

equal to £4 per acre, and that would not repay a man for fencing in and breaking up land. It would be a matter of very great importance that people should be encouraged to make plantations, some small and some large. The inducement offered might just turn the scale and cause a man to plant. Mr. Hall, the honorable member for Heathcote, was greatly in favour of a measure of that kind, and took a great interest in the matter, and was anxious that it should be passed through the Legislature. He (Mr. Acland) had planted to some extent, not with the blue gum, for he disliked that tree, but elm, ash, and oak, and he thought there were very few people who, if they planted, would not take care of the trees for two years, after which they would take care of themselves.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read a second time.

CONSERVATION OF FORESTS.

(“Hansard,” 1st October, 1873.)

Mr. O’NEILL, in moving the motion standing in his name, would make his remarks upon it as brief as possible. He would remind honorable members that, in the session of 1868, on the motion of Mr. Potts, of Canterbury, a resolution was adopted to this effect: “That it is desirable Government should take steps to ascertain the present condition of the forests of the Colony, with a view to their better conservation.” He believed the Government, of which Mr. Stafford was the head, had adopted means to obtain reports upon the subject from the various Provinces, but only two or three Provinces had sent in any returns, and consequently no action was taken in the matter. Last session he had called the attention of the Government to the subject, and the Native Minister stated that the matter would receive the attention of the Government during the recess, as it was one which deserved very great consideration. He was glad to believe that the Government had given the matter some serious consideration during the recess, but it was found impossible to bring in a measure as complete as they would wish during the present session. A measure for the conservation of the forests of the Colony was one that would require the careful consideration of the House and the Government, so that history might not be able to relate that they received a fertile country, but, by a criminal want of foresight, transmitted to posterity a desert. Hochstetter, in speaking of the kauri pine—the noblest of New Zealand trees—says,—

“Extensive districts, which had formerly been covered with kauri wood, are now totally destitute of such, and the extermination of that noble tree progresses from year to year at such a rate, that its final extinction is as certain as that of the Natives of New Zealand. . . . Individuals should not be allowed to ravage those precious woods, and to turn the country into a desert, to the detriment of whole generations to come. For the sake of a few serviceable trunks, sometimes whole forests are burned down and desolated, and what formerly had been employed in the war of cannibal tribes, in a stratagem to burn out the enemy, is done now for the sake of money. The woods are ransacked and ravaged with fire and sword. During my stay in Auckland, I was able to observe from my windows, during an entire fortnight, dense clouds of smoke whirling up, which arose from an enormous and destructive conflagration of the woods nearest to the town. When the fire had subsided, a large, beautiful tract of forest lay there in ashes.”

In 1867 a Royal Commission was appointed in Victoria, which went into the whole subject very earnestly, and made a report in reference to the forests in Victoria. It showed that there was an area of 69,000 miles of bush and 18,000 miles of open in that Colony. The report also treated of the kinds of forest trees, indigenous to Australia, which should be cultivated in the forest reserves; of the trees which should be specially protected; of the kinds of non-indigenous trees which should be cultivated; the comparative strength and breaking weight of Australian timber; and the system recommended for planting and cultivating young trees, &c. It also showed that the jarrah, the noblest of the *Eucalypti*, might be planted with wonderful success by thousands in Victoria; and if this were so, it might be grown in this country, especially in the North where the kauri grew. The Hon. Mr. Casey, Minister of Lands and Agriculture, recently wrote a Memorandum upon the forests of Victoria, which gave some ideas of the best mode of preserving forests. He would read a few lines of it:—

“It is thought that if a specific part of the forest be leased to a particular person, there will be a material guarantee that the young trees will not be cut down before maturity, and that due care is bestowed in facilitating and encouraging the growth of young seedlings; and if the first be violated, or the second neglected, he can be at once made responsible. This is the system that is insisted on in every country where State forests are maintained. The Government are anxious to obtain two results, if possible:—1. The careful management of the forests and the protection of the growth of the young timber. 2. The planting out every year of an adequate number of young trees to keep the forests stocked. Nature has endowed us with a number of valuable forests. Ordinary care would enable us to cull from them the annual growth of the trees for public use. Would it not be a national crime to neglect attending to them?”

In the report to which he referred some minutes ago, it was shown that, notwithstanding the immense extent of the forests of Victoria, during the five years previous to the report, timber to the value of £8,500,000 had been imported into the colony. In some countries regulations were made for the planting of timber. In Japan, it was said, that for every tree that was cut down another was planted. In Biscay, where one was cut down two must be planted.

PART I.

Parliamentary
Debate, 1871.

Parliamentary
Debate, 1873.