

Charles Edward Lane-Poole (1885-1970), forester, was born on 16 August 1885 at Eastbourne, Sussex, England, youngest son of Stanley Edward Lane-Poole, Egyptologist and professor of Arabic at Trinity College, Dublin, and his wife Charlotte Bell, née Wilson. He was educated at St Columba's College, Dublin, and at the Ecole Forestière, Nancy, France. After a year at the South African Forest School in 1906-07 he served until 1910 as district forest officer in the Transvaal. In Dublin on 20 July 1911 he married Ruth Pollexfen by special licence in the chapel of St Columba's College. In 1911-16 he was conservator of forests, Sierra Leone, and a member of the Legislative Council. On the recommendation of Sir David Hutchins, who had reported on forestry in Australia, Lane-Poole was appointed conservator of forests for Western Australia in 1916 and vigorously set about providing a sound forest policy and a school to train foremen and rangers. The Forests Act (1919) which he formulated was regarded as a model in professional circles, but lack of support and opposition to its implementation prompted his resignation in 1921.

In 1922 he was commissioned by the Commonwealth government to report on the forest resources of Papua and New Guinea and recommend a programme for their development. In his mainly solo surveys of hazardous terrain Lane-Poole indulged a taste for living dangerously, surviving disease and the attentions of hostile inhabitants. He was dexterous in the handling of his equipment, despite the substitution of a steel hook for his left hand, and he was also an expert horseman. In 1925-27 he was forest adviser to the Commonwealth government. At his prompting, the States and the Commonwealth finally agreed to establish an Australian Forestry School which was set up temporarily in Adelaide in 1926. In 1927 Lane-Poole became inspector-general of forests and acting principal of the Australian Forestry School (1927-44) in Canberra. He was also the administrator of the Forestry Bureau which he had proposed to co-ordinate education, research and policy (not formally established until 1930). The research section which he first promoted in Western Australia to include research into making paper from eucalypts was developed in Melbourne as the division of forest products, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The forestry research section of the bureau eventually developed as the division of forest research, C.S.I.R., in Canberra.

Lane-Poole represented the Commonwealth government at the Empire Forestry conferences of 1920, 1923 and 1928. At the first conference (London) he proposed the resolution which led to the formation of the Empire Forestry Association. He was one of the great pioneers of forestry in Australia, working tirelessly to promote a national policy. Of strong personal and professional principles, he exerted considerable influence through his teaching and administration and as the author of over fifty papers covering both scientific and general aspects of forestry. He was a foundation member of the Royal Society of Australia (Royal Society of Canberra). After his retirement as inspector-general in 1945 he carried out consulting work in Sydney. He died on 22 November 1970 in Sydney, and was cremated. His wife and three daughters survived him.

His brother, Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Hayden Owen Lane-Poole (1883-1971), joined the Royal Navy as a cadet in 1897 and was appointed O.B.E. in World War I. In 1924-27 he commanded the Royal Australian Naval College at Jervis Bay. In 1929-31 he was captain of the Royal Navy College at Greenwich and in 1936-38 rear admiral commanding the Australian Squadron. He came out of retirement in England to serve as commodore of convoys and director of demagnetization in World War II. In 1957 he settled at Armidale, New South Wales.

Select Bibliography

- *Commonwealth Forestry Review*, 50, 1971
- *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 Mar 1971
- *Times* (London), 3 Apr 1971
- Lane-Poole papers (National Library of Australia)