

Mr. KESSELL asked was it a general opinion that the numbers and figures were too small?

Mr. MACKAY and Mr. CLIFFORD endorsed Mr. Port's statement of the necessity of issuing to fallers brands with larger numbers and figures, and branding hammers with larger eyes for sleeper branding.

Mr. KESSELL said the papers were on his table at present, so that a good job could be made of next year's brand. He took it, from Mr. Smith's interjection that there would be a decided objection to increasing the weight of the hammers in any way.

Mr. DONOVAN said the handles were too short.

Mr. SMITH said there was no objection to the weight being increased. It was a longer neck that was wanted. The full face of the brand had to go on each end of the sleeper, and as some sleepers were cut 2in. long and some 2in. short, it was a hard job to get the face on both ends when they were stacked.

Mr. TELFER said increasing the size of the hammer head and also adding a rejection brand at the other end would mean that the size of the shank of the hammer would have to be increased, and that would add considerably to the weight.

Mr. HEBB said he had all his hammers drawn out by the blacksmith. The shank then was no thicker than a man's finger.

Mr. DONOVAN considered there should be lugs the same as on a carpenter's hammer.

Mr. KESSELL said, regarding the question of the inspector's number, he wanted it to be clearly understood in future that one number would be allocated to each person using an inspection hammer and that same number would run on from year to year. Foresters would be responsible for seeing that nobody but the man to whom the hammer was issued used that particular hammer. It was better to let a ship lie idle at Bunbury than to use another man's hammer. It was a very serious offence for any district officer either to allow anyone to use it with his knowledge, or to leave the hammer in such a position, while in his possession, that it might be used by anyone else, and if, for any reason, one man ceased to inspect, that number would remain out of circulation for a sufficiently long time that there should be no confusion as to who branded any sleepers with that particular number on.

Mr. MACKAY spoke of the folly of getting rid of our best timber at too great a rate. He said that we should shortly be importing timber from other countries at a higher cost, and he advocated an export duty. He thought the specifications should be greatly modified. He thought the timber companies should carry out their own inspections, although he was aware that the department derived revenue from this source. He deplored the fact that the late timber inspectors who were now doing ranging work were often unavailable for bush work owing to inspection of timber for shipping.

Mr. McCOY recalled that on one occasion 10,000 sleepers were sent away without inspection owing to an accumulation of stocks, when the assistant rangers were responsible for the work, owing to the fact that sawmillers did not turn sleepers when it suited the convenience of the department as is now done.

Mr. KESSELL said the policy was accepted of inspecting those sleepers, and it was a matter of the most efficient way of carrying it out. The fact that Mr. Mackay, for instance, had two inspectors in his district had only been occasioned by the fact that those inspectors had been employed by the depart-

ment, and whatever they were called they were carrying out the duties, they could all see reasons against the "sacking" of these men because there was a change-over of system. The men were employed and naturally expected to continue in employment, and it was a matter of training them in the wider duties. Still, he thought that question of policy might be allowed to pass.

Mr. TRAINOR said with regard to the waste of timber, he understood that, if a cutter was sending in a number of sleepers that were condemned, he would not be allowed to cut any further. At least, that was so years ago. He spoke with feeling because Mr. McCoy once threatened him and three others that if they did not alter in their use of the broad-axe they would not be permitted to continue.

Mr. McCOY said, with reference to the statement by the Conservator of Forests, Foresters Smith and Mackay, that half round sleepers were equal to other sleepers, they might be all right in France and some of those countries where they used Spruce, but in a Jarrah sleeper the sapwood was stronger than the heartwood, and caused the sleeper to split without any pressure by the rail on the dog-spike. He advocated the use of a sleeper midway between the squared sleeper and the half round sleeper. When round back sleepers were carted in from the forest and shipped, it made it a very expensive operation. They could save much by shaping them off before carting them.

He might say that timber inspection was better organised than it used to be prior to Mr. Lane-Poole's appointment, and the general inspection was more consistent.

Address by Head Forester, D. McVicar.

#### "CO-OPERATION IN FOREST WORK."

*Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.*—At the opening of this Conference, Mr. Kessell stated that Mr. Lane-Poole, the late Conservator of Forests, had laid the foundation of the Forest Policy of the State. Now, I want just briefly to deal with the forests as they were prior to that, and with the work of the Forest Ranger, as he was then called. In those days the work of the Forest Ranger was to patrol the forests, timber inspection and land inspection. His work was practically a matter of the collection of revenue, to see that the timber was not unduly wasted either in the mill or by the hewer, and to inspect land that was applied for for selection purposes. Then we had no hewing permits in operation. A man got a license and he went into the bush, and all lands were Crown Lands and Crown Land was a harvest for the sleeper cutter. Mr. Lane-Poole quickly saw that that sort of thing could not obtain for any length of time, and the output of the forests be maintained. Some seven years ago come September, when our then Chief had had time to go through the forests and study the conditions, he called such a conference as we have to-day, but not such a large number of foresters were present. He then laid down his plans with reference to what he thought was the best method, not only of handling the forests, but of getting to know what our forests really contained. At that board the inception of the classification scheme of our forests was inaugurated. I think also at that

time was laid down the marking out in different districts of our sample plots. He recognised that one of the first things that we ought to know was what our forests contained, secondly, the rate at which our forests were being denuded, and thirdly, what regeneration was happening in the forests. These sample plots were laid out in each district and as far as possible they are being protected from fire. I think we have only had one measurement so far, and that measurement has shown us definitely that the life of our forests is getting very near to a close, that is as far as export is concerned, at the present rate of cutting. I think I mentioned yesterday that on that first measurement our forests were making 250,000 loads a year, and we were cutting it out at the rate of 800,000 loads a year. Instead of our forests being of great extent, running into, it was said, something like 18 million acres, we found that it is pretty hard to secure the quota that has been laid down by the Commonwealth for our portion of forest country, namely, three million acres. And of that three million acres 2,600,000 acres has been already cut over. Consequently it pertains to every forester in the Department to exercise very great care that all waste shall be eliminated, and that the best possible use shall be made out of our remaining forests.

Mr. Lane-Poole went one step further; he not only started the demarkation of our forests but he changed the name from Forest Ranger to Forester. I think you will all recognise with me that that was not done as a mere whim. It was done so that the foresters would know that he had to have a wider outlook, and not merely have the collection of revenue; also that the public and the State would understand that the forester was there for forestry purposes. In that wider outlook the forester had to recognise that his range of country, his district, did not only embrace the Crown lands carrying forest, but it embraced his whole district. It took in not only Crown lands, but it took in all private property.

As has been remarked before to-day, we must have the sympathy of the farmers in and around our forest country. Without that our work will be practically useless.\*

I should not be the only one going around on our propaganda work. Each district forest office should be a centre of propaganda. Every district forester, every assistant forester, and every timber inspector should be a teacher and educate the people in his district. It is not for the district forester or the assistant forest ranger to say, "Well, it does not matter, I don't want to know so and so, he is only a 'cocky.'" That cocky may be a very great help to you, or he may be the cause of much annoyance. In the olden days in connection with the land selection business, the Department got into very bad odour. We were then under the Minister for Lands. It was a matter of the Lands Department against the Forests Department in very many cases. Many of the older foresters can bear me out when I say that we recognised our responsibilities as district officers when many times we recommended that the land should not be alienated. Perhaps a year afterwards or less, when we were passing along the same track of country, we found it being fenced in and turned into a farm, because we had practically no control. We were without a leader; we were without a head. Now things are different. We have got our classification and we have got a good

strong control at the head of us who is going to buck every time that our recommendations are not carried into effect. Many of the older settlers are up against the Forestry Department. Now it is for us, as foresters, to try and eliminate the previous impression existing amongst the farmers in the various areas, and try to get the farmer to realise that the forester is there, not to interfere with his work, but to be a source of help to him, and also that that same forester expects that the farmer shall be a source of help and support to the forester in his work. It is only by this mutual sympathy that we need look for that result from our forest which we have the right to anticipate. In connection with this land selection business, a considerable amount of care must be exercised by all foresters. You know we laid down a certain standard, viz., land carrying four to seven loads in jarrah, and 20 loads in karri, that should not be recommended for selection purposes. Now, I do not want you to misunderstand me. When we say "land carrying four loads," that land may not to-day be carrying four loads, but if it was carrying four loads, or has been carrying eight loads or more, although it is not carrying four loads to-day, it should be cut out for timber purposes because, if it has been growing that amount of timber before, we must expect that it will not only grow that amount but increase, under improved forest conditions, not only 100 per cent., but in many cases, 200 per cent. Again, many small areas applied for in the timber country, say, from 10 to 20 acres. A man applies for it to make a market garden. There is a soak on it. It may be a considerable distance from any other settlement. There may be timber on it, or there may not. In the proper working of the forest for years to come we must have water for our future operations. Timber on the area is not the only consideration. A forester in his range should always keep a look-out for natural mill sites, because the days are coming, I hope, when we, as a department, shall ourselves deal with the whole of the timber transactions in the State. It will mean work, it will mean more worry, but if it means the proper marketing of our timbers and the elimination of waste, then it is something we should all work for. In connection with this Group Settlement Scheme of the Premier, in many of your districts they are picking out groups, as much as possible in the valleys. Say we reserve a range of hills for timber. Each district forester should look out before these blocks are laid out that there is a means of ingress and egress to that hill of timber, otherwise in years to come we will have an isolated hill of timber with no road to get it out, so that care must be exercised in that respect. Then again, in connection with our work of patrolling, the forester many times gets up against the sleeper-cutter, the sawmiller, or the farmer. We should not be looking so much for trouble and for difficulties. If you have given a man one warning and he is still going on doing that which is wrong, then prosecute him. Ask for the highest penalty you can get. If a farmer through ignorance does something wrong, then act yourself as the magistrate. Adjudicate on the matter yourself there and then without taking that man to court. Deal with him courteously, tell him the evil he is doing, explain to him the plans and aims of the department, and how, if this sort of thing is allowed to go on we will have no forest. A little quiet talk with a man along those lines will very often make a friend of the

forest out of him, whereas drastic action will more often make an enemy of that man, and one enemy on the outer fringe of your forest is going to cause you incalculable worry and trouble, and is going to mean a very great loss to our forests in years to come. During the course of the discussion on Mr. Brockway's paper something like that cropped up where a little quiet talk does a certain amount of good. They had a great deal of worry up there last fire season. I can assure you when you get fire fighting down in your own districts you will realise what difficulties these fellows have been up against. Fires started so often on one area there that it was thought wise that some drastic action should be taken. Prior to that the Conservator asked me to go up and hold a court of inquiry. That was done. The assistant forester was sent around to dig up the whole of the men who had permits in that district. Here I would just like to say that the working books Mr. Brockway referred to, of the fire patrol men, came in very handy, and I was able to get those loose leaves at that court of inquiry, and to get plans with the exact spot where every fire started. I was able to tell those men at that inquiry the exact amount it cost the department to put those fires out, and I was able to say to them—"Now, are you out to help us, or are we fighting alone?" and to a man they said they were out to help. Next Wednesday I am going there and I hope to start a strong branch of the Forest League. I think we as foresters should be foresters, not policemen. Do not be out looking for cases, but look out for friends of the forest instead of cases for the police court, and we will find our forest policy will get the sympathy of the people, and as we gradually come south our forest policy will be ahead of us and we will have the goodwill of the people with us. I do not think I need say anything further. You are all foresters, you are all bushmen, and you all understand what I mean.

Mr. KESSELL thought they must all agree with the full intention of all that Mr. McVicar had said. Just to prevent any chance of a wrong impression being created, he would point out that it was realised that although an officer might use his discretion and deal locally with a man, it was usually necessary that, for such officer's protection, the case should be reported to Head Office. Although it was not always necessary to take them into a police court, it was a dangerous precedent for any man to set himself up altogether in the place of the magistrate. That onus could be thrown on the Conservator. He had no love for taking a man before the magistrate. He knew it was not Mr. McVicar's intention, but he wanted it to be clearly understood that because an officer found it necessary to report one case after another he was not to be looked upon as a vicious individual causing a lot of trouble in the country. He thought there was not very much left for discussion, but they would allow five minutes to any member of the conference who would like to raise any matter at all.

Mr. McCOY said he wanted to speak on behalf of the Inspectors. He noticed right through the day the Inspectors were alluded to after the Assistant Foresters. He took strong exception to that.

Mr. KESSELL said that although the terms might exist, it was hoped that they were gradually eliminating the distinction, and that there would before long come a time when there would be no such term as Inspector. Timber inspection would play a very important part among the duties of all officers.

Mr. H. CLIFFORD spoke of the use of banksia for cricket bats, and gave an instance where he had had a bat made up and it was most successful.

Mr. SCHOCK said he had not taken very much part in the discussion at this conference, but he could assure them that he had very much enjoyed himself. He must congratulate every officer who read a paper and discussed it, and also Mr. Head Forester McVicar for his address. He was sure that, although the work was in its infancy, by its development and by application, with modification, it must improve the status of the Forestry Department. He knew there were a lot of things of which he was not aware, as his district was far south and he did not get very much in touch with other foresters. He did not get information of all the work which was carried on. Therefore he did not take much part in the discussion because there were so many able men and able foresters capable of discussing the matter better than he was.

Mr. McVICAR moved the following resolution: "That this Conference of Foresters recommend that all application for Permits for licenses for hunting marsupials or other game in timber country in the South-West portion of the State be referred to the Forester-in-Charge of the District for recommendations before being granted." Mr. Port seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. PORT asked whether any more public posters were coming out in regard to the fire business. The Conservator had asked them to send in all back notices. Was he issuing fresh ones?

Mr. KESSELL said the notices would be redrafted before next season.

Mr. TURNER suggested that, with reference to the registration and the notice that appears on the back of it, it might be a good idea to insert two or three regulations on the back of the registration, one in particular, which seemed to be the cause of most prosecutions. That was the undersized timber regulation. He would like to see that regulation embodied in the notice on the back of registrations.

Mr. McVICAR said they had tried for that for the last 16 or 17 years. The magistrate gave it from the bench at Katanning, at a prosecution he had in connection with mallet bark, that it should. He had the magistrate's notes taken down to Head Office. Still it was not a license.

Mr. KESSELL said it would be. He would see what objections there were in the past and would have the subject considered.

Mr. KESSELL said he was any question of it. The Conference had served Schock alone would justify. An officer who was in a district removed quarters seldom met a position to explain developing elsewhere instances, hit upon which was quite aware. It more to introduce. But there were many that entered into the and innovations brought opinion were more to ends. It was not an which went rather too

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allowed. If anything were introduced, either a regulation or a practice, and, because it was before its time it was discontinued, the result was that the re-introduction of a similar practice, even in a modified form, would have to be deferred for many years. Consequently, although many of the recommendations that were forwarded from District Foresters from time to time were absolutely sound and desirable, it was impossible to give effect to them. He did not want them to feel that, when they forward recommendations that were not given effect to, they were not appreciated. There was always some other reason underlying it. He could assure them that any recommendation that came forward was very carefully considered and, if at all possible, it was given effect to directly or indirectly, or else stored up for future use, when a fitting occasion arose. He would like to thank the officers who had gone to the trouble of preparing papers. The papers had been a valu-

able basis for the discussion, and considerable time and trouble had been put into their preparation. Mr. McVicar suggested the advisability of officers having opportunity to see operations that were proceeding. He thought, in view of the statement of the Minister in the early part of the Conference, there would not be much difficulty in persuading him of the advisability of holding further conferences from time to time, and, if at all possible, the next conference might be held in proximity to some forest centre where actual operations could be discussed on the site.

In concluding, he would like to thank all officers for the loyalty they had shown during his term of office and for the energetic manner in which their work was constantly carried out. Their efficiency was thoroughly appreciated.

(Conference closed.)

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1923.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

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REPORT of PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
CONFERENCE of SENIOR OFFICERS  
OF  
FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

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PERTH, JULY, 1923.

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