

19.10.23 Register 19.10.23 Gold

## CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

### New Appointment Criticised.

### Mr. Corbin's Qualifications.

The appointment of Mr. Edward Julius of Burnie, Tasmania, to the position of Conservator of Forests of this State was commented upon by members in the House of Assembly on Thursday, when an endeavour was made to get the Minister controlling the department (Hon. G. F. Jenkins) to table the applications and credentials of all those who had been considered for the position.

Mr. Anthony said that section 20 of the Public Service Act set out that any recommendation from the Public Service Commissioner should be considered and dealt with by the Governor, and that if the Government did not approve of such recommendation, it was the duty of the Commissioner to reconsider it, and within a specified time to make another recommendation. He asked the Minister whether after the recommendation had been submitted by the Commissioner and turned down by the Government, the matter was referred to the officer again for consideration.

The Minister of Agriculture—No; and I would draw attention to a further provision of the Act which gives the Government power to make appointments without referring the matter to the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. Anthony said that section 36, by which the Minister had evidently been guided, said—"If at any time, in a special case, it appears expedient or desirable in the interests of the Public Service to appoint to any division a person who is not in the Public Service, or is only temporarily employed in the public service, the Governor may, after considering the recommendation of the Commissioner on the matter, appoint such person as the Governor thinks suitable without examination, and, if the Governor thinks proper, without probation. No such appointment shall be made until the Commissioner has certified that, in his opinion, there is no person available in the public service, or if the person proposed to be appointed is temporarily employed in the public service, no person available and permanently employed in the public service, who is as capable of filling the position to which it is proposed that the appointment shall be made as the person proposed to be appointed." As the recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner were very seldom turned down, would the Minister take the House into his confidence and say what special reasons there had been for passing over Mr. Corbin, and what special qualifications the new appointee had.

The Minister—Such an involved question is difficult to answer.

Mr. Butterfield—The principle is very clear.

The Minister—Mr. Julius was appointed because, in the opinion of the Government, he was the most suitable man for the position. I have his qualifications, and members are at liberty to peruse them.

Mr. Price requested the Minister to bring down to the House the qualifications of Mr. Corbin, and a copy of the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner on the appointment.

The Minister said he would not do that. He was willing to submit the application and the credentials of the man who had been appointed. If he were to comply with the request, some other member might want the credentials of some other applicant.

Mr. Reidy—I want those of some one else.

Mr. Price—Bring them all down.

The Minister said that the credentials of Mr. Julius were available to any Member.

Mr. Hill—What do you want to hide?

Mr. Anthony asked the Attorney-General (Sir Henry Barwell) whether the Government had been right legally in overlooking the recommendation of the Commissioner in regard to the appointment.

The Attorney-General—The question is out of order; as it is asking the opinion of a Minister. (Laughter.) I am sure, however, that the Government was quite right.

The Rev. Percival Watson was elected Vice-Chairman of the South Australian Congregational Union for the current year, and Chairman-Elect for the year 1925, after an election so close that twice there was a tie, and a third vote had to be taken to get a final. Mr. Watson, who has a forceful personality, was born in Birmingham (England), and he came to South Australia in 1901, and received his training at Adelaide, and took honours in philosophy at the University. He has held pastorates at Henley Beach, Hindmarsh, and Gawler. He received



REV. PERCIVAL WATSON,  
Vice-Chairman of Congregational Union  
(and Chairman-elect for next year).

and accepted a call to Sumner Hill (Sydney) in 1914, and he was there for six years. He was Chairman of the New South Wales Congregational Union for 1918-19, and was the youngest man to occupy that position. Mr. Watson returned to Adelaide in 1920 as pastor of Clayton church, Kensington, where he still ministers. For 10 years he was a military chaplain, and he served throughout the period of the war in various camps in New South Wales. Mr. Watson is Vice-President of the Society of Christian Endeavour in South Australia, and lecturer in philosophy, ethics, and apologetics at the Parkin Congregational College.

Mr. Gerald Walenn, of the Elder Conservatorium, has been offered a position on the staff of the N.S.W. State Conservatorium in Sydney, and he has accepted it, subject to the approval of the council of the Adelaide University. He was appointed teacher of the violin at the Elder Conservatorium at the end of April, 1917, in succession to the late Mr



MR. GERALD WALENN.

Eugene Alderman. The son of an eminent scientist—Mr. William Walenn, F.R.S.—the violinist is one of a musical family. He was a student at the Royal Academy of Music from 1887 to 1895, and won all the honours within his reach. He later toured with Madame Melba, and has been heard by audiences in the United States and Canada. He also had the honour of a special command to play before the late Queen Victoria.

Among the passengers by the steamer Aeneas, which arrived at the Outer Harbour on Thursday morning from Liverpool, via Capetown, was Mr. Geoffrey Samuel, who was appointed lecturer in plant pathology at the University of Adelaide last December, under the Waite Bequest. He has been visiting laboratories of plant pathology in England, in order to organize, in the best possible manner, the section dealing with plant diseases in the laboratories to be established under the bequest. He also visited laboratories in France and Holland. While in Holland he attended the international conference of phytopathology and economic entomology. At this conference representatives of 26 different nations were present, and matters of wide importance were discussed regarding research in and the control of plant diseases. On his way back he spent a month in South Africa, where he visited university and Government laboratories in botany and plant pathology, and typical citrus and pear orchards. Mr. Samuel will take up his work at the University of Adelaide, dealing with teaching and research on plant diseases.

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## CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

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### Adelaide Scientist's Views.

The appointment of Mr. Edward Julius, of Burnie, Tasmania, to the position of Conservator of Forests, in succession to Mr. Walter Gill, has been severely criticised in some circles, and several questions have been asked in the Assembly why the qualifications of Mr. H. H. Corbin were not taken into account. A leading Adelaide scientist presented strong arguments in the case of Friday afternoon. He said that forestry as a planting scheme was taken in hand in South Australia long before any other State, and it was only recently that anything of the kind had been attempted elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Accordingly South Australia led the way among the Australian States, so far as reforestation was concerned, and local forest officers were in a position to teach similar officials in the other States in this regard, excepting those, of course, who had gained experience in such matters in South Australia, or other countries. The climatic conditions in the timber growing areas in the other States were quite different from those in South Australia. The low rainfall here made timber growing a matter of special study, and that aspect of the question was not a matter of which thought had been given in the other States.

#### Adelaide Graduates.

At the South Australian Government's own expense, and to their credit, an officer with experience was imported from abroad to teach forestry in this State, and to advise the Government in forestry matters. The School of Forestry had been in existence at the Adelaide University for 10 years, and a number of graduates had been turned out from it, some of whom

now held important positions in the other States. The Conservator of Forests in Western Australia, for instance, was an Adelaide graduate. With the retirement of Mr. Walter Gill the opportunity presented itself of entering upon afforestation in a manner worthy of the present economic importance of the science. It had been expected that the Government would raise the status of the position, and call for the highest qualified person, looking abroad if necessary, in the same manner as had been done in the case of the railways, to fill the position. Instead of that, the office was to carry no more salary, and of the applicants a gentleman had been chosen who, although his capabilities had been vouched for, could not possibly have the training that was required for the position of Conservator of Forests in South Australia. Neither could he possess the training necessary to advise the Government in the expenditure of large sums of public money.

#### Local Knowledge Necessary.

There was no doubt that Mr. Julius was a capable officer, but, according to statements which had appeared in the press concerning his work, he was a man whose interest in forestry had evidently begun at a rather late period in life. His duties were also confined to work in the existing forests of natural timber in New South Wales and Tasmania. South Australia's problem was not so much concerned in that regard. A man with a good modern agricultural training might be expected to be better qualified for the work here than a person who had spent his time principally measuring up logs. "Surely," the scientist added, "there is some officer in the South Australian service better fitted for the work, by reason of his local knowledge. The action of the Government seems to be absolutely foolish. Money has been spent to train men on scientific lines, and when one is required to take charge, a person from another State, without the necessary local knowledge, and without any special scientific training, is accepted."

#### APPOINTMENT "A BOMBHELL TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE."

The secretary of the Public Service Association (Mr. Hunkin, M.P.) stated on Friday that the service was extremely disappointed that the Government had found it necessary to go outside the State to fill the position of Conservator of Forests. The appointment of Mr. Julius had, certainly, created general surprise in the service, and was entirely unexpected, especially in view of the fact of there being suitable men in the State. Mr. Corbin, with his long service and his undoubted ability, training, and technical, as well as practical, knowledge of the subject of forestry, was a suitable applicant. The service had taken it for granted that Mr. Corbin would, naturally, fall into the position vacated by Mr. Gill, and he (Mr. Hunkin) seriously questioned whether the Government could possibly have found anybody in Australia more competent to carry out the work. The announcement of the appointment was a bombshell to them. The Government would, of course, have been justified in going out of the State to fill the important post had there been no one in the State competent to succeed Mr. Gill, but that could not be urged in Mr. Corbin's case. Another feature of the question that was extremely difficult for the service to understand was that the Public Service Commissioner, whose duty it was to recommend applicants for positions in the service, had selected Mr. Corbin to fill the position. It was obvious that the Government had acted in defiance of that recommendation, and also in contravention of the accepted method of filling positions.

#### Theory and Practice.

A prominent citizen, who has always taken an active interest in forestry, said yesterday that there was no gainsaying Mr. Corbin's academic qualifications. But he pointed out that theory was not everything in forestry. In Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania practical foresters were in charge of the forestry departments, and in those States there had been controversy for some years between the practical foresters and the university trained men. He knew nothing of the attainments of Mr. Julius, but he thought that his experience in Tasmania should make him a very suitable man for the position. He knew that there were several foresters in the department with many years' experience, but he thought the Government was wise in getting somebody from outside, who would introduce new ideas into the State timber-growing concerns. He considered that the importance of forestry demanded that the best possible man should be obtained. It had been stated freely that within 15 years America and Canada would cease to export their soft woods, and there, surely, must be an end to our imports from the Baltic. South Australia must in the near future plant large areas of suitable timber on her vacant lands, of which there was plenty in the south-east, or timber would have to be replaced largely by steel and cement in houses and buildings generally.