

G.C. OEDERS BEMÆRKNINGER OM
NORSK SKOVBRUG GJORTE UNDER OG
EFTER HANS REJSE TIL
NORGE 1755-1760

Peter Wagner

Botanisk Museum og Centralbibliotek
Sølvgade 83 opg. S
1307 København K

G.C. Oeder's remarks on Norwegian forestry 1755-1760



Georg Christian Oeder 1728-1791

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SUMMARY

One of the measures taken by the government in Denmark-Norway to promote the economic development in the realms of Frederic V was to

establish a royal botanical institution under the supervision of the lord high steward. The objects of that institution were to register the occurrence and uses of the plants in Denmark-Norway and in the duchies Schleswig and Holstein, make research on their uses and the use of imported plants and their cultivation and make the results of the research known among the subjects of the king by publishing a botanical work: *Flora Danica*. As scientific leader of the institution the German born medical doctor G.C. Oeder (1728-1791) was employed. As a student under A. von Haller (1708-1777) in Göttingen he was a skilled botanist. From 1755 to 1760 he traveled in Norway to register plants and their uses and having them depicted for *Flora Danica*. The purpose of the botanical institution was to improve agriculture, forestry and gardening and Oeder consequently made observations on these trades on his journey and sent them to the lord high steward. After his return to Copenhagen he rewrote his observations in probably five reports of which four still exist. In the present paper Oeder's views on Norwegian forestry are reported. As he had no education in economy an attempt is made to disclose the sources from which he so quickly acquired knowledge about the structure and problems of Norwegian timber trade. It is evident he treated problems of current interest with the civil administration and the priests in Norway. The solutions to the themes dealt with Oeder found in contemporary economic literature in Denmark, Sweden, and Germany, in the economic policies discussed in the Estates of the Realm in Sweden and with the officials in the mining administration in Norway. They were responsible for the management of forests providing the fuel necessary for the mining and many of them had been trained in German mining districts.

Oeder claimed the best protection of the forest would be to convey the commons to the single farms and to change the regulations for the felling of timber from the inefficient minimum measures of circumference of stems to quantity control at the ports of export. His views had no impact upon the central administration in Copenhagen.