VINE PROTECTION BILL 1885

**House of Assembly, 20 August, page 606-7**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. H. Howe),** in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it had been prepared at the instigation of a very influential deputation, who had made it clear to both the late and the present Government that it was due to the country that a measure of this description should be introduced with the least possible delay. The Bill repealed the Acts of 1874 and 1878, and was a consolidated measure. The Act of 1874 was introduced to protect the vineyards of the colony from the dreaded pest of phylloxera. Hon members were fairly conversant with the great good that Bill had accomplished. It prohibited the introduction of vine-cuttings and rooted vines from any infested country, and the consequence had been that our vineyards had up to the present time been kept pure and clean from the great pest that had done such great destruction in Europe and Victoria. The Act of 1878 prohibited even the introduction of vine leaves, and the precautions that had been taken had accomplished great good, not only to individual owners of vineyards, but to the colony in general. Hon. members would remember the scare that was caused when experts differed as to the disease that had affected our vines, and it was feared that the phylloxera had found its way to the colony. That scare had been the means of good, and probably the passing of the two Bills he had referred to had saved the country from the disease. Since those Bills had been enacted other diseases had established themselves in various parts of the world. For instance, there was the scale insect in Europe, the Colorado beetle in America, and the codlin moth in Australia. The chief aim of the present Bill was to prevent the colony from the great ravages the codlin moth had inflicted on owners of orchards in other parts of the world. It affected pears, apples, and plums, principally. In California, where the climate was similar to our own, where it seemed to find a congenial home, the moth laid its egg on the eye of the forming fruit. In due course the grub hatched; it wormed its way into the core of the apple and got to the lower side, where it made its exit. But before doing that it returned to the heart of the apple, and touched the pips, and the consequence was that the apple dropped from the tree. Then it crawled out of the apple to the stem of the tree; it ascended the tree, and in the first little crevice it found it made a home for the time, and wove a little fleecy web round itself, and remained in chrysalis form until it developed again in a short time into a moth. The propagation of the moth in a congenial climate like California or South Australia was something prodigious. It attacked both the early and late apple, and in some years no less than 75 per cent, of the fruit grown in the orchards in California had been lost by this dreaded pest. He would draw hon. members’ attention to the following extract from the *Australasian* of July 28 last “In Tasmania and in Victoria the moth has been making great progress of late years. Like the rabbit and the sparrow, it finds in our genial climate conditions which enable it to reproduce its species several times in one year. In the cooler climate of Great Britain, it takes a whole year to pass through its various stages; during the greater portion of the year, it is, however, in the chrysalis form, the date of the escape of the moth being determined by the character of the weather. In favourable locations in California the moth appears about the middle of April, but more generally from the 1st to the 20th of May. It is believed that each female lays from 200 to 500 eggs, but taking 200 as the lowest number, twelve moths in one orchard would produce 2,400 caterpillars; if one half of these were females, they would give in the next generation 240,000, and so on in proportion to successive generations. The rapid increase of the moth when it is once introduced is thus clearly explained.” In California they had very drastic legislation indeed, and the people submitted to it with the greatest pleasure, because the loss not only to the orchardists but to the state of California was incalculable. He thought hon. members would say it was necessary that we should try to keep such a pest from our midst. The moth was already in Tasmania, and the legislation in regard to it was of a very drastic character. The clean and unclean districts were divided, and the unclean districts were subdivided into districts. The inspectors had great power and were doing a great deal of good. But there was great danger of the moth being- introduced to this colony in consequence of it being in Tasmania. The orchardists of Tasmania shipped a great deal of fruit to New South Wales in cases, and these cases in due course were filled with oranges. During their carriage from Tasmania to Sydney it was possible that the grub might find its way out of the apples or pears, or plums, secrete itself in the crevices of the cases, then go into the chrysalis stage, to find its way into South Australia and come out here a full-blown moth. Under this Bill our inspectors would have the power of seeing that no oranges arrived in South Australia unless packed in new wood. (Hear, hear.) That was a very necessary precaution. In Victoria the codlin moth had already established itself, and had increased at such a rate that it was difficult to find a case of sound fruit in Melbourne. To affirm his statement, he would read an extract from the circular of one of the leading nurserymen firms in Melbourne. It was to their advantage to keep the news of the disease as quiet as possible; but it had become such a plague in destroying the orchards round Melbourne that they thought it right to make the matter public, so that legislation might be passed to eradicate it. In their circular Messrs. Thos. Long & Co. said— “Of late years apple-growing is seriously inconvenienced by the appearance amongst us of the codlin moth, and if united action is not promptly taken this will ultimately destroy the apple, pear, and plum crops. This insect pest is creating such ravages that a perfectly sound case of apples is hardly to be procured in the market. Breeding twice a year, the insect is numbered by millions, and is increasing at an enormous rate. Around Melbourne there is not a private garden (in which there are a few matured apple trees) but what has this scourge, familiarly known as ‘the grub,’ which hardly leaves a sound fruit on the trees. We notice this codlin moth with the view of arousing combined action, and of pointing out how to destroy it.” Further on it was stated — “This moth is annually destroying thousands of pounds worth of fruit; it is a greater scourge in this and the other colonies than is the dreaded phylloxera. One grower alone calculates his loss as over £200. It demands legislation to compel all owners of trees to take united action in destroying the grub, which is the easiest way to eradicate the moth. Surely these facts provided very good reasons why we should endeavour to prevent the colony from being injured by such a pest. (Hear, hear.) The scale insect was also provided for in the Bill. This was the pest that destroyed oranges. It was not very difficult to eradicate on the whole, and while introducing a measure or this kind the Government thought it was only right that they should have the power of prohibiting by proclamation the introduction of any insect that was likely to interfere with the property of our orchards and nurserymen. The devastation wrought in America in consequence of the myriads of Colorado beetles that overran the western states had also come under the notice of the Government. In our southern country, and in the hills, we grew potatoes of excellent quality, and the Government thought it right that the Governor should also have power by proclamation to prohibit the introduction, if necessary, at any time of this insect which had caused such destruction in America. This was no new legislation. Even England had introduced legislation to prevent pests been imported to that country. It was also sought by the Bill to give power to prohibit other insects. An insect not known at the present time might within a short time commit great ravages, not only in Australasia, but on the continent of Europe. The *Home News* of last month said: — “It is reported from Vienna that a new insect, ravaging the vineyards to even a greater extent than the phylloxera, has appeared in great numbers in some parts of Romania and Bessarabia.” This was considered of such importance that a scientific commission had been appointed to investigate the matter. He admitted at once that the Bill was of a drastic nature. But he would ask hon. members to remember that our Bill to prevent the introduction of scab, and to effect its eradication, had worked a great deal of good, and that our flocks were now clean and healthy. He was sure that no Government would recommend the Governor to prohibit anything that should not be prohibited, in fact it would be only when the voice of the people demanded it. He had not any intimate knowledge of the Colorado beetle, the scale, or the codlin moth; but it was deplorable to read of the destruction caused in other countries, and now that our orchards and vineyards were pure and clean, he asked hon. members to pass this measure to keep them clean. (The Hon. J. Colton — “What is the scale insect?”) There were many kinds of scale insects. There was one in the colony, but it was not that which the Bill proposed to exclude. (Mr. Symon — “Can you compel it to emigrate?” Laughter.) Clause 2 of the Bill repealed the Acts of 1874 and 1878, which would remain in force until this Bill became law. In clause 3 definitions were given of diseases, insects, and trees and plants. In clause 5 the words “any other thing” would include the goods that went from Tasmania to New South Wales and then came to this colony. At present the Governor had the power of appointing inspectors, but the Bill proposed that the power with regard to this Bill should rest with the Government. Other clauses extended the powers given by the Act of 1878, and provided for the enforcement of the penalty. He hoped hon. members would assist the Government to pass this measure: South Australia was becoming a very large fruit-growing country, and he was told by tourists and travellers that the fruit of South Australia was superior to that grown in Tasmania, New Zealand, or any of the sister colonies. Our vineyards and orchards were now free from any scourge so far as we knew, and the Bill contemplated keeping them free.

On the motion of Mr. COPLEY, the debate was adjourned until Tuesday next.

8 SEPTEMBER 1885, PAGE 767

Adjourned debate on second reading.

Mr. PLAYFORD said that for years past there had been an Act in force for the prevention of the introduction of the phylloxera, but that Act did not provide against the introduction of other pests with which we were now threatened. There was, for instance, the codlin moth, which was well known as particularly destructive to apple trees. In those parts of the world where the winters were long and cold the ravages of the codlin moth were not nearly so destructive. as they were in warmer climes. Under the favourable conditions of a warm climate such as California and Australasia possessed the moth in question would breed not merely once but twice or three times in a year. It had now found its way to Tasmania, where very stringent legislation was in force to prevent its introduction from infected districts to others which were not infected. The danger to South Australia was that apples were exported from Tasmania to New South Wales and Victoria in cases, and that these cases were frequently refilled with oranges and sent on to South Australia. The moths got into the crevices of the wood, and were therefore liable at any time to make their appearance here. There was also a very similar danger, and from a similar cause, in regard to the phylloxera. The phylloxera existed in New South Wales, and was known to prevail in very dangerous proximity to places from whence camellia plants were sent to South Australia. The phylloxera, as they all knew, could be readily forwarded in the soil, and thus there was always the danger of our getting this pest too, even though the importation of vine cuttings and plants was prevented, indeed, he thought it would be well to provide for the prohibition of the importation of the camellia plants, as then the New South Wales people would awake to the necessity of eradicating the plague if they desired to cultivate the trade. (Hear, hear.) The Bill was a most useful measure, and would do much to encourage an industry which before long would he believed cover the Mount Lofty slopes with apple trees — (hear, hear) — and enable us to do a large trade with England; for it must be remembered that the London market was most bare of apples just at the very time when we could send them there. He would cordially support the second reading. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. JOHNSON thought the Bill needed little argument to commend itself to the House. The district he represented was peculiarly favourably situated for the growth of fruit, and within the last few years hundreds of acres had been put in with apples, which were a very profitable fruit, as they would stand carriage for long distances. He might say that he would like to see a cider manufactory here. (Hear, hear.) Cider was a most wholesome beverage, and could be produced very cheaply. He could confirm all that had been said by Mr. Playford about the codlin moth, and he would point out, too, in regard to the culture of the vine, that though we had hitherto escaped the phylloxera we ought to stand very carefully on our guard against its possible introduction from New South Wales. The round scale disease had undoubtedly made its appearance with Sydney oranges imported into the colony, and with the example of California before us we ought to awake to the necessity of very stringent legislation on the subject. (Hear, hear.)

The Bill was then read a second time.