**FOREST BILL 1873**

**House of Assembly, 19 November 1873, pages 1134**

Second reading

**Mr. KRICHAUFF**, in moving the second reading of this Bill, hoped that hon. Members had studied it, so that he would not have to say much. It was intended to deal with certain parts of the colony which were treeless. It would be in the power of the Government to declare any district in which forest trees might be planted, but while Government could plant some forests private persons must be looked to for something. He pointed out the great disadvantage a country laboured under in not having trees, and questioned the statements in Mr. Goyder’s report upon forest trees as to the rapid return which would be brought in by the trees. Private persons planting trees would eventually reap an advantage, but not at so early a date as there pointed out. The Surveyor-General thought a revenue of £35,000 a year might be derived from the forest trees in the sixth year, but in contradiction of that the hon. member quoted from a work on forest culture on this subject, showing the age of trees for cutting as follows: — Beech, 60, 110 years; hornbeam, 70, 100 years; oak, 70, 120 years; alder, 30, 80 years; birch, 40, 70 years; silver fir, 60,150 years; Norway spruce, 60, 150 years; Scotch fir, 30, 60 years; larch, 30, 80 years. He thought that when planted here some of those trees or other trees would come to an earlier maturity, but not to any extent what the Surveyor-General predicted. If we wanted private persons to go into tree - planting, we must give them partial compensation. Assuming that at the present moment very little coal and no peat was used in South Australia, estimating that 15 tons of fuel would lie used in each house per year, the last census would prove the annual consumption by 38 333 households to be 574,959 tons in the year it was taken. The amount required for the future would be very large, and unless we took action he did not see what was to be done. The hon. member read a recommendation from a writer on this subject, that trees for shelter and timber purposes and for fuel should be planted, as in America, in belts round the fields. There were now 1,400,000 square miles of treeless plains in the United States. If such a thing as that was of so much importance in America he pointed out that it must be far more important here where the climate was so dry. The same authority also stated that owing to the cutting down of forests the climate of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York had so changed within the past, that whereas the peach grew 50 years ago there it would not now grow after the forests became extensively removed. For shelter these forests should be planted in various portions of the colony, and tree-planting would be found to be a means of hardening and binding what was now mere drifting sand. As to the timber supply, it might be said that if we had not timber here we could get it from other countries; but that was not so clear to him, as the timber supply was falling away very largely in the countries from which the principal supplies came. The hon. member read from a recent article in the *Australasian* as follows“ There can be no doubt of the existence of the evil not only in this country, but over a wide area of the earth’s surface. There is a mania just now for clearing forests, coequal and coextensive with the desire for the possession of land. The question of timber supply belongs not merely to one er two countries, but to the world at large. The destruction of forests appears to accompany what is called European civilization. In Japan, as in this country, the timber is being fast cleared off in order to afford space for crops, which yield an annual return for the outlay. Many decades will have to elapse ere the mischief done can be even partially repaired.’' It was calculated that at the present rate of consumption the whole of the forest to the east of the Mississippi would be cleared in the early part of the next century. The supply was becoming more and more scarce in Norway and Sweden. He hoped that like other enlightened nations we would take the question up and not leave it. In reference to the question of rain, he thought the planting of trees very necessary to cause the rain supply to be large, and they have made some commencement in that direction. But though we might not at once be able to commence largely planting, seed might be collected, for fresh seed was highly necessary when a large forest was to be planted. Many trees in the colony, irrespective of native trees, were now seeding, and this should be carefully collected. He hoped as no objection was likely to be urgued against the Bill that, the second reading would be passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. A. Blyth) agreed with the hon. member that while the Government should do something in this matter, private individuals should be called upon also to assist. Since the hon. member had taken the matter up, and Mr. Goyder had reported upon it, attention had been largely directed to it both here and in the other colonies. He was astonished only that the work had been so long left undone, and he felt sure that the second reading would be carried.

Mr. PEARCE, as this was a matter only for the country’s good, did not think there could be any opposition, but he suggested the gum of Tasmania came to maturity in half the time of that of this colony. Therefore it might be wise for them to plant Tasmanian gums instead of native gums. At present it was not possible for us to supply wheelwrights and others who used colonial timber . He would have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. WARD would support the second reading of the Bill, but thought that it would be a much better course than the Bill laid down that the Government should establish State forests, and cause them to be placed under certain Wardens. He thought offering a premium for the planting of an acre of trees would only encourage persons to plant shrubberies round their own houses. It appeared strange that land was being offered in some places with trees on it for £1 an acre, and yet £4 an acre was to be offered to persons who, in other parts, would plant the land.

Mr. BRA.Y said that the scheme laid down by Mr. Goyder did not interfere with Mr. Krichauff ’s scheme. He did not see much in the Bill at present, as there were many blanks to be filled up. He agreed with Mr. Ward as to the effect of offering £4 for the planting of one acre of forest trees. Under the Bill he thought that a man might complete a plantation and get paid for it, and after two or five years transplant them.

Mr. KRICHAUFF pointed out to Mr. Bray that for one plantation in a certain place only one payment would be made, and that the trees would be protected. An officer would be appointed by the Governor in Council to see that the regulations were all carried out. There was no fear, after the trees had been allowed to grow for two years, that they would be uprooted.

The second reading was then carried.