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# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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24 Duff Street,  
ARNCLIFFE. 2205.  
December, 1980

Dear Friend and Members,

The December (Christmas) Meeting will be held as follows -

Date: Friday evening, December 19th, 1980, at 8.00 p.m.  
Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.  
Business: General (very brief).  
Syllabus Item: Mr. Don Sinclair will talk to us - "While the Billy Boils". You will surely enjoy this informal talk and, at the conclusion we will all join together for the 'Get Together' of the year.

Ladies, put on your best 'Bib and Tucker' for a wonderful SUPPER.

Supper Roster: Captain, Mrs. Wright, and all who can help - please do.

President,

Mr. R. Lee,  
Phone: 570.1244

Secretary &  
Bulletin Editor.  
Mrs. E. Eardley.  
Phone: 59.8078

Publicity Officer.

Mrs. B. Perkins,  
Phone: 587.9164

Treasurer and Social Secretary.

Mrs. E. Wright,  
Phone: 599.4884

Research Officer.

Mr. A. Ellis,  
Phone: 587.1159

"A lot of things are different now, that's why its good to know, old pals are still around to talk of days of long ago" David Hope

The President and Officers wish you a Happy Christmas.

HOLIDAYS.

Saturday, 14th and Sunday, 15th March, 1981 - Milton-Ulladulla and District Historical Society invites us to a weekend function. \$45.00.  
Please ring Mrs. Wright 599.4884 for details.

Saturday, 3rd, Sunday, 4th and Monday, 5th October, 1981 - Weekend historical tour of Dubbo and Districts. \$92.00. Deposit \$10.00 at January, 1981 meeting. Please see Mrs. Wright for details.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The St. George Historical Society is pleased to announce that the following books, written and illustrated by the late Gifford H. Eardley, for the Society, have been reprinted and are now available. No. 8 Book was compiled by Mrs. Bronwyn Perkins.

- No. 1 "The Wolli Creek Valley"
- No. 2 "Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway"
- No. 3 "Saywells Tramway - Rockdale to Lady Robinson's Beach"
- No. 4 "Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway"
- No. 5 "Our Heritage in Stone"
- No. 6 "All Stations to Como"
- No. 7 "Tempe and the Black Creek Valley" is also available.  
(Limited stocks only)
- No. 8. "Early Churches of the St. George District"

All books now available at \$1.25 per copy -plus current rate of postage.  
For your copy of the above books, please contact one of the following:  
Mrs. E. Wright - Ph. 599.4884. Miss B. Otton - Ph. 594259 (after 8 p.m.)  
Mrs. E. Eardley - Secretary - Ph. 59.8078. Mr. A. Ellis - Ph. 587.1159.

Book 9 in our series of books on history, local and thereabouts, is in the process of being researched. Can you help with any information concerning the early Pioneers of the District? If you can, this will be greatly appreciated.

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Many of our Members have been and still are ill. We are sorry to hear this, and hope they will be well again soon.

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MR. W.C. FOSTER

It is with deep regret that we record the passing of Mr. Bill Foster on 7th November.

A former teacher, whose career took him to many parts of New South Wales, he was Headmaster of James Cook High School, Kogarah, prior to his retirement.

Mr. Foster was a foundation member and Vice President of our Society, and a Fellow and Councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Members of our Society will recall with pleasure the many occasions on which he addressed our meetings and the way he was able to make history come alive.

He was particularly interested in Sir Thomas Mitchell and had recently completed a biography.

THE HISTORY OF FOREST DEVELOPMENT & CONTROL IN AUSTRALIA.

- from Forestry & Forest Industries in Australia.
- M.R. Jacobs.
  - Former Director-General of the Forestry & Timber Bureau & Principal of the Australian Forestry School, Canberra.
- Published in "The Etruscan" Vol. 19., No. 1. March 1970. Staff Magazine of the Bank of New South Wales.

The first Australian colony to be developed was New South Wales with the first settlement around the excellent harbour of Sydney. N.S.W. had a good range of forest types, but the better forests were situated far from the capital, across rough ranges and several rivers. Prized native timbers such as red cedar were used locally and even exported, and durable local woods were used where necessary in constructions, but half or more of the essential industrial wood was coniferous timber imported by ship. It was cheaper to transport wood from Scandinavia to Sydney than from the northern rivers. A somewhat similar situation developed in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania made greater use of their native forests.

The Colony of South Australia had very little native forest, as is evident from the map. The cost of importing wood caused concern there one hundred years ago. In 1870 enlightened leaders decided on a creative forest policy. A forest service was formed and by 1880 it had experimented with plantations of more than seventy species of native and exotic forest trees, and was successful with several of them, particularly with radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*) from California and maritime pine (*P. pinaster*) from the Mediterranean. The Colony (later the State) continued its creative forest policy and, in spite of starting with virtually nothing, in 1970 has the largest mills producing sawnwood in Australia, bigger than any based on the splendid native forests of the other States.

South Australia has a most interesting case of the use of wood as an industrial fuel. The regional electricity station in Mt. Gambier is fuelled in the main by bark and chipped offcuts from the mills producing industrial wood from the State plantations. The station is linked to the South Australian grid, but satisfied most of the Mt. Gambier district electricity requirements from wood residues.

At the time of Federation in 1901 South Australia was the only colony with a satisfactory forest service. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia had made moves to establish services, but the decade 1890-1900, when the main Federal conventions were held, was such a difficult one that little progress was made. The question of the forest industry complex was not seriously considered by the conventions.

At Federation the colonies surrendered vital powers with forest industries

to the central Government, such as the tariff, control of trade, quarantine, etc. but were left with the stewardship of the Crown lands in the States, and these contained most of the better forests. This has led to many problems.

During the first twenty-five years of the Federation, the States developed their embryo forest services as best they could, mainly with untrained enthusiasts. Between 1911 and 1924 the States conducted seven interstate forestry conferences, with the Forest Service of New South Wales, not the Commonwealth, providing the secretariat. These conferences provided the stimulus for the present national forest policy of Australia.

The first requirement was to locate and reserve for permanent timber production a certain minimum area of the better native forest, and to have this protected and developed by adequate forest services given appropriate powers by suitable legislation. In 1920 a Premiers' conference supported a resolution from the Fifth Conference (1917) that 24.5m acres of the native forest should be reserved. It took some time to achieve this aim, but it was done. Moreover legislation has been enacted in all States which defines the policies and functions of the forest services, gives them power to issue licences for the exploitation of State forests and to determine conditions of forest managements and the charging and collection of stumpage (the price paid by industry for logs). The moneys collected are usually paid into the Consolidated Revenue of the States and a specified proportion - half or much more - is allocated to some form of forestry fund from which the developmental work of the services is paid. Up to date there have been few regulations governing work in privately owned forests.

In the thirty-six years since the Seventh Interstate Forestry Conference in 1924, the States have strengthened their forest services. The Commonwealth - again as a result of recommendations from the earlier interstate conferences, the stimulus of a few dedicated individuals and recommendations from bodies such as ANZAAS and the early Advisory Committees on Science - has played a significant part.

In 1924 it established the Forestry Bureau and in 1925 it established the Australian Forestry School as a Division of the Bureau. This School functioned as a collaborative effort between the Commonwealth and State Governments and the older universities, until its functions were taken over by a Department of Forestry in the Faculty of Science in the School of General Studies of the Australian National University in 1965. The Forestry Bureau, now the Forestry and Timber Bureau, continues to administer a secretariat for co-ordinating intergovernmental activities, the Forest Research Institute and Timber Supply Economics Branch. In 1964 the Prime Minister, following several years of constructive discussion with the State Premiers, announced the formation of an Australian Forestry Council of Ministers to act as an advisory body on Australian forestry with the principal functions:

"To formulate and recommend a forestry policy for Australia directed in particular to the development of Australian forests to meet the national requirements for timber and



other forest products, both for domestic use and for export.

To promote and co-ordinate research ...

To examine methods of obtaining adequate finance for the development of forests; etc."

The Council is made up of Ministers in Charge of the State forest services and appropriate Commonwealth ministers, with Minister for National Development as chairman. The Council is supported by a standing committee made up of the heads of the State Forest Services and appropriate senior Commonwealth officers. The standing committee, in turn, is supported by sub-committees and research working groups on which the forest services, research organizations, the universities and industries may be represented.

In addition to its co-ordinating and research activities in forest management and silviculture, the Commonwealth supports the well-known Division of Forest Products in CSIRO and several sections in other divisions of CSIRO which work on forest problems. It gives massive support to many university research projects in the field. It also maintains a weather forecasting service in the Bureau of Meteorology which is of tremendous value to many forestry activities, mainly fire weather forecasting, but also weather warnings in several other fields where they are necessary in a rural activity.

In spite of the many good things that have been achieved by the States and the Commonwealth, there remains the difficult and grey area of attitude to the financing and taxing of industries based on long-term forest crops. The amount of money actually spent on labour and equipment in the field in raising and protecting a forest crop is very small in relation to the price charged by the States for logs, and ridiculously small in relation to price of processed goods. The only factor which makes tree growing unprofitable is compound interest. The time taken to grow the average log going into Australian sawmills based on the native forest at present, is probably at least eighty years, and into sawmills based on coniferous plantations at least twenty years. Any cost of \$1 spent on the treatment or protection of a forest is increased by 5% compound interest to \$2.7 in twenty years and to \$49.6 in eighty years.

Textbooks on forestry finance state that compound interest represents from 60-95% of the value of a forest crop. Forest services get most of their revenue from the long established sawmilling and plywood industries. In Australia these industries pay substantial stumpages to the State forest services and provide a great deal of income to State railways and highways departments. They are mainly family or relatively small companies with a minor political voice in policies which give protection to industry. They pay relatively little into the Commonwealth Government in company tax compared with the various charges they pay to State Governments.

The paper companies and other industries based on pulpwood, on the other hand, must be big to have a chance to enter the market, and they

must be profitable to have a chance to continue to exist. The Commonwealth Government collects a 45% company tax on the profits, and this is usually vastly more than the State receives from the wood without which the industry could not function. In Australia it varies from five to thirty times as much. A fraction of the money collected in company taxes by the Commonwealth would, if given to the State forest services, make log growing profitable.

In countries with single central governments, such as New Zealand and the United Kingdom, governments see the broad picture and take factors of this nature into consideration. They make political decisions regarding interest which permit and encourage the production of sources of raw materials such as forests, knowing that taxes from resulting industries will make the venture nationally desirable. This attitude is much more difficult to achieve in a federation like Australia, but no less important. It requires instruments of communication between governments, such as the Australian Forestry Council and the support of sympathetic individuals with a knowledge of the position.

Important progress has been made in obtaining a national attitude to forestry by the recommendations of the Australian Forestry Council which led to the agreement between Commonwealth and State Governments, as expressed in the "Softwood Forestry Agreements Act of 1967" which has already been referred to. This Act makes a political decision which reduces the interest rate on loans payable by the State Governments, to a figure which gives them a chance to get expenses back on the sale of logs. A similar agreement is most desirable to cover the development of the native forests. The Forestry Council, the standing committee and the Department of National Development are working on this problem with the State forest services. If success can be achieved it will demonstrate that difficult problems can be solved in the complex Australian Federation.

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