**OSTRICH-FARMING BILL1882**

**House of Assembly, 14 November 1882, pages1578-9**

Second reading

The Bill having been recommitted,

**The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. Catt**) moved to insert in clause 4, after the worth “ Commissioner” in the eighth line, the words—“ That he will, at the end of seven years from the commencement of his lease, and during the succeeding seven years of the said term, have and keep upon the said demised premises at least twenty ostriches for every 1,000 acres so leased; and will at the end of the fourteenth year and during the remainder of his said term, have and keep at least fifty ostriches for every 1,000 acres so leased upon the said demised premises.”

Mr. WARD would have to move an amendment on this amendment, because he thought the first term ought to be three years, and not seven. They all knew that the Bill was to give a bonus to one person, and was to encourage speculation. (No.) That would be the result of it. The amendment proposed by the Commissioner made the Bill just a shade better than it had been, but he did not think it went far enough. Even with the amendment it would allow a man to monopolize the area of 5,000 acres for seven years, and in order to prevent that he would move the insertion of the word “three” in the place of “ seven” in the first line.

The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon, A. Catt) thought the clause as amended would provide all that was necessary, and would oppose the amendment of the hon member.

Mr. WARD thought too much was left to the discretion of the Commissioner, and that the matter should be definitely dealt with in the Bill.

The Hon. J. COLTON thought Mr. Ward was right, as under the clause a person might simply make his arrangements during the first seven years, and really put no ostriches on the land.

Mr. HOWE said the whole of the difficulties connected with the rearing of the birds and other matters had to be overcome in the first seven years, and he thought the Government proposal was a fair one.

Mr. PLAYFORD said under the clause fourteen years was really allowed in which to commence the industry. The land might be occupied for seven years without anything being done, and then a few birds might be put on. He thought at least eight or ten birds should be put on the land in the first three years, and that the number should be increased to twenty at the end of seven years.

Mr. WARD agreed to the alteration of his amendment, so as to embody the suggestion made by Mr. Playford.

Mr. HOWE said it was already provided that the land should only be used for ostrich-farming, and he thought the proposed conditions were too harsh.

Mr. WARD believed the whole Bill was a pretence, and that a land speculation was at the bottom of it. The large area of land sought for was not required, and he would point to the fact that Mr. Malcolm had raised on less than a hundred acres near Gawler sixty birds, which would be sufficient to entitle him to the monopoly of 3,000 acres for at least seven years. The Bill seemed to proceed on the principle of “To him that hath shall be given.” If it were to be carried out it would be far more sensible to give Sir Thomas Elder a grant of land for the camels which he had introduced at great cost, and which had done far more good already than all the ostriches which were likely to be brought here would do in half a century. The only effect of this Bill would be to take large blocks of land from men who now held it profitably and hand it over ostensibly for ostrich-farming purposes. But as the clause stood nothing need be done for seven years, during which the so-called ostrich-farmers might have the land without having any ostriches thereon. He hoped the three years would be agreed to instead of seven years, and then he would be willing to accept the amendment for the smaller number of birds being placed on the land in three years. He only wished that the matter should be calmly discussed.

Mr. HAWKER said the hon. member’s “calm discussion” of this question was like what would be considered a storm in any other hon. member. (Hear, hear.) Still there was something in what he said—that these large blocks of land should not be lying idle for seven years. But it should be borne in mind that before this land could be utilized it must be fenced in such a manner as to keep in the ostriches and to keep out the dogs. That would cost £800 a mile. (Mr. Ward—“ Will it ever be fenced ?”) He questioned whether the whole 5,000 acres would be fenced ; and that showed where the real fault lay—in the very large areas which had been granted, and which he would have sought to have reduced had he looked into the matter more carefully at the outset. Five thousand acres of land for 250 ostriches was altogether too much. However, at the present stage all he need add was that he would support the “eight ostriches” in the first three years, as otherwise the land might be kept seven years without any birds at all being on it.

The amendment was carried, and the subsequent part of the clause so amended as to provide for eight ostriches for every thousand acres from three years to ten. years, after that for twenty ostriches, and from the end of the fourteenth year to the twenty-first fifty ostriches for every thousand acres of land.

The House resumed, and the Bill was reported.