

From: Jacqueline Comben
Sent: 28 November 2008 11:23
To: liz.kirk@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Subject: Climate Change Bill Consultation.

I represent only myself, a pensioner living in a part of Argyll which has a high percentage of the workforce employed in forestry.

There is only one aspect of the Climate Change Bill provisions which I find worrying.

Any private company has the profit motive. Therefore no such company or group will lease Forestry Commission land unless a good profit is expected from the timber. This is profit gained after all expenses, including re-stocking and wages, are taken into account. Thus, a good profit is to be made over and above the cost of the lease. If the land were retained by the Forestry Commission, all this profit, including the lease price, would be retained by the Commission and, hence, by the people of Scotland.

In effect, the proposed leasing of land is tantamount to pawning the family silver. This is slightly better than selling it, as Mrs. Thatcher did, but not much better.

The interest on the pawned silver is 75 years-worth of profit on the timber which belongs to the people of Scotland.

The reason for the pawning, apparently, is to get money now to buy more land to plant with trees. Surely there is a better and cheaper way to borrow this money?

What is to stop companies from abroad from buying these leases and exporting the wood, with no profit to us? Might Scottish companies not end up having to re-import it and pay the shipping costs on top of the price of the timber? What is to stop the purchasing companies from re-selling to others with no obligation to the current workforce and, either jobs being lost, or conditions of work being down-graded?

Is it not possible to raise money by carbon-trading? Airlines may well be willing to finance Forestry in order to reduce their notional carbon footprint. Road transport companies, oil producers, coal producers and countries reliant on coal and oil for energy might all be interested in carbon-trading.

Seventy five years is a very long time. South Korea is apparently buying land in Africa in order to grow food for its citizens in lands where the indigenous population is already hungry. Will South Korea and China not be interested in buying 75 years-worth of our timber for a cost based on 2008 values? Might oil-rich Arab states not want a steady supply of our wood?

The plan, as outlined in the Discussion Document seems very short-sighted. Would the Scottish Government please think again about the proposed leasing of our land?

Best wishes from

Jacqueline Y. Comben

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