

Regula 19.10.23

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.