

A4b.

SAVE COLONG BULLETIN

THE COLONG COMMITTEE

Correspondence: Liaison Secretary,
Mark Weatherley, B.A., 18 Begonia Rd.
Normanhurst, N.S.W. 2076. 84 0265

COLONG COMMITTEE BULLETIN

Price 10¢.

NUMBER 12

22 MAY 1970

"Development for its own sake is not enough. We must also care for the environment we live in."

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II
broadcasting to the nation on
Sunday, April 26th.

LABOR WILL REVOKE COLONG MINING LEASE

The N.S.W. Labor Party will revoke the Colong Mining Lease if successful at the next election.

An assurance to this effect has been given by the Deputy Leader of the State Opposition, Mr S. Einfeld.

Mr Einfeld's statement was made to the Colong Committee which now represents 100 community bodies in the struggle to save the focal point of the Kanangra/Boyd National Park from limestone mining.

This is the first real breakthrough in this four year dispute.

It is the logical outcome of the strong attack on the mining lease made by Labor Members in the debate on the National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Bill late last year.

The mining company concerned is the 74% overseas owned Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers (Australia) Pty. Limited.

The Company refuses to give any assurance that site works will not proceed either in the short or long term. But the Company would be reckless to proceed now in view of Labor's statement.

LIBERAL GOVERNMENT STILL SUPPORTS LEASE

It is most disturbing that despite unanimous resolutions in State Council and State Convention of the N.S.W. Liberal Party calling for the lease to be rescinded, no positive action in that direction has been taken by the Liberal Government.

APCM(A) is legally entitled to commence mining at Colong any day it chooses.

ALTERNATIVE LIMESTONE DEPOSITS

The only concession made by the Liberal Government to public opposition to the lease has been to carry out a survey of one alternative group of limestone despoths - in the Murruin Creek area.

The Sydney Speleological Society and The Colong Committee provided the Geological Survey of N.S.W. with the locations of two additional limestone deposits in the Murruin Creek area previously unknown to the Mines Department.

There are seven deposits in the Murruin Creek area, 5-10 miles from the Colong Caves Reserve.

Two deposits, Murruin Limestone Creek and Little Wombeyan No 1 contain over 30 million tons of limestone. In its efforts to justify its Colong lease the Company has stated that it is looking for reserves of the order of 30-40 million tons.

All the deposits in the Murruin Creek area have now been surveyed and the Minister for Mines now has to admit the truth of the Committee's claim that over 50 million tons of limestone exist where he first advised the public that "600,000 tons only" existed.

The Colong Committee regrets that the Minister, after accepting vital information from the Committee and after claiming to be co-operating with the Committee refused to discuss the terms of a joint announcement of the survey results.

The Committee claims the Governmental Survey of Murruin Creek deposits is of no use in solving the Colong dispute without the results of a similar survey being carried out by APCM(A) of the Marulan deposit. The Company refuses to give a date for completion of its Marulan survey.

The Marulan deposit is the major alternative to the use of Colong Limestone by the Maldon Cement Works.

Association Portland Cement Manufacturers already has 36 years supply at the increased rate of demand in its Marulan leases. Its reserves at Marulan, Portland, Charbon and Colong must total approximately 200 million tons. If the Company can demonstrate that it really needs more limestone in return for giving up the 50 million tons in its Colong lease then more might be granted at Marulan.

But the lease over the most highly dedicated public Reserve in N.S.W., The Colong Caves Reserve, at the heart of the Kanangra/Boyd National Park, must be revoked.

Labor's assurance that it will revoke the lease if elected to power is the most positive move in this direction to date. It will also be a positive factor in influencing the Government through the votes of the growing thousands of conservationists.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ASSOCIATED PORTLAND CEMENT
MANUFACTURERS (AUSTRALIA) LIMITED**

Despite the full force of criticism from shareholders, despite public opinion, the Managing Director of APCM still thinks we are playing games. Asked if APCM was having second thoughts about mining Colong, Mr Taylor replied: "We should not be under any illusion about this. We are honestly undertaking an investigation of alternatives. If they prove acceptable and economic then naturally we will look at them. To that extent only are there second thoughts."

The following questions were countered by the Chairman with "Next question please".

- "When will the Marulan survey be completed?"
- "What is the Board doing to counter lost sales?"
- "What economic criteria will be used to judge alternatives?"

Mr Le Couteur, a newly appointed Director seeking election was unable to grasp the relevance of these questions. "Why this illogical sniping at a point when the Chairman has told you that everything which would be properly done, has in fact, been done? I fail to see really where the argument exists? A year ago this subject was discussed..... Twelve months later these obligations continue to be honoured."

Milo Dunphy summarised shareholder feelings by saying: "You refuse to state the criteria on which alternatives will be judged. The Minister for Mines is not capable of making a pronouncement on these alternatives - he will parrot your assurances to him as he has done before regarding Mt. Armour and Murruin Creek. The Minister for Mines has been wrong on repeated occasions in this issue and so has your Company. We want some better statement of your Company's intentions."

"The situation is that you are legally entitled to mine the lease any time you desire. You have assured us that you are looking at the two alternatives - Marulan and Murruin. Your Company could give us a lot more assurance about what it may or may not do than merely to take the Big Brother attitude that it will look after everything."

"Thank you, Mr Dunphy", said the Chairman.

Dialogue is needed between conservationists and industry. The N.S.W. Government has failed to act as a responsible mediator between the two interests. Because of the Government's failure it has fallen to the Colong Committee to bring home to the APCM(A) Management the Company's responsibilities to the country from which it earns its profit.

SENATOR COTTON ASKED TO STOP LOGGING ON BOYD

On April 14, the question of logging on the Boyd Plateau was raised in Federal Parliament. Mr A. Grassby, M.H.R. (Labor, Riverina) asked the Minister for National Development, Mr Swartz to appeal to Senator Cotton to stop Timber Industries Limited's logging operation on the Boyd. Part of Mr Grassby's speech in the House of Representatives is reproduced below:

"Meanwhile, what has been described as the rape of a new reserve is being carried out. I want to direct the attention of the House to this development and appeal for action tonight. A firm called Timber Industries Ltd, of Oberon, is carrying out savage logging operations on the Boyd tableland."

"In a world-wide awakening to the need to conserve unique, rare and beautiful areas, the majority of Australians sleep on oblivious of ugly acts of rape in various parts of our country in the interests of stripping natural resources, often by foreign firms for transitory profit gains. The Boyd Plateau is disappearing today. It is one of the few areas still abounding in wildlife near Sydney."

"Tonight my appeal is directed to the Minister for National Development (Mr Swartz). I ask him to take an appeal to the Minister for Civil Aviation, Senator R. C. Cotton. Timber Industries Ltd is 43% owned by the Cotton family. Senator Cotton is a director and his brother, Mr M. C. Cotton, is the Managing Director. The other major share holding is that of the North and South Broken Hill companies. So at least we have a situation different from the foreign cement company which is despoiling Colong. We have an Australian company with a distinguished legislator and his family as a major force in it. It is evident that the New South Wales Ministers concerned will not move on this matter. Tonight I ask the Minister for National Development to make an appeal to his colleague in another place to investigate the damage being caused by his firm, with a view to suspending operations which will lead to the destruction of the proud peak of the Boyd. Let it remain as a symbol of our determination to preserve unique aspects of our rapidly disappearing heritage."

"Perhaps in this case the private citizen, the private company, will put the New South Wales Government to shame and take the first step. I hope Senator Cotton will help. Even those who support his firm's operations, such as the Sydney branch of the Institute of Foresters of Australia, agree that there is a need for an independent examination of such operations. The branch Chairman, Mr G. S. Lugton, has supported the concept of an independent land use authority in these matters. With time running out on this matter, I renew my appeal to Senator Cotton, through his representative in this chamber, to intervene on the side of posterity."

ALTERNATIVE PINE-GROWING LAND FOUND

It has been found that an area of 10,600 acres suitable for pine growing is available in the Oberon District at \$6:00 per acre.

The land consists of several adjoining lots located 40 to 50 miles from Oberon by a good road. An advanced stage of negotiations were reached by the Forestry Commission for purchase of one section of 4,500 acres, but were abruptly dropped by the Commission without explanation.

This is a lower rainfall area than the Boyd Plateau and we do not doubt that the Forestry Commission would prefer the Boyd. Nevertheless it is a reasonable alternative to the Boyd at a much lesser price than the \$40 to \$100 which the Commission has said it would expect to have to pay for land in the Oberon District.

ASKIN REPLIES ON BOYD

Many people who have written to the Premier asking for the Boyd Plateau to be included in the Kanangra/Boyd National Park have received a standard letter in reply. We would like to make some comments on the points raised by Mr Askin in his letters.

Mr Askin says that "The Minister" (for Conservation) "has explained that the volume of present logging activities is no different from that carried out over past 30 years....". This is an astounding statement since if it were true the entire forest would have disappeared long ago. Further, it is an admission that for 30 years the Forestry Commission has permitted heavy logging in a reserve for preservation of flora and fauna.

The Premier says "the conditions for extraction of timber are better than in usual logging operations. The new logging road is a normal 16 feet wide.....". The road surface may be only 16 feet wide, but Mr Askin does not comment on why the forest has been flattened for 30 feet on each side of it. Is this now "normal" in logging operations or is it "better than usual"? We suspect the reason is that the Forestry Commission regards the native forest as doomed by its plans for a pine plantation, and is treating it with complete disregard.

"... the Forestry Commission..... would find it difficult to obtain sufficient suitable land to achieve a target of one million acres of softwood in N.S.W. by the end of the century." We suggest that it will be even more difficult to obtain an adequate system of parks and nature reserves at the present rate of destruction of natural bushland and forests. The Commission is certain to have difficulties when it selects for intensive softwoods development a district like Oberon where it knows land values are \$40 to \$100 an acre, or more.

Mr Askin says that he is "informed that the area in question is essential to meet the needs of the people of this state in timber and timber products." We would like to remind the Premier that he was also informed that Colong limestone was essential for cement production, and

Askin Replies on Boyd (continued)

that subsequent investigations have shown this is far from the case. We do not believe that the Boyd Plateau is any more essential to satisfy the softwood needs of the state than Colong limestone is for cement production.

"It is necessary that adequate areas of pine be available in the Oberon district to meet the future needs of the integrated wood-using industries in that town on which its prosperity depends". Oberon has got on very nicely so far without pine from the Boyd Plateau and the townspeople are not concerned whether the industry gets it or not. The town could well do better out of the visitors the Boyd would attract if managed as a park. Oberon is a first class grazing and agricultural district. We suggest to Mr Askin that he look into why these wood-using industries were established there in preference to some much less prosperous districts which are also climatically suitable for pine growing. Some of these districts are seriously affected by soil erosion and would benefit from re-afforestation with pine. We would expect a Department of Conservation that is really concerned with conservation to take account of factors like this.

NEW THREAT TO KANANGRA/BOYD

Not content with donating the focal point of the Kanangra/Boyd National Park to the Blue Circle Mining Company and the rape of its hub, the Boyd Plateau, the Askin Government is currently permitting Mining exploration over the bulk of the park.

On February 24 the National Parks Association of N.S.W. wrote to the Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service referring to occupation of a site at Boyd Creek Crossing in the Park by employees of Catawba Exploration Company.

The Association stated the camp had been there for two months and was expected to remain a further three. We asked for details of the lease or licence under which it operated and when would such be terminated. We advised the Director of the miners' pit toilet within twenty feet of the only permanent stream on the Boyd Plateau and asked what action was proposed regarding firearms.

On 24 March in answer to a question in Parliament from Mr G. Petersen, M.L.A., the Minister for Mines Mr W. C. Fife advised that no titles under the Mining Act had been granted within the Park but that approval had been given for the grant of Exploration Licences in satisfaction of Applications 554 and 557, "the areas of which adjoin the park".

Research by members of the Association in the public records of the Mines Department show that three applications cover areas of the Park: No 554 includes three areas of the Park and was approved on 1/8/69; No 826 was approved on 3/4/70 and No 766 is pending.

New Threat to Kanangra/Boyd (continued)

Application No 554 was made by the firm whose employees have been camped in the Park. However these men made available a map titled "Exploration Licence 118" which purported to allow exploration over the bulk of the park. No public record of a Licence No 118 is available in the Mines Department. Another map in use by the Company showed the location of over 50 sites within the Park from which samples have been taken.

The following questions arise: How does the Minister for Mines explain the contradiction between his Departmental records and his advice to Parliament? What validity has the mysterious Licence No 118? Who authorised what the Director N.P.W.S. publicly surmised may be "illegal prospecting", for five months, in our best national park?

On April 3, the Minister for Mines also approved an Exploration Licence covering New England National Park and part of Dorriggo State Park. Fortunately New England Park has a Trust which is completely opposed to mineral exploration in the Park.

Taxed in the press with their responsibility to protect parks from mining, the Ministers for Mines and Lands have belatedly agreed to exclude national and state parks from future mineral exploration licences.

But there are enough contradictions in the Kanangra/Boyd situation alone to fully justify the call by the Leader of The Opposition, Mr P. D. Hills for an investigation and possibly court action.

BEALE REPLIES ON BOYD

Minister for Conservation, Mr Jack Beale, M.L.A., has sent a detailed reply, complete with maps, to people who have written protesting against his proposed destruction of native forest on the Boyd Plateau.

Mr Beale's reply is the most voluminous public document yet produced by a N.S.W. Government in reply to a particular claim by conservationists

A large part of the document is taken up by unimportant detail aimed at discounting minor points in the conservationists case.

The remainder deals with the history of the Forestry Commission's takeover of the Plateau and attempts to answer a number of objections to its use for pine growing.

It leaves unanswered most of the main reasons advanced for retaining the plateau in its natural state - for example, the need to have the complete drainage system in the Park, its accessibility to the public, lack of anything but steep and rugged land in the state's parks, existence of alternative areas for pine-growing, etc, etc.

It makes some absurd claims, for example, on the value of pine plantations for recreation and wildlife habitat.

The Committee plans to prepare a detailed reply to Mr Beale

DEMONSTRATION AT THE "CONSERVATION" DEPARTMENT

On Thursday, June 11th, conservationists are asked to assemble outside the offices of the so called "Conservation" Department with placards.

The demonstration has been called to focus public attention on the refusal by the Minister for "Conservation" Mr Beale and the Premier, to reconsider the issue of logging licences and clearing the Boyd Plateau for pine planting. Remonstrations with the Company have been ineffectual. Only sharp focussing of public attention will stop those bulldozers on the Boyd.

The demonstration will begin at 12.30 p.m. and continue till 1.30 p.m.

Suggestions for placards:

- (1) Senator Cotton! Get your bulldozers out of public reserves on the Boyd Plateau.
- (2) The Rape of Boyd Plateau - another job by the N.S.W. "Conservation" Department.
- (3) The N.S.W. ~~CONSERVATION~~ DESTRUCTION DEPARTMENT.
- (4) Destruction of Boyd Plateau and Kanangra National Park - A Beale deal.

It is also suggested that individual conservationists might be present at any public function attended by the Minister for Lands, Mr Beale, or by Senator Cotton who controls Timber Industries Limited of Oberon. These men must never be allowed to forget the widespread community opposition to their operations on Boyd Plateau.

JOIN THE COLONG SHAREHOLDERS "CLUB"

The strength of shareholder power will continue to grow. Next year our goal will be at least 1000 Colong Shareholders in Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers (Australia) Limited.

If you are a shareholder encourage your friends to obtain one through the Colong Committee.

If you belong to a society, put the attached form in your society journal. Everyone who knows about Colong must be given the opportunity to become a shareholder.

If you aren't a shareholder yet, now is the time to become one.

Fill out the form below and send the Colong Committee three dollars (\$3:00). We will then send you a share transfer form (they will be transferred from David Eden who holds a parcel of shares on behalf of the Colong Committee) which you must sign and return in order to obtain a share.

BENEFITS

The benefits of becoming a shareholder in one of Sydney's unpopular companies are many. You will make 6 cents per year on your investment, consisting of two 3 cent cheques per year. You will receive a one-share Share Certificate which will probably become a collector's item in the future. You will be invited to the Shareholders' Meeting every year - this is an enlightening experience for all. You will receive a free subscription to the Colong Bulletin and continue to be informed of the latest happenings. And most important of all you will be participating in a form of Conservation protest unprecedented in Australia.

ORDER FORM (tear here)

For a three dollar (\$3:00) donation to the Colong Committee I will receive in return ONE free share in ASSOCIATED PORTLAND CEMENT MANUFACTURERS (AUSTRALIA) LIMITED plus a free subscription to the Colong Bulletin (NB. These shares of A.P.C.M. are listed on the Sydney Stock Exchange)

FULL SURNAME

For Registration purposes _____

FULL CHRISTIAN NAMES _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS _____

I have enclosed cheque for _____ dollars in order to obtain _____ share(s) in Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers (Australia) Limited.

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE COLONG COMMITTEE.

SEND TO: The Colong Committee,
c/o Mrs M. Eden,
22 Fairmount Street,
DULWICH HILL, N.S.W. 2203.