

# SAVE COLONG BULLETIN

THE COLONG COMMITTEE

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## SOLUTION TO COLONG QUESTION NOW POSSIBLE

With the National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Act before it, Parliament now has its opportunity to reverse the decision to mine Colong - a decision that should never have been made. Enough has been said on the subject. Every responsible body in the state with any interest in conservation (and many which had not previously been involved in conservation) have condemned the Colong mining lease.

Parliament now has its opportunity to rescind Special Lease 444, restore the leased area to the Kanangra-Boyd Park, and complete the park as originally intended, by restoring the Boyd Plateau.

The question of alternative supplies of limestone for APCM should not be allowed to delay this action. The Company already has 36 years supply at the proposed increased rate of extraction, at Marulan. If it wants more there are a number of sources available besides Colong. As Sir Garfield Barwick said last week, "the short-term private interests" of APCM are "in reality of no great significance to the public".

And as Sir Edmund Hillary said last Saturday, "It would be an irresponsible act to spoil the beauty of this region for purely commercial or political reasons" "In most countries this would have been made a national park years ago".

We appeal to all Parliamentarians to forget party politics and get on with the job of putting in order what is really a very simple matter, for the people of New South Wales.

## EVENTS SINCE BULLETIN No 6

### BILL - FIRST READING

On Thursday, 25 September, the National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Bill was dropped on Parliament by the Minister for Lands, Mr Tom Lewis. The Bill provided for dedication of the Kanangra-Boyd National Park - without Colong or the Boyd Plateau. In Mr Lewis' absence it was introduced in Parliament by the Assistant Minister, Mr Waddy (Liberal - North Sydney). It had appeared on the notice paper for the first time on the previous day.

This move was an attempt by Mr Lewis to create a fait accompli on Colong. It failed. Members of Parliament were deluged with letters, telegrams and deputations. Rock-climbers abseiled down the State Office Block to focus TV and press attention on the issue and three hundred people attended a demonstration outside Parliament House.

The second reading of the Bill had been expected to take place the following Tuesday (30 September), the next day on which Parliament sat. But so great was the public protest and the concern of those MPs who realised the Bill's significance, that it was deferred, and has still to take place at the time of writing.

On Tuesday, 30 September, the Colong Committee held a showing of slides, maps and photographs for Members of Parliament. Twenty nine MPs attended, including eight government members.

The Colong Committee thanks all of its supporters who responded to our call to alert their MPs to the implications for Colong and the Boyd Plateau of Mr Lewis's Bill. It is probable that the exclusion of Colong and the Boyd from the Kanangra-Boyd National Park would otherwise have been passed over by Parliament. Had the Park been dedicated in that form by Parliament, the matter could have been regarded as closed.

#### MAPS - ONE ONLY

There was the same sort of difficulty in obtaining maps of parks proposed under the Bill as there had been when Mr Lewis introduced his National Parks and Wildlife Bill in 1967. On that occasion maps vital for an understanding of the Bill were not displayed in Parliament during the debate, and were not available to the public until the Bill had passed through Parliament. The memory of this led Mr Max Ruddock (Liberal - The Hills) to say during the first reading debate that he hoped maps would be available this time. The section of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill concerning the Kanangra-Boyd National Park refers to plan Ms.4232 OeR, and references to the Park in the Bill are meaningless without this plan.

The text of the Bill should be, and was, available to Members of Parliament after the first reading, but the vital (one copy only) plan was available only for on-the-spot perusal over the counter of the Lands Department or the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Instructions had been issued to the staffs of both offices not to provide any copies of the plan, even using the normal Xerox facilities for which a charge is made. Even Members of Parliament who wished to study the Kanangra-Boyd Plan had to do so personally, over the counter.

As a result of complaints, the instruction to refuse copies of the plan was rescinded on Friday 3 October, but was re-issued a few days later.

#### COLONG SURROUNDS TO BE RETURNED TO PARK - AGAIN

Messrs Lewis and Fife had stated on many occasions that 4,000 acres surrounding Colong had been added to the park proposal. They have always avoided mentioning that this area was included in the original National Parks Association proposal, and that they had objected to it.

It was a little surprising then, to find that this area was still excluded from the Park in the Bill. When this matter was taken up with Messrs Lewis and Fife it was explained that the routes of the power line, pipeline and road had not yet been determined and that the Bill would be amended to re-incorporate the 4,000 acres when the survey was completed. To save face the survey was rushed through in near-record time. A special group of officers of the Mines Department worked under pressure that week to complete the job and Mr Lewis duly claimed that he had added 4,000 acres to the Park.

As the mining lease still stands, and the 4,000 acres surrounding it would be hopelessly affected by proximity to the mining and crushing operations, anyway, the whole episode has no significance except to establish that the Bill was rushed into Parliament before it was ready. This is further evidence that Mr Lewis introduced the Bill into Parliament at the time he did in an attempt to thwart the mounting pressure to cancel Special Lease 444 and restore Colong to the proposed Kanangra-Boyd National Park.

#### AT LAST - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ALTERNATIVE LIMESTONE DEPOSITS

On 10 October Mr Fife offered to commence a re-appraisal by officers of the Geological Survey of New South Wales of the Murrumbidgee Creek limestone deposits. The Colong Committee and APCM were invited to participate and the Minister promised full exchange of the information obtained. 20th October was proposed as the date of commencement of the survey.



This represents a partial departure from his attitude that he will only consider rescinding the Colong mining lease if requested by the Company. He has at least agreed to help find an alternative supply.

The Committee welcomes the Minister for Mines' invitation and has submitted (14 October) to the Geological Survey a copy of its consultant geologist's report because of the above conditions. This report states that there are 50 million tons of limestone in the Murruin Creek area.

On 16 October, Father James Tierney, Greg Middleton, Dr Branagan (geological adviser to the Colong Committee) and David Roots, met five geologists from the Geological Survey and APCM's geologist, Phil Lavers. At this meeting all our information was tabled. This included the deposits of limestone that the Geological Survey insisted up till then that they had no knowledge of - Murruin Limestone Creek and the second deposit at Little Wombeyan Creek, estimated to have 13 and 10 million tons respectively. The survey started on 20 October should clarify the details.

In summary, our reply to the Minister on 15 October, contained the following points -

- Marulan is regarded by the Colong Committee, and we believe by the Mines Department and the Company, to be a preferable alternative to Murruin Creek;
- a request was made for calculation of the total reserves at Marulan;
- the Murruin Creek investigation should not delay revocation of Special Lease 444 at Colong, as growing public opposition can only be met by its immediate revocation. The investigation should therefore be aimed at establishing the best source of supply consequent upon revocation of Special Lease 444, and not a justification for revocation.
- implicit in the offer to re-assess the Murruin Creek alternative is the revocation by the Government, or voluntary surrender by APCM of the Colong lease if either Murruin Creek or Marulan is proved to be a reasonable source for the Company. If this is not so, the Committee should be advised forthwith and will consider withdrawing its participation.
- the Committee asked the Minister to instruct the Company that no site work, or work on services and access to the lease, should be carried out pending decisions on the foregoing matters.

#### PRIESTS PETITION PARLIAMENT

On Tuesday 14 October a petition signed by 150 Catholic priests was read in Parliament asking for the revocation of the Colong lease, and the return of the Boyd Plateau to the park. The petition said in part -

- "What is happening in Kanangra-Boyd is a test case for all present and future National Parks in New South Wales. If large vested mining and timber interests, local or overseas, can gain the mandate of the Government of the day to exploit what is the inherent right of Australian citizens, namely the only remaining National Park wilderness area close to the largest centre of population; and such vested interests can do so in the face of the greatest ever protest from a group such as the Colong Committee, then no area can ever be sacred to the Public from the intrusions of vested interests".

#### SLIDE SHOWING FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

Relatively few Liberal parliamentarians turned up at the first slide showing, compared with Labour Members. A second showing was therefore arranged for Liberal Members only, and invitations were issued over the signatures of nineteen Liberal Party Members.

The following attended -

Mr J Doyle	Mr D Darby	Mr J Barraclough
Mr T Dunbier	Mr L McGinty	Mr D Cross
Mr N D Walker	Mr J Dunbier	Mr R Healy
Mr M Ruddock	Mr J Cameron	Mr R A Mead

Mr M Coates (Independant) also attended.

Messrs M J Doyle, T Dumbier, J Cameron and M Ruddock attended both showings and we were most encouraged by their interest.

#### DOCTORS MOVE ON COLONG

A petition, harshly criticising the proposed boundaries of the Kanangra-Boyd National Parks was handed to Mr LJF Barraclough, MLA (Liberal - Bligh) on Monday 20 October 1969.

This document, headed by the signature of Sir Lorimer Dods, Chairman of the Institute of Child Research, and listing the names of supporters from all branches of medicine, describes the Kanangra-Boyd National Park boundaries as "grossly mutilated" by the exclusion of an island of land leased for limestone mining, an operation which the doctors say will turn Sydney's only Wilderness Area into a "Monument to the victory of commercial exploitation over the responsible management of the environment".

Among the supporters of the petition are Sir Charles McDonald, Sir Kempson Maddox, Dr Cotter Harvey and many heads of University medical departments. Sir Kempson, who describes himself as a keen conservationist, is one of a number of medical men and women from whose actions has grown the list of 192 signatories to the petition.

A copy of the petition was given to Mr Jago, Minister for Health on Wednesday 1 October, in a meeting with Sir Lorimer Dods. Mr Jago expressed interest but said that his position as Cabinet Minister prevents direct action by himself.

#### ARE YOU THINKING OF A PETITION?

If so, the following format should be followed rigidly to ensure that it will be presented to Parliament. Signatures must appear on a copy of the petition and should be accompanied by the name of the signatory clearly printed.

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales in Parliament assembled.

The petition of ...(name of group)...respectfully sheweth ...(disapproval of boundaries etc.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House will...  
...(action requested of House).

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(followed by list of signatures (including clear printing of names)

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#### INVITATION TO THE COLONG DINNER - 7th November.

Time- 7.30 pm Place - Macquarie University Union.

If you wish to attend what could well be the dinner of the year, you should send your \$5 per person to - The Colong Committee, Room 4, 4th Floor, 15/17 Young Street, Sydney 2000 - before 3rd November.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

I WOULD LIKE ..... TICKETS FOR THE COLONG DINNER.

ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND ..... TO COVER COSTS (\$5 per head)

Please make cheques payable to the "Colong Committee".



APPENDIX TO COLONG BULLETIN No 7

THE "AMAZING ADVANCES" IN CONSERVATION OF THE HON. T. L. LEWIS,  
MINISTER FOR LANDS

On 18 September 1969, the Hon. W C Fife, Minister for Mines, re-stated the Askin Government's assessment of its own efforts in the conservation field:

"More has been done in the field of conservation," Mr Fife said "in the four years that the Government has been in office than was done in the previous thirty years. The Minister for Lands can take due credit for his tremendous efforts and for the amazing advances that have been made in this field".

Park Acreage

In terms of park acreage, Mr Fife's claim is, as usual, wrong. Half of the State's total park acreage is in Kosciuszko National Park - created by a Labor Government. The Minister for Lands, despite extensive promises, still has come nowhere near putting into the State's park system as many acres as a Labor Government dedicated at one blow, ie approximately 1,300,000 acres.

Park Quality

In terms of quality or usefulness of park acreage, the Minister's efforts are also inferior. With the exception of Dharug, the few parks he has created are remote from centres of population. Kinchega in the West of the State is a worthwhile park but not very relevant to Sydney's population.

Additions to existing parks made by the Minister are usually easy additions - areas to which there is no competing claim. Dharug, a sandstone area North of the Hawkesbury, is one of these. The proposed Black Jack/Byadbo addition on the South of Kosciuszko Park is also in this category. It is dry barren land unsuitable for agriculture or grazing - a worthwhile park addition but no illustration of a great enthusiasm for conservation.

Wildlife Conservation

In the field of wildlife conservation the Minister destroyed the very worthwhile Fauna Protection Panel and forced its Chief Guardian, the most experienced and dedicated wildlife administrator in Australia, into exile at the Education Department. The number of staff at the National Parks and Wildlife Service specifically dealing with Wildlife is less than half the number employed by the former Panel. Wildlife administration in the National Park and Wildlife Service is a minor function of a recreational-oriented parks service whereas the Fauna Panel was dedicated to wildlife alone.

Legislation

In order to overcome the initial opposition of the conservation bodies to his National Parks and Wildlife Bill the Minister promised that, in return for repeal of the Fauna Protection Act and the Native Plants Protection Act, he would, within one year, introduce new wildlife conservation legislation.

He stated in Parliament on 16 August 1967 that "it is expected that new wildlife legislation will be introduced in the next session of Parliament".

Two years later the promised legislation still has not been produced.

The present situation is that the Minister has decimated wildlife Conservation in NSW.

Alienation of Parkland

But his most outstanding achievements lie in the field of alienation of public parkland.

No politician, in the history of NSW has given away so many acres of previously dedicated national parks to logging, mining and other developmental interests, as has the Hon. T. L. Lewis.

His re-arrangement of the boundaries of Kosciusko Park took away 85,000 acres for logging. Prime alpine ash forest and the scenic China Walls were exchanged for cut over forest and cleared grazing land. At the time the Minister claimed his action was taken "for managerial reasons and for rationalisation" - which must take the prize for the lamest excuse ever given to a parliament for the distribution of prime parkland to exploitative, private, interests.

Nothing has since been heard of the possibility, ~~mentioned by the Minister,~~ of restoring some of these lands to the Park.

The Minister's National Parks and Wildlife Act also thrust an airport into Ku-ring-gai Chase along its highest skyline.

The Act excised about 1,000 acres from the vital rim of the Grose Valley for a coal mine.

The total area of parkland alienated under the Act totalled over 95,000 acres.

#### Alienation of Potential Parkland

Likely to be of even greater significance than his alienation of existing parklands, are his efforts to alienate proposed and potential parklands.

Mr Weems, especially imported by Mr Lewis from the United States as first Director of his National Parks and Wildlife Service, said before his return to America, that the highest and most urgent priority was to reserve as much land as possible before it is too late. In the face of this advice Mr Lewis:

- is handing over two major park proposals on the South Coast (Deua-Turoos and Eden-Wonboyn) to the Japanese Chip-milling industry;
- is attempting to excise the Boyd Plateau from the proposed Kanangra-Boyd National Park for pine plantations;
- has limited the proposed Barrington Tops National Park to a small fragment of the total area available and is giving the rest (including extensive area of rainforest) to the Minister for (would you believe it!) Conservation, to clear for pine plantations;
- has excluded from the proposed Clyde-Budawang National Park the only area with an alternative claim to it, and is handing it over to logging interests;
- is selling up stock-routes as fast as possible, thereby denying the people of NSW the opportunity for a network of off-the-track tourist routes and camping space;
- is renewing Western Lands grazing leases as fast as they come up, thereby passing up opportunities to carry out his promise of more National Parks in the west of the state for conservation of kangaroos;
- within the last few months proposed what may well be his "final solution" to the problem of how to get rid of NSW public lands as fast as possible - to sell up 22 million acres of leased crown land to existing leaseholders at 1910 values. This land would be converted to private freehold.

In all this he is ably assisted by the Minister for Conservation, Mr Beale, who is claiming all the vacant crown land he can get for the wood-chip industry and pine plantations, and this includes our best potential parkland.

#### Coastal Parks

Endorsement by the Minister of "The Sim Committee" Report gave first option over the whole 400 mile North Coastline of NSW to the beachminers - except for 4 or 5 miles.



The Minister's concept of the Myall Lakes National Park includes beach mining of virtually the whole of the seafront and hind dunes. Last week he refused to take action to stop the dredge in the heart of the National Park proposed by his own National Parks Wildlife Service.

The Minister has not achieved what should be the most urgent priority in conservation in NSW - a coastal national park. There is not a single national park on either the North Coast or South Coast of New South Wales. In two or three more months the last two opportunities will have been lost (at Eden/Wonboyn and at Myall).

#### Colong

But the Minister's most "amazing advance is undoubtedly at Colong. This is the highest achievement of the present "conservation minded" Government. To become the first NSW Government to allow mining of caves in a reserve dedicated for preservation of caves. To plant a large open cut mining operation at the focal point of the most important park in the State. To inform the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council set up by the Government that it must not consider the boundaries of the State's most important proposed national park. To smilingly announce on television that he alone made the decision to mine - "in the national interest". These are the amazing advances wrought by the Hon. T.L. Lewis.

#### Important ! - Cost of Bulletin

The circulation of the Bulletin is now approaching 2000. The publication has more than doubled in size and frequency. Each number now costs about \$50 to produce and \$100 postage.

If you wish to help maintain this valuable service, and assist the Colong Committee in its financial straits, you may do so by sending stamps. Any number will do. But PLEASE SEND STAMPS.