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1897.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

OF THE

WOODS AND FORESTS DEPARTMENT

FOR THE

FINANCIAL YEAR 1896-7,

BY

J. EDNIE-BROWN,

CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

[SECOND SESSION OF THIRD PARLIAMENT.]

PERTH:

BY AUTHORITY: RICHARD PETHER, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1897.

To the Honourable George Throssell, M.L.A., Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Woods and Forests Department,

Perth, 30th June, 1897.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the First Annual Report on the Woods and Forests Department of Western Australia—the first in the annals of the Colony—that recently issued by the Government containing only my examination of our forests prior to my appointment as Conservator of Forests, and which will, of course, form the basis of all subsequent issues of the Department.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. EDNIE-BROWN,

Conservator of Forests

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*Annual Progress Report of the Woods and Forests Department
for the Financial Year 1896-7, by J. Ednie-Brown, Conservator
of Forests.*

INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY.

1. As a matter of record, it is necessary for me to state in this, the first Annual Departmental Forestry Report, that only a little while before the commencement of the year under review, the Government decided that there should be a Department of Forests, as a branch under the Department of Lands and Surveys, with the Commissioner of Crown Lands as its Ministerial head; so that the institution of this branch of the service may be dated almost concurrently with the publication of my "Report on the Forests of Western Australia," and during the *régime* of the late Minister for Lands, A. R. Richardson, Esq., then M.L.A. and Commissioner of Crown Lands.

2. At first, the branch was known as the Forestry Department; but recently, this name was changed to that of the Woods and Forests Department, under which appellation it will henceforth be designated.

3. This latter title was considered to be more comprehensive and appropriate to such a Department, as, in view of the intention to plant largely the softwoods of commerce, the word "Woods" is generally applied to that branch of the profession which treats of the formation, maintenance, and management, &c., of plantations of trees, which have been formed by man; and "Forests" to those tracts of any country which have been covered with an arborous growth by nature, such as our magnificent forests of Jarrah and other timbers—hence the application of the combined words constituting the title of the Department.

4. Introductorily, it is my privilege to state the fact, that within a space of one year, the Colony, from an indefinite and comparatively little known market (commercially), has bounded into a leader of export timber trade with most parts of the world. Perhaps it is not too much to say that this position has been achieved simply by making known what we possess in quantity, quality, and variety of matured indigenous forests. At all events, it is gratifying to be in a position to report most favourably on the progress which has been made in our timber industry during the last year and a half; and as this is only a beginning of what we may expect to follow, it is safe to anticipate that the end of the current year will show a very marked increase in the timber operations in the Colony, and that from the great demand which there is now for our timbers, a large revenue may be expected from this source in the course of a year or two.

5. In order to meet the requirements of this particular Department, it was decided that its Annual Report should be brought up to the 31st of July this year, so as to embrace the whole of the financial and other works during the preceding twelve months. This arrangement will be found more suitable for recording the operations and their cost, than if the Report were issued to the end of December, as is done at present with the other Government Departmental Reports.

6. In consequence, therefore, of several difficulties which have arisen, owing to the transfer of the works in connection with forestry having gradually been made from

the Head Office of the Minister for Lands to that of the Department of Woods and Forests, this present Report is not absolutely correct as regards its figures and dates within certain periods; but is absolutely so as to the works done and instituted during the period indicated.

7. With these few preliminary remarks I beg to submit this somewhat unsatisfactory, and therefore brief Report.

SECTION I.

FORMATION OF A FORESTRY DEPARTMENT.

8. It was early recognised by the late Minister for Lands that such an important branch of the rural economies of the State as that of its forests should be controlled by a direct Department of its own, and it is mainly due to his credit, and that of the present Under Secretary for Lands, that this was done.

9. The importance of this step was also at once acknowledged by Parliament, and the necessary funds for establishing such a State Department were at once, without dissent, passed upon the Estimates.

10. It is true that a larger provision for this important and revenue-producing branch of the service might have been made by the Government, and would, I am convinced, have been readily granted by the House; but perhaps a small beginning, upon the lines indicated, was advisable under the circumstances.

11. Accordingly the Estimates provided, under the heading of "Forestry," for an expenditure of only £2,210. This included the salaries of Conservator, Clerk, three Forest Rangers, Nurseryman, one or two more labourers, office rent, and various incidental expenses, such as seeds, travelling allowances of Conservator and Rangers, &c.

12. As may be easily understood, the amount set down for the Department was found to be thoroughly inadequate for its requirements, and hence several of the items had to be overdrawn for absolute necessities; but no expenditure of any great extent was incurred pending Parliamentary sanction.

13. At present the position of the Department in some respects is somewhat of an anomaly as all applications for special timber licenses and the issue and controlling of licenses of all kinds are made to and pass through the Lands Department.

14. This, in many respects, I find somewhat awkward and is certainly not conducive to that thorough control and grasp of the working of the Department which is so essential in an important office of this kind.

15. Although matters have gone on smoothly so far, and good work has been done under existing circumstances, still it must be remembered that we are only as yet in the initiatory stages of the great timber trade of the Colony, and that a year or two will show very great developments in this branch of the Colony's resources, therefore it is imperative that we should be prepared for this coming expansion of business.

16. I have therefore submitted to the Minister, in order that the Department should be in touch with all matters connected with the forests of the Colony, that all applications for special timber licenses, &c., &c., should be received, issued, granted, and generally dealt with by the Woods and Forests branch of the service—all, of course, subject to his direction, through the Under Secretary for Lands. The adoption of this proposal would, I am sure, be appreciated by the public generally, who at present are somewhat confused and possibly irritated by the dual positions.

17. In the Estimates for the current year therefore, I have, amongst other things, calculated upon this suggestion being carried out, and have provided for an officer whose duty it will be specially to see after this part of the work of the Department.

18. It is incumbent, as the work of the Department extends, that its expenditure should also increase, and it will therefore not be surprising that the amount asked for this year is considerably in excess of the sum provided for in 1895-6. This, of course, includes the expense of the formation of large plantations of exotic trees and the development of the Department generally, which will be referred to in another portion of my report.

SECTION II.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

19. I propose that the Revenue and Expenditure of the Department shall not only be shown for each year, but also collectively from the inauguration of the branch in 1895. This will then show at a glance the Revenue and Expenditure in connection with our forests since steps were taken to place them under a proper system of management, and will simply consist of a tabulated statement as follows:—

20. **A.—STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FROM 1ST JULY, 1895, TO 30TH JUNE, 1897.**

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
1st July, 1895, to 30th June, 1896 ...	£2,380 17 0 ...	£1,347 15 9
1st July, 1896, to 30th June, 1897 ...	£9,135 17 4 ...	£2,760 3 4

21. **B.—DETAILS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FROM 1ST JULY, 1895, TO 30TH JUNE, 1897.**

22. * REVENUE.

	£
Special Timber Licenses	...
Concessions	...
Pile Licenses	...
Hewing Licenses	...
Firewood Licenses	...
Sandalwood	...
Royalties	...
Miscellaneous	...
Total Revenue, £11,516 14s. 4d.	

23. EXPENDITURE.

	1895-6.		1896-7.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Salaries, provisional and temporary (including labourers occasionally employed) ...	746	18 8	1,532	16 5
Allowances ...	3	15 0	206	6 4
Contingencies—				
Incidental Expenses (including travelling) ...	597	2 1	950	10 7
Office rent ...			70	10 0
Totals ...	£1,347	15 9	£2,760	3 4

SECTION III.

STATEMENT OF WORKS CARRIED OUT BY THE DEPARTMENT DURING THE YEAR.

24. Owing to unavoidable delays in getting out my "Report upon the Forests of Western Australia," organising the Department, and other necessary initiatory steps, it has not been possible for me to attend to much outside work; and hence works of this description may for this year be somewhat disappointing.

25. Still, a little has been done in this way, and although as yet only of an experimental nature, they are not only important but will indicate the lines upon which the Department thinks of directing its attention in future.

* Headings showing details of Revenue to be adopted in future Reports; particulars of which cannot be given this year.

26. These I will indicate briefly, as follows, under their respective headings:—

A.—SANDALWOOD EXPERIMENTAL FARM AT PINGELLY.

27. About two years and a half ago, the Bureau of Agriculture, Perth, deciding to try an experiment of planting Sandalwood, purchased some 20 acres of land near Pingelly, from the late Western Australian Land Company, for this purpose.

28. A portion of this area—some five acres in all—was ploughed, fenced, and planted with nuts during the season of 1895.

29. This planting was, however, unavoidably carried out too late in the year: about August—and hence the results at the end of the season were not at all satisfactory.

30. The kinds of nuts sown were a quantity of our native Sandalwood—*Santalum cygnorum*, and the Indian or true variety *Santalum Album*.

31. The native nuts came up freely; but those of the Indian species did not show any signs of germination, so that although treated properly in every respect, I fear that they were either bad or had been heated in some way during transit from India.

32. During the season following, that is, in the winter of 1896, some further planting of native nuts was carried out by the Bureau; but again, although also treated properly, and with satisfactory preliminary results, the very dry summer of that year proved disastrous to the young plants.

33. In the month of October, 1896, the Bureau handed over the whole plantation to the Government, who placed it under the entire jurisdiction of this Department.

34. Recognising that the previous experiments connected with this plantation had not been at all successful, owing chiefly to the fact that the sowing of the seed had been done too late in the season, I decided that a still further experiment should be made this year upon the lines chiefly of early planting. With this view I obtained the permission of the Minister for Lands for an early start in this direction, and for embracing the remainder of the area within the scope of our operations.

35. With this view, the whole of the remainder of the 20 acres comprising the plantation was enclosed, the old ploughed portion re-ploughed as it contained only a few plants, and the whole re-planted and put under the following:—

Sandalwood Nuts.

Sugar Gums planted in bamboos and pots.

Pines of sorts.

36. The cost of fencing, planting, &c., came to £70 13s. 10d.

37. As we go to press, the results in connection with this experiment are most satisfactory indeed, and as the plants and nuts have had a good start during the rainy season I am sure that I shall be able to give a good account of them in next year's report.

W.A.F.D. A.R. 1896-7

B.—EXPERIMENTAL CONSERVATION AND PLANTING OF SANDALWOOD AT MECKERING.

38. During the year under review, Mr. Wm. Paterson, Manager of the Agricultural Bank, drew the attention of the Minister to the fact that a considerable portion of the Meckering Agricultural Area contained a very fine crop of young sandalwood trees which would be destroyed and probably prematurely cut down if not otherwise protected.

39. Acting upon this information, a visit of inspection was made to the site, with the result that some 292 acres of it, Lots 22 and 26, were withdrawn from sale and declared a "Sandalwood Reserve."

40. Upon the greater part of this area, a very fine crop indeed of young sandalwood is springing up in all stages of growth, from the smallest seedlings to the young trees of from three to four inches in diameter.

41. The whole of the area has just been securely enclosed with a six-wire fence against stock of any kind; all the large trees have been trimmed; the grass has been skimmed round each tree so as to prevent damage in case of bush fires, and all the bare or blank places have been planted with nuts collected upon the ground from the trees now upon it.

42. It is intended to maintain this reserve as a sort of nursery from which nuts of our local species can be obtained from year to year for sandalwood operations in other parts of the Colony.

43. The expenditure in connection with the fencing, planting, and attending to this reserve has not exceeded £52.

C.—BUNBURY PINE PLANTATION.

44. The Government being anxious that an endeavour should be made to form plantations of some of the softwoods of commerce, and thus, to a certain extent, make the Colony independent of outside supplies, which are daily increasing, instructions were given by the Hon. the Minister to make a beginning during the present year.

45. Having previously formed the opinion that these exotic trees could be successfully grown in various parts of the Colony, and having raised a large quantity of pine seedlings in a temporary nursery at Guildford—in the expectation that they would be required during the present winter—I was glad of the opportunity of making a beginning in the direction indicated.

46. After some preliminary inspections, therefore, it was decided to commence operations upon the seaside commonage near Bunbury, and the Mayor of that town readily granted permission for the work being carried out there.

47. The site of the plantation is about two miles South of Bunbury, and forms part of the dunes or low sand-hills along the sea coast.

48. A considerable portion of the land is covered with scrub of various kinds; but not of such a height or size, generally, as to interfere with the growth of the Pines, and it was thought advisable to let this remain upon the ground, so as to serve as a protection to the young trees, and prevent any sand-drift, which might occur if the vegetation were disturbed.

49. The site is necessarily, and happily, undulating, and contains some very fine sheltered spots with fair soil, in which the more delicate of the plants have been inserted.

50. The system adopted was of filling up the most favourable and low-lying spots with plants, at about eight to ten feet apart, and of sowing seeds of the same kinds of Pines half-way up the dunes, and finally the tops and more exposed places with Wattle seed, as shelter belts for the young trees.

51. The trees planted, and the seed sown, consisted of *Pinus insignis* or the remarkable Pine of California; *Pinus pinaster*, or the Cluster Pine; *Pinus halepensis*,

or Aleppo Pine of the South of Europe; *Pinus pinea*, or the Stone Pine of the Mediterranean; and *Acacia pycnantha*, the Golden Wattle of commerce, which is indigenous to South Australia and Victoria.

52. In all, about 40,000 seedlings plants of the kinds named; 56lbs. of Pine seeds, 3lbs. of the Wattle seeds, and one bushel of Sandalwood nuts have been inserted in the plantation in question.

53. The plantation has been securely fenced on every side with posts and barbed wire, in order to keep out large stock of all kinds.

54. The area so treated is about 150 acres, and the cost of planting, fencing, seeds, etc., is under £140, or about 19s. per acre, which is very reasonable.

55. It is almost needless to remark that this experiment will be looked to with much interest by the Department; and if we are favoured with an average season, its results will partially regulate our efforts in the way of the formation of plantations of exotic soft-wooded trees in the future. We know, of course, that such trees will grow luxuriantly in various parts of the Colony; but our object is to endeavour to show that the comparatively large area of so-called worthless sandy land along our sea coast might be advantageously and profitably used for the purpose indicated.

56. As this report goes to press the young Pines look remarkably healthy and promising.

D.—WATTLE PLANTING AT GOOSEBERRY HILL.

57. It being desirable that the introduction of the Golden Wattle of commerce should form one of the rural industries which might be profitably introduced into the Colony, the Honourable the Minister sanctioned the putting of Reserve No. 1557 near Gooseberry Hill, under a crop of this tree, as an object lesson towards this end.

58. Accordingly this was done during the past winter, at an expenditure of only £30.

59. The area operated upon was 85 acres, consisting of poor, sandy soil, with here and there gravelly ironstone patches, the whole being covered with stunted Jarrah and Red Gum of little or no value.

60. No fencing or grubbing of any kind was carried out upon the land, but the seed was simply soaked, and planted with the spade, at about five to six feet apart, all over the ground, except in places where the crop of timber was unusually thick, in which case no planting was attempted.

61. Upon a recent inspection I found that the young plants are coming up freely all over the ground, and if it be found, later on, that a good crop is likely to be the result, then it may be considered advisable to fence the land from large stock, and ringbark the stunted trees which are upon it.

E.—PLANTING ALONG RAILWAY LINES.

62. The Minister having suggested that it would be advisable to plant Wattle and other trees in different parts along the railway lines, this was agreed to by the Commissioner of Railways, and carried out in a few places during the past season; the idea being to plant these trees so that they might become object lessons for settlers and travellers in the railway carriages.

63. A beginning only could be made this year, consisting of:—

- 3 acres near Northam, planted with Sugar Gums, Pines, and Wattles.
- 6 acres near Spencers' Brook, put under a crop of Wattles only.
- 3 acres near Cannington, planted with Sugar Gums and Wattles.

64. So far, these plantations are promising; but the results will be referred to in next year's Annual Report.

SECTION IV. THE STATE NURSERY.

65. Just about a year ago, it was decided by the late Minister (Mr. A. R. Richardson) that we should form a State Nursery for the propagation chiefly of plants of the soft woods of commerce.

66. Pending the selection of a permanent site, a temporary one was rented near Guildford, and a large number of trees of various sorts raised there.

67. Roughly, the stock thus raised consisted of:—

Pines of Sorts	...	...	...	60,000
Oaks	...	...	...	2,000
Elms	...	...	...	500
Ash	...	...	...	150
Sugar Gums in Pots and Bamboos	...	...	...	2,500
Poplars of Sorts	...	...	...	1,000
Sandalwood	...	...	...	200
Pepper Trees	...	...	...	500
Tamarisk	...	...	...	300
Planes	...	...	...	200
Others of Sorts	...	...	...	500

Total number of Plants raised in Guildford Nursery ... 67,850

68. It was, however, found that the poor nature of the soil and the salty character of the water were not conducive to the successful raising of young trees of any sort, so that the site has recently been abandoned for a more congenial one.

69. At first it was intended that the site of the permanent nursery should be near Bunbury; but this idea was recently relinquished and an equivalent found at Drake's Brook, on land recently purchased by the Government for this and other purposes.

70. As this report is being written, the change referred to is being effected; so that, for the future, the permanent State Nursery of the Colony will be at Drake's Brook, about 30 miles North of Bunbury, upon the South-Western Railway.

71. The site, soil, and water are highly suited for an establishment of this kind, and it is expected that the stock of plants which will be raised there during the coming season will be of a varied kind and sufficient to comply with the necessities of the Department, both as regards the proposed plantations of exotic trees and the free distribution of plants to corporate bodies which has this year been inaugurated by the Government.

SECTION V. ARBOR DAY.

72. As the result of numerous applications for trees of sorts for planting in the streets and parks of various townships, and from the Education Department for holding an Arbor Day for ornamenting the several school grounds in the Colony, the Honourable the Minister decided that these should be supplied as far as the surplus stock of plants available by this Department would permit of.

73. These requests were complied with as far as possible, and something like 6,000 plants were distributed.

74. Unfortunately, the variety of trees available was not very large, but as a taste for planting trees in this way all over the Colony has now been established I hope that a more extensive assortment and a greater number of plants will be available next season for similar distribution, when early application for same should be made.

SECTION VI. NEW TIMBER REGULATIONS.

75. On the 7th day of July last the Executive Council passed the following new Timber Regulations:—

REGULATIONS.

1. The said Special Area shall not be subject to sections 93, 94, or 95 of the Land Regulations of the 2nd day of March, 1887.

2. In these Regulations "Standard Timber" shall mean the following trees, being of dimensions not less than those indicated against the several kinds respectively, namely:—

Kind of trees.	Minimum circumference of trees allowed to be felled.	
Jarrah	60 inches	}
Karri... ..	90 "	
Wandoo	48 "	
Tuart	60 "	
Sandalwood	15 "	
Banksia and Sheaoak	15 "	

measured at 3ft.
from the ground
with the bark
on.

3. The Commissioner of Crown Lands, and such persons and the holders of such offices as he may for that purpose appoint, may, on application, grant the following licenses:—

- (a.) A Wood-cutter's License, authorising the licensee to do the following acts only: to cut firewood and to split posts, rails, and other fencing material from any dead-wood lying upon the ground on any Crown Lands described in the license, and to remove the wood so cut or split.
- (b.) A like license to persons engaged only in removing the wood cut or split under a Woodcutter's License.
- (c.) A Timber License, authorising the licensee to fell and remove any standard timber, as logs only, growing or standing on any Crown Lands described in the license; but subject to the right of the Commissioner or his authorised officers, during the currency of such license, to reserve any part of such timber from cutting.
- (d.) A like license to persons engaged only in removing the timber felled under a Timber License.
- (e.) A Hewing License authorising the licensee only to fell, cut, hew, split, and remove standard timber for fencing, sleepers, green firewood, and shingles from any Crown Lands named in the license.
- (f.) A like license to persons engaged only in removing the wood cut, split, or hewn under a Hewing License.
- (g.) A Lath License, authorising the licensee to cut and split into laths only, and remove any standard timber growing upon any Crown Lands described in the license.
- (h.) A like license to persons engaged only in removing the wood cut and split under a Lath License.

- (i.) A Bark License authorising the licensee, during the month or months mentioned therein, to strip and remove, upon the Crown Lands therein described, wattle and other barks containing tannin, gum, zamia wool, or other such substances.
- (j.) A Charcoal License, authorising the licensee to cut, burn, and remove charcoal from dead-wood only, upon any Crown Lands described in the license.
- (k.) A like license to persons engaged only in removing the charcoal.
- (l.) A Sandalwood License, authorising the licensee to fell, cut, and remove any standard sandalwood growing upon any Crown Lands described in the license.
- (m.) A like license to persons engaged only in removing the Sandalwood.

4. Piles and Poles will be sold by the Conservator of Forests only, subject to arranged terms and conditions to be approved by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and to the kinds specified in the agreement, and growing or standing on the Crown Lands therein described.

5. Each license will be available only for the person named therein as licensee, and will not be transferable except by the special permission of the Conservator of Forests, on application to him.

6. Every license above mentioned shall be subject to the following conditions, for breach or non-observance of which the license, and all timber and other wood cut, sawn, split, or hewn thereunder, and being on the land comprised in the license, shall be forfeited:

No tree shall be felled so as to obstruct any road or track.

Unless otherwise specially provided in the license, all timber or other wood cut, sawn, split, or hewn, must be removed from the land comprised in the license during the term thereof.

All persons cutting timber under one or more licenses extending over three months in any one year shall brand all timber cut by them with a brand, and shall register the same in the office of the Woods and Forests Department, Perth.

Every licensee must produce his license whenever production thereof is demanded by an officer of the Woods and Forests Department.

7. Where any person, without express allowance, strips bark from any standing trees, the Conservator of Forests and the officers of the Department acting under him are required to prosecute such person as for a malicious injury to property under the Statute in that behalf.

8. The fees for the several licenses shall be as follows:—

	Per Month for each man employed.
	s.
Woodcutter's License	5
Woodcutter's Carting License	5
Timber License	10
Timber Licensee's Carting License	10
Hewing License	10
Hewer's Carting License	5
Lath License	5
Lathcutter's Carting License	5
Bark and Gum Licenses	5
Charcoal License	5
Charcoal Carting License	5
Sandalwood License	5
Sandalwood Carter's License	5

Piles and Poles by valuation and arrangement.

76. These Regulations are only intended as a preliminary measure, in order to give the Department a better chance of putting a stop to the indiscriminate cutting of young trees throughout the forests, pending a more elaborate code, which will be issued under the proposed Forest Act.

SECTION VII.

A FOREST ACT.

77. That a "Forest Act," specially framed to meet the exigencies of the important and valuable forests of this Colony, is an imperative necessity, no one, I am sure, will deny.

78. This fact was recognised by the late Minister for Lands (Mr. A. R. Richardson), and a Bill dealing with the question was brought by him before Parliament last Session; but, unfortunately, too late to allow members to give it proper consideration. It was thrown out upon that plea, and with the view of its being properly dealt with during the approaching one.

79. The present Minister (the Honourable George Throssell, M.L.A.) is, I am glad to say, thoroughly in accord with my views as to the necessity for this Act, and I have his instructions to at once amend and re-construct the old Bill, so that he may be able to place the same upon the table of the House at the earliest possible date.

SECTION VIII.

NEW OFFICES.

80. Other and more suitable offices than those we now occupy are urgently required for the use of this growing Department.

81. The present ones in Eagle Chambers, Hay Street, are too small, and being at the top of a very high building are far from being convenient in many respects.

82. There is now a very considerable number of inquiries at the office, which are daily increasing, and will be much more as soon as the Department is put upon a proper footing as regards the issuing of licenses, etc., and therefore it is hardly fair to expect the public to toil up four flights of stairs to obtain the information they require.

83. There is no place at present in Perth where our timbers can be seen in a collective form, and the necessity for a Museum or room for this purpose is at once apparent.

84. Under the circumstances, therefore, I am pleased to say that the Minister recognising this, has promised to find suitable accommodation for the Department at a very early date.

SECTION IX.

REPORT ON THE FORESTS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

85. Of my Illustrated Report upon the Forests of the Colony, which was laid on the table of the House of Parliament on the 30th of June, 1896, some 2,000 copies in all have been received from the Government Printer.

86. I take this, the first public opportunity of thanking the Government Printer for the excellent manner in which this Report was turned out by his Department.

87. These Reports have been freely distributed, and copies have been sent to, the various Governments, interested parties, public institutions, &c., all over the world. A large number were also sent to the Agent General in London for distribution in the United Kingdom.

88. Up to date some 1,780 copies in all have been sent out by the Department, and a number are still in hand, which may be obtained on application at this office.

SECTION X.

THE TIMBER IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES OF THE COLONY.

89. A brief reference to this important subject is all that I can afford to give in this report, and will do so under headings beginning with—

A.—OUR TIMBER IMPORTS.

90. It is needless to give these in detail, but it is most noticeable that our import of soft-tongued-and-grooved woods alone have increased in value from £4,680 in 1895, to £23,618 in 1896; “worked” timbers from £16,382 in 1895, to £48,653 last year, and “unworked” timbers from £19,489 in 1895, to £62,764 in 1896, which together form our principal timber imports; whilst all our imports of timber increased from a little over £45,000 in 1895, to considerably over £141,000 in 1896.

91. This I consider to be a remarkable increase in one year, and only shows what an important subject it is, and equal to three times the value of the timber imports of the previous year.

92. This, no doubt, shows a very marked development of the Colony, and hence, therefore, is of considerable importance in this respect.

93. Consequently, as these soft woods are found so necessary to the development of the Colony generally, it only shows how necessary it is that we should at once go on with the cultivation of these within our territory.

B.—OUR TIMBER EXPORTS.

94. Owing chiefly to the fact that many of the buildings that are now being constructed all over the Colony are of our own timbers and also that our local mills are only equal to this strain upon them, the value of the exports of our timber is not so great as we might expect it to be. Notwithstanding, however, the great impetus which our timber trade has received in every quarter during the last year, the value of the export of this is only some £40,000 in excess of that of last year.

95. From the returns kindly supplied me by the Acting Collector of Customs—Mr. D. J. C. Goodsir—it appears, however, that the value of the Sandalwood exports have increased from £30,863 in 1895, to £65,800 in 1896, or more than one-half of an increase over those of the previous year.

96. Altogether, therefore, it is gratifying to be able to report that the value of the increases is most favourable in every respect and point to a very valuable increase all round in our timber trade.

97. I understand, at the last moment, from Mr. Goodsir that the increases are still going on and show a very marked improvement in the returns during the current financial year.

C.—RETURNS FROM OUR SAW MILLS.

98. At my request the owners have kindly supplied the following particulars of their mills and workings for the period ending 30th June, 1897.

Name of Proprietor or Manager.	Where situated.	Timber obtained by License or Timber Lease.	H.P. of mill or mills.	Probable No. of trees cut during the year.	Probable No. of loads of timber cut in the round.	No. of loads of sawn timber sent from mill.	Probable No. of acres cut over.	No. of all persons connected with mill.	No. of horses and bullocks employed.		Length of tram and railway on property.
									Horses.	Bullocks.	
Gill & Co.	Sawyer's Valley	License	28	8000	5350	4350	5000	70	30	10	½ Mile.
Gill & Co.	Mahogany Creek	Do.	20	3000	5000	3500	3000	45	21	10	½ do.
Dunton & Co.	Helena Saw Mill, near Chidlow's Well	Do.	14	3000	4500	1500	2000	25	12	...	3 ch. siding.
Geo. Shepherdson, manager	Jarrahdale, Darling Range, S.W. Railway	Concession	160 (nom.)	19360	40478	21573	...	100	90	...	45 Miles.
R. Honey & Co.	Adelaide Timber Co., near Mundaring...	License	34 (2 mills)	3000	...	2500	...	30	18	10	Nil.
Canning Jarrah Timber Co.	Lion Mill, Darling Range, E.R.	Lease	50	4000	7000	3600	5000	250	40	...	3 Miles.
J. A. & E. A. Buckingham	Canning Jarrah Timber Co.	Do.	88	7000	15000	8000	1500	500	60	70	35 Miles.
Thos. Buckingham	Kelmscott Mill, Canning River	License	7 (water)	100	150	90	1000	3	...	8	Nil.
W. F. Guppy	Kelmscott Mill	Do.	7	50	75	50	200	2	3	...	Do.
J. & E. Byfield	Helena Saw Mill, Canning Line	Lease	10	1200	1200	800	1200	11	6	...	Do.
G. & W. Sexton	White Gum Gully Mill, W.G.G. Creek, E.R.	License	16	2400	4500	2700	500	17	17	...	Do.
McCoy & Oudaille	Sexton's Mill, Parkerville	Lease and License	12	1800	3250	2400	2000	33	12	...	Do.
A. Patterson	Chidlow's Well Saw Mill	Do. do.	12	3000	3600	1800	2000	19	12	...	Do.
Jos. McDowell & Co.	Smith's Mill	License	10	1000	1500	1000	1800	10	10	...	Do.
R. Williams & Co.	Drake's Brook	Lease and License	32	5280	13000	6600	2000	100	70	...	6 Miles.
Hannans Saw Mill Co.	Cookernup Mill	Loc. 715 and 717 by Monthly License	14	1400	2800	1600	300	16	12	24	Nil.
Goodrich Bros. & Massey	Hannans's Saw Mills, Dwellingup	Lease	14	900	1470	882	300	30	42	...	Do.
Jas. Scott	North Dandalup Saw Mill	Do.	16	14000	2833	1700	300	25	20	4	Do.
J. C. Fort	Bridgetown Saw Mill	License	6	200	460	300	600	6	2	10	Do.
J. C. Fort	Collie Mill	Lease	25	2000	6000	4000	1000	50	8	10	Do.
The M. C. Davies Co., Ltd.	24-Mile Mill, Donnybrook Railway	License and Lease	12	2000	5000	2500	1280	50	15	...	Do.
H. J. Yelverton	M. C. Davies & Co., Ltd., Karridale	Concession	300	800	30000	15000	2000	330	400	...	20 Miles.
H. J. Yelverton	Quindalup	Lease	24	3600	5300	2664	500	100	32	...	14 do.
McDevitt Bros. & Mitchell	Donnybrook Mill	License	16	2800	5600	2866	400	80	30	...	Nil.
Silberthorpe & Adair	Drake's Brook	Private Property	*16	2400	150	80	60	14	16	...	Do.
Baxter & Prince	Silberthorpe & Adair, about 3 miles South of Serpentine Railway	Lease	†16	...	...	...	...	13	12	...	Do.
M. Hooker	Preston Saw Mills, Donnybrook	Do.	45	12000	16000	14000	2000	95	50	...	5 Miles (1 loco. 30 trucks).
A. B. Wright	18 Miles from Bunbury on Boyanup Area	Do.	14	2400	1200	700	1500	30	42	...	½ Mile.
C. & E. Miller	Boyanup Jarrah Saw Mills, Boyanup	Do.	10	1250	2500	1300	250	16	16	...	3½ Miles.
Rockingham Railway and Jarrahdale Timber Co., Ltd.	C. & E. Miller's Karri and Jarrah Co., Waigerup	Do.	154	13000	37000	18300	3500	420	200	...	15 do.
John Dunton & W. C. Forsyth	Rockingham Railway & Jarrahdale Timber Co., Ltd., Darling Range	Do.	160 (nom.)	19360	40478	21573	...	100	90	120	45 do. (3 locos. 120 trucks).
Johnston, Blakeney & Co.	Helena Saw Mills, Chidlow's Well	License and Lease	16	1000	1500	1000	1000	26	14	...	3 Chains siding at Station.
West Australian Timber Co., Ltd.	Armadales Timber Co.	Lease	16	3030	7500	3500	400	20	15	...	Nil.
Connaughton & Crossman	Chidlow's Well	Do.	20	2599	4212	2106	1000	21	16	...	Do.
Isbister, Wiseman & Co.	Gem Saw Mill, Sawyer's Valley	License	8	1872	936	500	1000	12	3	...	Do.
	Federal Saw Mill, Sawyer's Valley	Do.	14	2500	3060	1836	300	18	15	...	Do.
	36 Mills	...	1416	151480	278702	166170	44890	2587	1451	284	193 Miles.

* This mill started operations on April 12th, 1897. † This mill started operations during present month.

D.—COMMENTS ON MILL RETURNS.

99. Although the foregoing statement is not absolutely correct, I make the following remarks and observations upon these figures as pointing out the lines of our timber industry.

100. It appears that there are 41 saw mills in the Colony which are cutting our indigenous timbers, irrespective of others engaged in the manufacture of imported timbers.

101. The united mill power employed in connection with these establishments amounts to 1,416 horse power. This is very considerable indeed, and even of itself shows how large the timber industry is.

102. From this statement it would appear that some 151,000 trees were cut down during the period under review. This is certainly a very large number; but when it is taken into account that there are something like 30,000,000 matured Jarrah and Karri trees alone—without taking into account the Tuart, Wandoo, York Gum, &c., &c., in the Colony—it is evident that we have plenty of material to go on with, not only for the mill power now in our midst, but for three or four times that amount for at least the next 100 years.

103. It seems that these mills cut about 167,000 loads of timber during the year, and as the Customs Returns show that only 34,230 loads were exported, it follows that we thoroughly believe in our own timbers from the fact that over 131,000 loads were used in the Colony during that period.

104. It certainly appears a large area to cut over 44,890 acres in one year; but of course although *cut over* it does not follow that it is *cut out*; and I therefore feel pretty certain that as much more timber will be obtained from the land as has already been obtained from it; but apart from this, even supposing that we go over 40,000 acres each year we shall have more than enough of matured timber in our forests to last for many years to come.

105. No less than over 2,500 men are employed at these mills. This means at least 5,000 persons who are dependent upon these works for a livelihood. This is a very considerable population, even apart from the ordinary timber getters, who, with their families, number at least 2,000 more souls. It may, therefore, be estimated that some 7,000 persons are more or less connected with our increasing timber industry.

106. Of horses, there are 1,451, and bullocks 284, connected with these works. This, again, means the consumption of an enormous quantity of chaff and oats, the most of which is produced in the Colony.

107. No less than some 193 miles of private railways and tramways have been constructed in running our timbers to the port.

108. In brief, all these little matters, if considered as a whole, point to the importance of our timber trade.

J. EDNIE-BROWN,
Conservator of Forests.