**FOREST BILL 1875**

**House of Assembly, 23 June 1875, pages 259-61**

Second reading

**Mr. KRICHAUFF** said he did not intend to make a long speech in moving the second reading of this Bill. He had gone into the matter lately at some length, and thought some hon. members at least were aware of what he had put forward on that occasion. He thought that a Board was absolutely required to take the responsibility of dealing with forest conservation from the shoulders of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. No progress had been made last year in the work, although £680 had been set apart for planting trees. Those which had been planted in the North had been planted to no purpose, as the work had been commenced too late in the season for sowing or planting. The work had been done by tender, and he understood that not one of the trees was now growing, and the amount had been expended to no pur­pose. He was glad to say that the trees planted last year at the Hope Valley Reser­voir were growing amazingly well, showing that all that was wanted to success was care. After pointing out what had been done in Victoria in this matter of late years, he thought that we were very careless as regarded our native forest trees, and thought we should protect our native forests if we did nothing else. The present generation had only a life estate in the forests of the colony, and should leave to generations to come after a similar boon—(Hear, hear)—and especially should we be careful to preserve and cultivate forest trees, as we had not coal and other kinds of fuel here. Of late years importation of timber had very greatly increased, and in the future it must still increase. He did not therefore think that it needed many words from him to convince hon. members that it was high time action should be taken in this Direction. Much had been said and written upon this subject in former years. Dr. Schomburgk had made reports upon the necessity of action being taken to conserve the forests, and Mr. Goyder hart also reported upon the question. Other persons, such as Dr. F. Mueller, of Victoria, Dr. Hector, of New Zealand, and Sir Julius Vogel, the New Zealand Premier, had written upon the subject. He held in his hand two papers on this question published by the Legislatures of New Zealand and Victoria, for the latter of which he had to thank the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who had brought it to him from Melbourne. He thought it was absolutely necessary that this matter should not be neglected any further. (Hear, hear.) They had not only to look to supplying themselves in the future with fuel, but to preventing the spread of drift sand from the coasts inland. For we could do the same here that was done in European countries, and in France the coasts had been planted with great success. For 170 miles along the shore of the Mediterranean planting had prevented the drifting of sand, and so solidified the sand where the planting had taken place that no person would recognise the country again. Another thing that he looked upon as of great importance was that we should lay out our railroads much wider than at present, half a mile wide at the least, and plant the sides, so that there would be a supply of timber for railway purposes in the future. (Hear, hear.) It might also be expected that our climate would change for the worse if we pursued the same course that we had been following with regard to our forests, instead of, as he hoped, being made to change for the better by extensive plantation. The Minister of Agriculture had mentioned some little time ago that he wished leases to be granted with a condition that the lessee should plant a certain portion of the land with timber-trees. He feared that the farmers might be frightened by such a condition in a very dry climate, but thought that if they claimed extensions of time they might be able to carry out that work, so as to enable them, while carrying on their own occupations, to plant say one-tenth of their holding in forest trees. In the United States no more land would be alienated unless the person taking it up agreed to cultivate one-tenth in timber-trees if the land was not already timbered, and in that case to preserve the trees on one-tenth of the land. He wished to read on this subject an extract from the *Mark Lane Express*, of March 22, 1875, as follows:— “In response to a circular addressed by Lord Derby to the Secretaries of Embassy abroad, respecting the various descriptions of timber-trees produced, the uses to which they are generally- applied, with other important considerations connected with the preservation of the forests, we have placed before us the information collected by those gentlemen in their various localities. Until 1858 the highland forests in Switzerland were subject to the most reckless treatment. Steps have been taken to rewood all slopes which have been denuded. Almost all the cantons have now laws (or the protection, renewal, and extension o{ forests, and devote annually considerable sums to rewooding the unduly cleared portions of their territory. By means of lectures, &c, it is hoped that private forests will be more judiciously managed. In Bohemia and Hungary entire forests have been so completely destroyed and uprooted that it appears even doubtful whether the land is susceptible of again resuming its tree-bearing qualities. Proprietors now feel regret at the havoc, as the soil has become unproductive through seasons of drought, and a permanency of winds coming from the Carpathians fill the air with unceasing clouds of dust, and considerably increase the development of pulmonary diseases. The State gives prizes and rewards; Societies have been formed to further forest culture; nurseries and schools of arboriculture are being formed. In the Grand Duchy of Baden one-third of the land is under forests, or 1 269 000 acres. In Germany strict precautions are observed to prevent anywhere a greater number of acres being cleared than is annually replanted. In Sweden 42 per cent, of the surface is covered with forest, or 30 millions of acres, five millions belonging to the Crown. Of late years Parliament has been much occupied with forest projects. In Norway indiscriminate felling of timber produced a most unfavourable effect upon the climate. Nurseries are established to rear trees in large quantities, to be planted out in tracts hitherto neglected or denuded of timber. We saw here that the dust did rise very much, and it was very unpleasant; and he had no doubt that it increased the development of pulmonary diseases. He hoped South Australia would not be the last of the Australian Colonies to take this question up. New Zealand and Victoria were far ahead of us in this respect. New South Wales, Tasmania, and Queensland were not so much in want of timber; but if there was any one of the colonies that ought to protect its forests and needed more timber it was South Australia. (Hear, hear.) We had not exported timber during some years, but had had to import a considerable quantity; therefore he thought the necessity for the passing a Bill like that under consideration would be admitted. As to the Bill itself he need say very little. It was a simple measure, suggesting the appointment of such a Board as the Governor thought proper. The members would receive a small fee—one guinea—for their attendance say once a month. It also provided for the appointment of certain officers, and set forth the duties and powers of the Board. There were a few clauses relating to the impounding of cattle and other animals, and another to encourage the carrying out of the Forest Bill of 1873. He trusted the steps which were being taken would lead to the encouragement and advancement of such an object. He moved the second reading of the Bill.

On the motion of Mr. HARDY the debate was adjourned till that day week.