**SANDALWOOD ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1936**

**House of Assembly, 22 October 1936, pages 2070-1**

Second reading

**The Hon. M. McINTOSH (Albert—Commissioner of Crown Lands**)—Since the passing of the Sandalwood Act of 1930 the pulling and export of sandalwood has been controlled by the Government, and by agreement with the Governments of Western Australia and Queensland the industry has been similarly controlled in those States. This system of control has proved to be a definite advantage to the sandalwood getters in Australia, the sandalwood companies, and the Governments concerned, and recent investigations in China by the Director of Lands have confirmed the opinion that it is essential to the future success of the industry that the control should be continued. Two factors, which are the result of the controlling Acts in the two States and the organisation recommended by Sir Herbert Gepp in his 1932 report, have brought about the present satisfactory position of the industry. The factors referred to are:—

1. Stabilisation of conditions in Australia by means of unified control and regulation of output.
2. Creation of a sound and stable market in China by means of organised and centralised selling.

It is only by maintaining the control that we can obtain full advantage of the fact that more than 80 per cent, of the world output of sandalwood is concentrated in one source of supply—- Australia. Provision is therefore made in clause 3 for the repeal of section 11 of the principal Act, which will have the effect of allowing the control to continue until such time as the Act may be repealed or amended. A further amendment of the Act is submitted in clause 3, which will alter the definition of “sandalwood” so as to bring it into line with the Western. Australian Act, in which the definition is as follows:—

For the purposes of this Act the word ‘‘sandalwood” means and includes the wood of any tree of the geneus Santalum or Fusanus, and any other species of aromatic wood which is or may be used as a substitute for sandal­wood.

The reason for suggesting this amendment is to obtain control of the export of other species of aromatic wood which might be used as a substitute for sandalwood. A limited quantity of what was termed “sugarwood” has been exported from Victoria to China, and there is a small demand for it there. The wood in question is the species *“*Myoporum” which grows in the mallee and our east and north-east pastoral country, and is also known as sandalwood in this State. Unlike the commercial wood which grows in the saltbush country, and is a root parasite of little value from the point of view of land settlement, Myoporum is a valuable tree for shade and, in times of drought, fodder for stock, and it must also be retained to minimise sand drift. It is unlikely, of course, that this Government would ever allow this latter timber to be removed from Crown lands, but the wood is growing also on private property, and unless it is controlled under the Act there will be danger of its being removed and exported to the detriment of the country from an agricultural and pastoral standpoint. I point out that the term "sandalwood” is often confused with the tree that we know, as sandalwood throughout the mallee and northern areas of our State. Commercial sandalwood is a parasitic growth, and is not the tree known as sandalwood. As stated there is only a small demand in China for *“*sugarwood”, as it is not of much value, but if allowed to be exported it might become an irritant to the trade in the genuine article, and thus cause a disturbance of the market. The wood sent from Victoria is only worked up small tops and crooked branches which can be cleaned to look like sandalwood. The bigger wood or split logs would not be saleable.

In discussing this measure it must not be assumed that the continuation of control necessarily means the continuation of the existing agreement as between the two Governments and the Australian sandalwood companies. That is not at issue at present, and the existing agreement continues in any case to June 30, 1937. This Bill is for the purpose only of enabling the control over the pulling and export of sandalwood to remain with the Government. Some members may think that they are now voting for a continuation of the agreement. However to the end of June, 1937, and thereafter must be rejected or allowed to continue. On other occasions I have referred to the fact that a great deal of the wood that is being pulled at present is dead or dying, and in a report received a few days ago from Mr. C. H. Goode, Chairman of the Sandalwood Licences Allocation Board, he stated that he had visited the camps of all pullers and the localities of operations had been inspected. During this inspection, necessitating travelling nearly 1,700 miles through the Flinders Range, round Port Augusta, through the Gawler Bangers, County Dufferin, then north to the Trans-Australian Railway and through the northwest pastoral areas back to Port Augusta, he was struck by the overwhelming proportion of dead and dying sandalwood trees, probably at least 90 per cent, of both marketable size and smaller, due to the last five years of low rainfall following on the previous periodical rabbit-scarring. This indicates that, even to those who would suggest that the removal of the sandalwood is a detriment from the point of view of sand drift, there can be no cause for concern in this direction, and that the State and those employed in getting the sandalwood out would be benefited by the continuation of the marketing system. I move the second reading with confidence and hope that the speeches in regard to it will not develop into a thesis on the one hand as to whether we should disallow the pulling of sandalwood and, on. the other hand, whether better terms and conditions can be obtained. All that is asked is that the control over the pulling and expert of sandalwood should remain with the Government. In due course we can can decide how it is to be exercised.

Mr. Riches—Will you allow it to be discussed *?*

The Hon. M. McINTOSH—It can be discussed in due course. I have been frank and open at all times, and have given members the benefit of the information I have on the subject. I ask that the Bill be agreed to in order that the control may not slacken, otherwise unlawful trading may eventuate. In my district there are thousands of tons that could be used as an irritant to the trade. It is hoped that the whole marketing system can be organised for the benefit of those engaged in the industry.

Mr. BEERWORTH secured the adjournment of the debate.