**NOXIOUS WEEDS DESTRUCTION BILL 1891**

**Legislative Council, 7 October 1891, pages 1436-7**

Second reading

The Hon. P. KRICHAUFF moved the second reading of the Bill, which he said was very simple. It did not add to the list of noxious weeds. The object of the Bill was to give the Government the power to step in and compel destruction of any weeds which by proclamation had been declared noxious, as the Act now in force did not provide for that. The worst weed they had now to contend with was the Kentrophyllum lanatum, or saffron thistle, which was first seen grow­ing at the Sod Hut near the Burra some fifteen or eighteen years ago, and the seed of which was supposed to have been brought out from Holland in the straw packing in some cases of gin, and from the Sod Hut had now spread to various parts of the colony, being carried princi­pally by flood waters, as the seed being heavy— almost as heavy as a grain of wheat—did not blow about with the wind as is the case with stinkwort and other thistles, and was therefore, if taken in time, the more easily eradicated. It might be con­tended by some that stock would eat it, but that was incorrect. It might also be said that like some other weeds it would run out or die out if left alone. That also was incorrect, as a person need only look at the land around the Sod Hut to have ocular de­monstration of the utter fallacy of such an idea. The thistles were now growing, and unless prompt action was taken to destroy them before seeding that year they would have a hundred per cent, more to destroy next. Similar measures were being taken in Victoria to ensure destruction of noxious weeds, where what we had called the star thistle was called the saffron thistle, or Kentrophyllum lanaturn. The star thistle was the Centaurea calistrapa. The only thing he had doubt of In connection with the Bill was whether the clause was sufficient to enable the Government to collect moneys from local authorities in the event of the abolition of subsidies to District Councils.

The Hon. Dr. MAGAREY looked upon schemes for the eradication of weeds as humbug. Many could not be destroyed. Some weeds proclaimed as noxious had been proved to be useful as fodder plants. The Bill increased the power of those who wanted all so-called noxious weeds destroyed. District Councils would be the best judges whether a weed should be destroyed. If they neglected to destroy it, it must be for a good reason. He under­stood the Bill would compel them to do it, and he opposed it as unnecessary.

he Hon. J. L. STIRLING said there were un­doubted noxious weeds, such as star and Canadian thistles, and the Bill, which was not to dictate to District Councils, was to render measures of a majority of Councils for their eradication effective by bringing pressure on an un-neighborly body. Like the expenditure on rabbits, the expenditure on weeds by several Councils was wasted by the refusal of one or two to co-operate.

The Hon. A. R. ADDISON said the Bill had been introduced for the sake of weak Councillors who, being afraid of ratepayers, would not do their duty. The Bill would be useful in making it com­pulsory on such Councils to act in the matter. Clause 3 wanted verbal alteration.

The Hon. J. H. ANGAS said a great deal of injury had been done by the introduction of noxious weeds, notably the Bathurst burr and stinkwort. The weeds commonly known as star thistle had spread in some parts of the colony to an alarming extent. Some kinds of weeds died out. Perhaps the most objectionable of the lot was stinkwort, because it took possession of all lands which had been under the plough. It was not an edible weed. The Act of 1862 compelled the Government to destroy noxious weeds on unoccupied lands of the Crown, and embraced all pastoral lands of the province. The Bill was too wide in its application. The Act of 1887 repealed portion of the Act of 1862, which referred to the variegated and Scotch thistle, because it had been found that they were, especially the former, valuable fodder. It was hard where one landholder destroyed noxious weeds that his neighbour did nothing. For his own part he had spent a great deal of money during the last twenty years in systemati­cally destroying weeds, but there were many channels of distribution, notably by animals, the wool of sheep, also by watercourses and winds. If weeds when they first made an appearance had been properly reported upon by experts, and been eradicated at once, South Australia would have been saved thousands and thousands of pounds. It appeared to him that the present Act was sufficient if carried out properly. The whole of the Acts, however, wanted competent revision. The Vegetable Products Committee collected evidence showing that the star thistle should be eradicated. It might have been exterminated in the early stages, but it was almost impossible to get rid of it now.

The Hon. J. BOSWORTH thought they were going a little too far in that class of legislation. Many of the weeds when introduced grew rank, and nothing would eat them, but after a year or two they grew with less vigour, and stock began to eat them. Years ago the Scotch thistle was thought to be a nuisance, but had since been found to be a great benefit. As the stinkwort grew so thickly it seemed to be killed by over-production. Even in that case it had been proved a blessing, for in dry seasons when nothing else would grow it would thrive, and if stock were fenced in it when young they would live upon it. He had tried 300 sheep upon 30 acres for six weeks. (Hon. J. L. Stirling—“Poor brutes.”) They had eaten it and passed through the experiment in fair condition. If sheep were put in early stinkwort it could be kept down to two or three inches.

The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. Copley) said it was not a Government measure, but he believed it would be useful, and he agreed with Mr. Addison’s remarks. The Commissioner would have to satisfy himself that the weeds in question were noxious before ordering them to be destroyed.

The Hon. J. J. DUNCAN said there could not much harm in passing the Bill. It gave, however, extensive powers to the Commissioner. Government parties were generally very expensive. At present the Government might declare a weed to be noxious, and the Bill proposed to compel the Councils to do their duty and eradicate them. It would be well for Mr. Krichauff to take the oppor­tunity to explain in the Bill what was meant by the star thistle, about which a mistake had been made in previous Acts. Recently the Government had resumed lands from District Councils previously used as travelling stock routes. While under Dis­trict Councils in certain districts money was spent in keeping down objectionable weeds. Since the Government had resumed the lands and they had been cut up into working men’s blocks a number had been left for the propagation of weeds to an enor­mous extent. It was useless and unfair to the settlers for them to destroy weeds if the Government did not do the same on their lands. (Hear, hear.)

The Hon. F. KRICHAUFF said Mr. Angas found fault that the Bill included the whole colony, but it only applied to lands within District Councils and Corporations. (Hon. J. H. Angas—“ Clause 3 shows it applies to the whole colony.”) No; that was made right by a proviso. He hoped the Bill would be passed, for unless something were done shortly it would be impossible to destroy the noxious weeds. (Hear, hear.)

Carried.

In Committee. Clauses 1 and 2 passed. Clause 3—“ Power to Commissioner of Crown Lands.” The Hon. J. J. DUNCAN said he wished to qualify the clause by insertion of the word “reasonable.” The CHAIRMAN said that was not necessary, as the clause already conveyed the desired meaning. The Hon. J. H. ANGAS moved to insert the words “within municipalities or District Councils” after the word “situated.” The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. Copley) did not see the necessity of this. The Hon. F. KRICHAUFF said this was already set out in the interpretation. He hoped it would be withdrawn. The Hon. J. H. ANGAS said he would not press his amendment. (Hear, hear.) The Hon. J. J. DUNCAN moved to insert the word “reasonable” between “any” and "expense’’ in the fourth line on page 2. The Hon.

W. Copley said this was not necessary, and it would be better to leave the clause as it was. The Hon. F. KRICHAUFF thought; the word would not do much harm but if was hardly worth while to send it back with such a small amendment. (Hear, near.) Carried. Clause 3 as amended carried, Clause 4 preamble and title passed.