinned dog" comprised the staple diet, sometimes supplemented by boiled tomatoes or potatoes; but more often than not there were no vegetables available.

Of the many thousands of men who rushed to "the fields" in the nineties, only a handful succeeded in finding the Eldorado all had hoped for. Some of the less successful miners turned to sandalwood getting to earn a living, often combining it with prospecting, a practice that has continued to the present time. During the 1920's, when the price of gold fell, and again in the Depression years, the Forests Department reserved a percentage of the annual cut for genuine prospectors who were temporarily down on their luck. Licences for small quantities were issued to such men to enable them to earn enough to live on for a while, until they were again in a position to support themselves from prospecting and from working their "shows".

Many of the sandalwooders and prospectors were tough bushmen, who lived a lonely life and saved the money they earned to invest in a farm later; or else to spend on holiday in Kalgoorlie or Perth - or perhaps even for a trip to Melbourne to see "the Cup" - where they could live it up for a while, but usually returning to the bush as soon as their money had run out.

From time to time, cutters complained about the low price paid to them and of the big profits made by the exporting companies. In the early days settlers, with government assistance, made their own exporting arrangements, but by the 1880's cutters were finding it convenient to sell to local buyers or agents and so spare themselves all the hassles associated with such transactions. It wasn't long before the middlemen were exploiting the producers - or so it was claimed.

In 1909, James Mitchell, the Minister for Lands and Agriculture wrote to the Secretary of Woods and Forests, which was a section of the Department of Lands at that time, asking if he could suggest any means by which the industry could be improved, both for those engaged in it and for the State. The request was referred to the forestry officer in charge in the Eastern Goldfields, Forest Ranger Kelso, who was the Department's expert on sandalwood.

Kelso failed to see that there was any problem.[5] According to him, 1908 had been a near record year, the best since 1882; the price was governed by the price received in "The East" and sandalwood was being brought down from Kookynie to Fremantle (808 kilometres) at a profit. About $14 to $16 a ton on rail at Fremantle was always considered a good price in the Eastern Goldfields and about $2 less in the agricultural areas. At that time, he reported, the Goldfields cutters were being paid about $15 and those in the agricultural areas about $13. He pointed out that the price was to a large extent controlled by the demand and that the opening of the Great Southern, Eastern Goldfields and Norseman lines and the timber tramways was an important factor in the supply situation. He considered that the cutters had it in their power to control the supply by holding out for better prices. This had often been done, some men holding out for two or three years for a higher price.

Kelso added that years before, when he had recommended imposing a royalty on sandalwood, he had made careful enquiries into profits. "Much ado" had been made at that time by cutters about excessive profits big buyers were making on the China market. He had found that in the 1880's there were big profits -

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5 Report by Forest Ranger Kelso in Forests Department file 1507/09. State Archives.

up to 36/- a pekul (about $62 a ton) - being obtained, but the price was nothing like that now. He understood that the real control of the trade was in the hands of very wealthy Chinese merchants, who were the distributing agents.

This belief that big profits were being made by a "Chinese Ring" seems to have been widely believed in the goldfields. It was to be the subject of an investigation after the World War (see page 18).

But, if the cutters were being exploited, so too was the sandalwood resource. As early as 1876 legislation was passed aimed at preventing the unwise over-exploitation of this valuable wood. The new Act prohibited cutting of "miniature" sandalwood and provided for the establishment of large Sandalwood Reserves. In 1895 John Ednie-Brown, a professionally-trained forester, was appointed Conservator of the newly formed Department of Woods and Forests, which had been formed within the Department of Lands. The new Conservator selected and trained a number of Forest Rangers whose duty it would be to control, not only the sandalwood industry, but the now buoyant jarrah and karri timber industry, and also to manage the establishment of plantations of pines and sandalwood. Unfortunately, Ednie-Brown died suddenly in 1899 and it was not until 1916 that another professional forester was appointed to take his place.

In spite of the good work Ednie-Brown had started, it was not until the Forests Department was founded in 1918, with Charles Lane-Poole as Conservator, that any serious steps were taken to properly control the industry, or that any worthwhile research was done.

Soon after the War Lane-Poole sent Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, a young engineer who joined the Department soon after being discharged from the Army, to familiarise himself with every aspect of the sandalwood industry. Drake-Brockman read everything on the subject that he

could get hold of. He journeyed to the wheatbelt and goldfields, familiarising himself with the practical side of the trade, and inspecting the old sandalwood plantations established in Ednie-Brown's time.

It was while inspecting an old plantation at Meckering that he noticed that all of the sandalwood trees that had survived, and which were now mature and ready for cutting, were growing close to raspberry-jam trees. He assumed the "jam" trees were host plants and the sandalwood trees parasites. Lane-Poole sent the Government Botanist C.A. Gardner to investigate this further. Gardner confirmed Drake-Brockman's theory and wrote a paper on the subject for the Royal Society.

These investigations led Lane-Poole to believe that sandalwood trees could be grown successfully in plantations if host species, of which it was soon discovered there were several, were planted with them. To obtain seed to start the first plantations with, an appeal was made to school children to supply them at sixpence per pound (about 12 cents per kilogramme). In his book "The Turning Wheel", Drake-Brockman said that the nuts rolled in like a brown avalanche until there were tons more than could possibly be used and the offer had to be cancelled.

After the War, there was a boom in sandalwood and many men joined the industry. The demand was always around 6 000 tons per year but in 1920, 14 355 tons were cut and in 1921, 10 839 tons. Inevitably a slump followed. Large stocks built up at Fremantle and it was years before this stockpile was cleared. Claims about the Chinese Ring controlling the market re-emerged and Lane-Poole sent Drake-Brockman to China to try to unravel the situation there. This he soon succeeded in doing. He found that 80% of China's total annual requirements came from Western Australia and that while in W. A. it brought from $16 to $24 per ton, it was sold in China at from $100 to $200. He reported that

while the cutters in Western Australia, who roughed it in lonely camps in dry and isolated areas, received no more than a base wage rate, the State Government collected only a small royalty and the distributing firm in China earned only a small percentage on the selling price of the wood; it was obvious that the exporters from Western Australia made a huge profit.

So much for the mysterious Chinese Ring.

Drake-Brockman called tenders in Hong Kong for the handling of all Western Australian sandalwood in China. A tender by Jardines to take delivery and market "at best" the entire output from Western Australia on a commission basis of 1½% was accepted.

Drake-Brockman's idea was that the cutters and the Western Australian Government should benefit more from the industry. He considered that even if the royalty was increased sharply (Lane-Poole had increased it from 50 cents to $4 already), it should not affect the level of exports. On his return he recommended that the State Government should control all sandalwood cut from Crown Land and share the profits with the cutters on a sliding scale as the price varied, and that all sandalwood sold to Hong Kong and Shanghai be transported by chartered ships, and that Jardine and Matherson arrange all handling distribution in China on a commission of 1½%. He estimated that the State Government's profit would amount to $200 000 per annum and thus enable the Forests Department to afford to establish large plantations of sandalwood - which his research had shown was possible - so that when the natural supplies cut out the plantations would supply the market requirements.

Lane-Poole accepted the recommendations without question but the Premier of the National Party Government, James Mitchell, rejected them. He said "It savours too much of a trading concern".

Eventually, 6 000 tons were rationed to a panel of exporters with the Government to receive $24 per ton and thus its share would be $144 000 per annum instead of the few thousand dollars before Drake-Brockman's visit to China.

Later the exporting companies had to pay $50 per ton royalty but $32 was refunded upon proof that the cutters had been paid at least that amount. So the cutters too, benefited from the exercise.

The industry has had its ups and downs since the 1920's. The Depression, the World War, the Communist take-over in China, which put an end to the trade with mainland China; and modern drugs and chemicals, which replaced the use of sandalwood oil in medicine and cosmetics, have all had some effect on the industry.

After 1930, the industry never regained its former importance, but it does continue to afford a good living to a small number of men. Today, about 100 men are involved in sandalwood pulling. They operate in the Murchison and North-Eastern Goldfields. Parties of two or three men are issued licences for 200 to 400 tons and for the best of it, the log wood, they receive about $430 per tonne. Tractors and four-wheel drive vehicles are used to to the pulling now and the wood is transported to Fremantle by road.[6] Exports are usually about 1 500 tonnes per year and earn almost $2 million.[7] The main use for it is still the manufacture of joss sticks. Some new uses have been found for it locally, including its use in the making of musical instruments, such as

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6 Gerald Hughes of the Australian Sandalwood Company, personal correspondence.

7 Peter Richmond, of the Forests Department, personal correspondence.

flutes.[8] But only very select wood is suitable for this and the market for it is an infinitesimally small one.

It is not possible in an article of this length to deal with every aspect of the industry. The part the Forests Department has played in controlling the industry and in researching and protecting sandalwood, could alone provide sufficient material for an essay of this length. Neither has any attempt been made here to cover cutting in the North-West, the use of camels and donkeys in the industry in the North; the sandalwood oil industry, or the effects of grazing, insect pests and rabbits on young sandalwood plants, for instance. Instead, this essay has been confined to giving a brief outline of the development of the industry and an attempt to give some insight into the life-style of the people who engaged in it.

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8 Gerald Hughes of the Australian Sandalwood Company, personal correspondence.

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