



CONSERVATION : A STUDY IN THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC INTEREST.

(With special reference to bushwalkers and their clubs.)

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed : *Philip J. Shackel*

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## I N D E X.

INTRODUCTION 1 - 7.

### PART I.

(a). From Pioneering Towards Protection. 8 - 19.

(b). A National Park and a Reserve. 20 - 35.

### PART II.

(a). Transition : 1930 - 40. 36 - 50.

(b). The Hobart Walking Club:

Foundation and Growth. 51 - 64.

### PART III.

Campaigning: Mt. Field to Lake Pedder. 65 - 91.

EPILOGUE. 92.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 93 - 95.

## INTRODUCTION.

If one has to choose an arbitrary point in any historical study, the founding of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust in April 1968 marked a point in the development of Tasmanian interest in conservation. However, this study aims to examine not the actual founding of the Trust, but rather the efforts and arguments of the conservation enthusiast, especially the bushwalker, which cleared the way for the founding of the Trust. Therefore it is concerned with the problem of what drove men towards a realisation of the need for conservation, and in what way they argued in an attempt to modify a predominantly anti-conservation social environment.

The city dweller saw the wilderness in two ways. First it appeared as something to be tamed, to be exploited, shaped into a familiar pattern. The relationship in this case appeared to be one of distrust, of concern, the wilderness had to be carved up by roads, have billboards, neon signs, motels and picnic areas. It did not matter if these symbols of man's taming of nature were unsightly, or badly planned, so long as man asserted his presence. Such an attitude formed, I feel, the basis of what may be termed the popular urban level of anti-conservation, or rather complete lack of interest in the subject. This theme in another aspect was developed in Robin Boyd's The Australian Ugliness. The second aspect of the city dwellers' attitude towards the wilderness was a romantic one. This involved a search for the roots of man

connected with the earth, with nature. Here the wilderness was seen as a reservoir of peace, of serenity, that could be drawn upon to sustain the mad rush of city life. Henry Lawson, for example, described the city as corrupt, true virtue only belonging to the bush, or rather to the bushman. Russel Ward gave another aspect of this nostalgia for the bush; even though his thesis may not be entirely convincing, and the ideal of the Australian bushman may be a myth, it indicated the existence of a desire to find in the wilderness values that may have shaped a whole culture.

In Tasmania the unspoilt highlands have stimulated men to the most extravagant statements as to the almost spiritual quality of the peaks, tarns, moors, and forests. Again and again in the press and in the magazines of the walking clubs, writers launched into extravagantly descriptive passages in an attempt to capture the feelings aroused by some particular scene. However, the visual impact of scenery only formed part of the wilderness experience, which came through the feeling that the walker was self-contained, that the more blatant examples of man's presence were absent, and that physical achievement survived in an age of machines. With the increased growth of the cities and increased reliance upon machines, involving a more complex relationship within society, a certain element experienced a desire to seek, somewhat idealistically, the "simple life". The motives were obscure, walkers could not say why they went walking. But the urge was there, no matter what

forms the rationalisation took. The interest of the walker was not merely one of preserving the recreational area but extended beyond the immediate need to a wider consideration of how his needs could be put in a wider context, the context of man's whole environment and the balance within that environment.

As walkers composed only a small section of society, and as that society was generally not concerned about conservation issues, the walker/conservationist had to be continually on the alert, and in attempts to obtain a hearing they had to shape their arguments so as to appeal to the dominant interests of that society. In Tasmania and in Australia as a whole, the overriding interest was that of development. The term covered a large range, practically any project could come under the heading. Donald Horne in the Bulletin of October 5, 1968, gave an interesting view of the pre-occupation with development, it achieving almost the status of a "sacred cow". The emphasis was on individual, large-scale plans involving the exploitation of primary resources, conceived not in a spirit of overall planning, but in a piecemeal arrangement, where it seemed that large interests could make their way without any considerations apart from their primary goal of immediate exploitation.

The walker/conservationist entered into the scene by insisting that the wilderness area must fit into the developmental



pattern, or alternatively that the pattern be modified and coordinated, and that the many aspects of any project be considered. For example, in the Tasmanian hydro-electric development :- other uses of water resources, human consumption, industrial use, the needs of farmers and graziers, the aims of tourists interests and other bodies associated with the appreciation of scenic values - have not been considered as of substantial importance. Rather, they have appeared as minor aspects that may be considered in an aside, and only if they fitted in with the primary objective of power generation. In attempting to modify the developmental pattern, the bushwalker/conservationist pursued his objective in two ways. One involved an appeal to public opinion through the press, public meetings, pamphlets and so on, and the other involved individual walker/conservationist bodies acting as consultative agencies to government departments or boards, so attempting to influence both politicians and public servants.

This concept of the bushwalker/conservationist was only part of more recent developments. In a smaller community walkers could not be distinguished as a separate body. Rather those people interested in walking were connected with the Tourist Association, the Field Naturalists' Club and the Royal Society of Tasmania. Also government bodies such as the Railways and Lands Departments provided an opportunity to combine both occupational and recreational interests. When the process of settlement in Tasmania spread beyond the easily settled grasslands and river

valleys, settlers had a difficult task in clearing the forests. The bush and its inhabitants were seen as opponents, the scrub and timber being burnt and animals shot or trapped. There was no attempt to control fires or limit the slaughter of fauna, it was in the nature of pioneering to exploit ruthlessly to get a maximum return for the effort and consequently there was very little thought of preservation for the future. This attitude persisted, especially in the margins of settlement, where families existed on inadequate low-quality farms, dependent on seasonal work, trapping or wood cutting to supplement the farm income. Such people did not see any harm in burning off a section of bush, or trapping fauna in sanctuaries or out of season. Since the 1940's however, a new type of anti-conservation force has dominated. The fringe settler still constituted a nuisance, especially with regard to bush fires, but with the Labor Government's economic programme based on the development of secondary industries using hydro-electric power, and large-scale mining and forestry ventures, the anti-conservation forces were to be found in these groups.

In the move from pioneering towards protection the protectionist agitation came from established interests, centred around government officials. The obstacles that had to be overcome were the depredations of the 'small man', and once some form of legislation was passed and administered reasonably efficiently the fauna in particular had some protection from

complete exploitation. Wilderness areas remained generally untouched and did not appear to be of economic importance, so a little effort yielded such large reserves as Mt. Field (27,000 acres) and Cradle Mt. - Lake St. Clair (158,000 acres.) One of the first indications of the changing economic pattern came in the late 1930's with the granting of 400 square miles of forest concessions to Australian Newsprint Mills in the Florentine Valley. This Act, combined with the somewhat limited aims of the Forestry Commission brought the new anti- and pro-conservation interests into conflict during 1946 - 50. The bushwalkers, notably the Hobart Walking Club, were very firmly ranged among the conservationists. In the conflicts over the alienation of part of Mt. Field National Park in 1946 - 50 and the flooding of Lake Pedder in 1966 - 67 the conservation forces were unable to significantly modify the dominant process of uncoordinated exploitation. The very strength, however, of the anti-conservation forces provoked a far greater reaction than had previous forces, and the arguments had a far greater public airing and greater sophistication. The only case where the government modified its position was in 1959 when the Macquarie Island sanctuary was to be revoked to allow the establishment of a sealing industry. The public outcry was immediate and coupled with the expulsion of Dr. R.J.D. Turnbull from the Labor party and an election, the sanctuary remained inviolate. Also in the Macquarie Island case the

anti-conservation forces were not large, and in comparison with the Mt. Field and Lake Pedder issues the government's developmental policies were not at stake. To the conservationist the threat of the large-scale 'development' projects was involved in the modification of environment subordinating aesthetic, recreational and scientific values to the immediate aim of single resource exploitation.

P A R T I (a) .

FROM PIONEERING TOWARDS PROTECTION .

Acts of parliament providing for game protection and the reservation of crown land for recreation existed in various forms in late nineteenth century Tasmania. The 1895 Game Protection Act repealed seven previous statutes passed during the years 1879 - 1889<sup>1</sup> and the Crown Lands Act of 1890<sup>2</sup> provided that crown land may be reserved for recreational purposes. The Crown Lands Act applied to town parks and reserves rather than to any wider purpose, and the game laws proved almost impossible to enforce, the Lands Department having little in the way of policing powers. There are many instances of attempts to preserve both flora and fauna before 1900.<sup>3</sup> Twelve reserves were mentioned in a list published in 1899, the most significant being a 300 acre area at Russell Falls proclaimed a reserve in 1885.<sup>4</sup> This was formed through the efforts of L.M.Shoobridge, who applied for a grant of 50 acres to preserve the scenery, resulting in a grant of 300 acres for a public reserve.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The formation of the Tasmanian Tourist Association in 1893, based in Hobart, meant that there was a body actively interested in promoting the scenic aspects of the State. To do so the promoters had to publicise the attractions of such areas as Mt. Wellington, the Hartz Mountains, and the Russell Falls, as well as the more settled parts of the state. Among the members of the Association were H. Dobson, P.S.Seager, L. Rodway, J.M.Beattie, and as representatives of urban interests their attitudes towards the problems of the marginal settler tended to lack sympathy, especially

concerning the destruction of flora and fauna. Rodway, as government botanist had a professional interest in flora, but this interest would appear to have extended beyond purely professional concerns. In 1917 he mentioned that over thirty years before, he and others including Chief Justice Nicholls, used to go camping and exploring in the Mt. Field area.<sup>7</sup>

Rodway's work in the Royal Society of Tasmania, the Tourist Association, the Field Naturalists' Club, and later on the National Park Association, indicated that certain members of the establishment were indeed interested in conservation.

As a publicist of Tasmanian scenic attractions, J.W. Beattie was outstanding, along with S. Spurling III of Launceston. When Beattie began landscape photography in 1882 the tourist industry was just under way,<sup>8</sup> at first he covered the more settled regions, but by 1890 he had penetrated to much of the highlands and western areas. Beattie's reports indicate that he was not solely concerned with scenic beauties. In a series of articles published in the Mercury during March and April 1901, he mentioned the mineral potential of the Barn Bluff - Pelion East area, and outlined estimated quantities of minerals and the economic possibilities of exploitation. The Royal Society of Tasmania provided a meeting place for those people interested in the related subjects of exploration, natural scenery and progressive methods of resource exploitation. Beattie was elected a

9

Fellow in 1901, but previously he had read papers and exhibited lantern slides. In May 1898 he read a paper giving an account of a trip to Port Davey. Again in May 1899, Beattie, in conjunction with Rodway, gave accounts of a visit to the Hartz Mountains and Pictou districts, illustrated of course with lantern slides taken by Beattie. There are other references to papers and lantern slides being shown by Beattie in 1901, 1903 and 1904. <sup>10</sup> Spurling gained bush experience as a surveyor before entering his father's profession of photography, and the experience fitted him to be an outstanding landscape photographer. <sup>11</sup> Some of his first scenic photographs were of Mt. Ossa, Mt. Pelion and Barn Bluff, published in the Examiner of July 1898. Spurling also made the first winter ascent of Ben Lomond in August 1902 <sup>12</sup> and in 1905 climbed Cradle Mountain, taking many photographs in the area. The work of both Beattie and Spurling as photographers, contributed a great deal to the interest in Tasmanian scenery, and even though their works were in many cases used as tourist advertisements they can be seen as helping develop an appreciation, hence preservation, of scenery.

Various aspects of Royal Society activities were directed towards conservationist ends. The prohibition of sealing in certain areas in 1891 involved a certain amount of pressure from the Society <sup>13</sup> while during the 1901 and 1902 sessions especially there was a considerable amount of discussion on forest conservation. This interest was sufficiently extensive for the matter to be



discussed in parliament. The Minister for Lands, E. Mulcahy, in reply to a question, stated that Cabinet '... was preparing definite proposals for the conservation and management ... of forests ... ' <sup>14</sup>

Difficulties in access prevented any wholesale exploitation of the scenically attractive inland areas, but the Freycinet Peninsula and Schouten Island were easily accessible from the sea. Attempts to reserve this area as a flora and fauna sanctuary brought the Tourist Association, Royal Society, and the recently formed (1904) Field Naturalists' Club together in pursuit of a common objective. In October 1901 the Tourist Association formed a sub-committee on the protection of native flora and fauna and public reserves, the members being J.F.Mather, F. Abbott, <sup>15</sup> L. Rodway and G.E.Moore.

At this time the Tourist Association was interested in developing the potential assets of the east coast; the Mercury of October 21, 1901 having an article on the area. The idea of national parks was brought forward in a letter in which the Yellowstone National Park in the United States was <sup>16</sup> cited as an example. The east coast received further mention

in 1903 when at the September meeting of the Royal Society, Beattie exhibited views of the scenic attractions, emphasising the <sup>17</sup> tourist potential. In June 1904, F.A.Mather proposed at a meeting of the Tourist Association that the crown lands at Schouten Island and Freycinet Peninsula be reserved for flora and fauna protection. The Minister for Lands, G. Lyne, responded favourably.

The Royal Society heard a report on the matter at its June 1904<sup>18</sup> meeting. The arguments used were mainly that of the tourist interest, the existence of fauna - the black swan especially - being part of the appeal. The matter of the reserve was not publicly mentioned again until 1906. It is not to say that interest had declined, rather the process of discussion may have been on an informal basis, this being facilitated by the small and interwoven nature of the establishment at that time. The Mercury of January 10, 1906 reported that the Tourist Association had been notified by the Secretary for Lands that '... Schouten Island and Freycinet Peninsula had been temporarily set aside as game reserves and now that the statutory authority had come into existence under the Game Act 1905 steps would be taken to formally<sup>19</sup> reserve these and other areas ...'. The Mercury continued its interest in the east coast reserve. In an editorial on January 30, 1906 the paper maintained that it was always in favour of such a reserve and had brought public attention to the slaughter of fauna. The editorial extolled the beauties of Coles Bay and Wineglass Bay, but for the reserve to be effective a gamekeeper should be appointed. Members of the Royal Society had not, however, been allowed to forget about the reserve. At the August 1906 meeting Beattie gave a lecture on Schouten Island and Freycinet Peninsula as reserves, and from comments it was apparent that Beattie had been quite active in advocating such

reserves and had ideas of a 'sort of national park.'

Closer to Hobart and of more immediate interest was Mt. Wellington. The slopes and fern gullies formed interesting walks and tours, the mountain providing a convenient and not yet an entirely familiar environment for walking and nature excursions. Groups of young men built rustic huts out of saplings and bark slabs; these were usually hidden in the fern gullies, much of this building being on land owned by the Cascade Breweries which extended a considerable distance up the mountain. <sup>21</sup> The Tourist Association had an active interest in the scenic qualities of the mountain in that drives to the Springs were very popular, and formed part of the tourists' itinerary while in Hobart. Inevitably the interest of the various users conflicted. A large part of the eastern slopes of the mountain formed the catchment area for the Hobart water supply.

With increasing use, especially by tourists, the Council decided to prevent access to certain areas, thus causing a certain amount of controversy. The Tourist Association approached the Minister for Lands, and emphasised the attractions of the mountain and the need <sup>22</sup> to bring tourists to the city. The matter continued to be discussed, brief references appearing in the press, but by January 1906 associations interested in conserving the mountain scenery organised a deputation to approach the Minister for Lands (A. Hean.) The deputation included H. Nicholls, M.H.A., and representatives from the Tourist Association, Australian Natives Association and the Field Naturalists' Club. They suggested that crown land on the

eastern slopes of Mt. Wellington be declared a national park,  
 and that a board be appointed to administer the park.<sup>23</sup> The  
Mercury's views of the proposed mountain park as a recreational  
 area came into conflict with people who wished to develop the  
 area. H. Dobson, the founder of the Tourist Association, attacked  
 the Mercury over comments on the work of the Association and the  
 mountain park.<sup>24</sup> Later in July the paper devoted editorial space to  
 criticise Dobson for commencing a hotel at the Springs before  
 permission was given.<sup>25</sup> In the meantime a bill to reserve certain  
 areas of Mt. Wellington had been introduced in parliament, and  
 attempts made to push it through quickly. The Mercury at first  
 commented favourably,<sup>26</sup> but when the financial provisions of the  
 bill became fully known there was a certain amount of protest.  
 By August 1906 satisfactory compromise was reached.<sup>27</sup> It is quite  
 apparent from the press comments that the tourist interest held  
 quite an important place in the minds, if not the economic interests,  
 of the established sections of society.

The Game Protection Acts of 1905 and 1907 contained  
 provisions that made the task of enforcement very difficult. The  
 Lands Department report of June 30, 1906 commented that the Game  
 Protection Act only applied to game captured on unoccupied crown  
 lands, so exempting pastoral leases and making the already difficult  
 task of the police virtually impossible.<sup>28</sup> The task of enforcing  
 inadequate legislation was further complicated through the lack of

finance for rangers. The 1909 - 10 Lands Department report maintained that the Freycinet game reserve had failed, and so the Act should be amended, but warned that '... game reserves mean continual expense in supervising if the game is to be protected ...' <sup>29</sup> In a largely pioneering community, expenditure on conservation projects was regarded as a luxury, limited government funds must go to far more 'useful' projects. Only through a long process of 'education' and through changing economic circumstances could such an attitude be modified.

Even though the Freycinet game reserve scheme was not entirely successful, the possibilities of national parks, functioning as both fauna and scenic reserves, continued to be discussed. In the June 1907 meeting of the Royal Society, Colonel V.W.Legge gave a paper on the Ben Lomond plateau and <sup>30</sup> mentioned its possibilities as a national park, and at the July 1908 meeting J.W.Beattie gave a paper describing a visit to the Gordon River, and commented on the need to reserve the banks of <sup>31</sup> the river for scenic purposes. During 1910 and 1911 the Mercury gave considerable coverage to fauna and scenery protection. On January 17, 1910 the paper printed several letters on fauna preservation, the matter being taken further in May 1910 when a deputation approached the Government on fauna protection. An editorial commented :

... The question now is whether that sympathy is going to show itself in deeds. This matter has come up from time to time during many years, and in no single instance have Ministers failed to say how heartily they approve of something being done ... But having made nice little speeches ... Ministers have been satisfied that their duty was done ...

32

Colonel Legge's proposal for a Ben Lomond national park was put before the government by a deputation consisting of Colonel Legge, P.S.Seager and A. Wertheimer of the Tourist Association and F. Fiesse of the Royal Society. Seager also proposed that all the mountain plateaux in the state should be reserved and that a master plan should be prepared. The main objections reported were those of expense in appointing rangers.<sup>33</sup> A certain amount of controversy was aroused through reports of logging in the Gordon River scenic reserve but the incident was resolved in February 1911 when the Minister for Lands stated that no sawmilling lease had been granted in the Gordon River area but in Birch's Inlet, further west along Macquarie Harbour.<sup>34</sup> The discussion did, however, reveal that the tenure of existing scenic or fauna reserves was very much subject to the will of the Minister for Lands, and that such a situation should be altered so as to make the existence of a reserve less dependent on political whims.

So, in a halting piecemeal manner, protection gradually modified pioneering, but the movement in Tasmania cannot be isolated from overseas interest in conservation. In many cases mainland

states had anticipated Tasmania in protective legislation, but considering the cause of conservation retrospectively the United States provided the outstanding publicists, one of the most prominent being Gifford Pinchot. Pinchot, with President Theodore Roosevelt, brought to conservation all the energy and drive of the progressivist movement. His influence was greatest in the years 1901 - 08, when he managed to transfer the administration of forest reserves to the Department of Agriculture, and the highlight of his career being in 1908 when he chaired the National Conservation

35

Commission. The attitude of progressivists like Pinchot was one of unbounded optimism towards human progress and rationalism, and a basic part of his conservationist philosophy was that resources should be developed for use, but in an equitable, coordinated and scientific manner.

36

Approximate equivalents of such an outlook could, I feel, be found in certain Tasmanians, especially among members of the Royal Society and Field Naturalists. There is quite a possibility that the ideals that motivated Pinchot and Roosevelt also acted upon certain Tasmanians. As the area of settled country in the state had just about reached its present limits, and with the feeling that the frontier had virtually vanished, certain thinking Tasmanians may quite well have come to the conclusion that resources were not inexhaustible and that it was time to look and plan for the future.

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P A R T I (b) .

A NATIONAL PARK AND A RESERVE .

The creation of national parks or reserves is not the sole concern of conservationists, but it has been an area of activity that has received the greatest amount of publicity and public interest. The conservationist of 1968 would argue that his interest basically covers the coordinated use of natural resources, and that flora and fauna left in a natural state constitutes a significant natural resource. The view taken by certain Tasmanians involved with scenic or fauna reserves has been one of preservation rather than conservation. This system developed as piecemeal attempts to preserve certain areas or species without any attempt at overall planning. The Mt. Field National Park and the Cradle Mt. - Lake St. Clair National Park form the best known and most significant part of Tasmania's national park system.

The small 300 acre Russell Falls reserve was only sufficient to encourage further activity and with increasing interest in scenic and fauna reserves the case for expansion of the reserve seemed a reasonably popular one. On May 20, 1911 the Mercury published an article on a trip to Lake Fenton, and commented on track clearing done by W.A.Belcher, the track being made at the insistence of the Tourist Association and the Railways League. It was at this time that W.E.Crooke first took up the idea of pressing the government to create a national park including Russell Falls and the Mt. Field plateau.<sup>1</sup> Crooke figured significantly in the agitation which led both to the creation of the National Park at Mt. Field and the

introduction of legislation specifically covering scenery preservation. The motives underlying his efforts are obscure, there does not appear to be any direct economic interest, from statements made at the opening of the park in 1917 he appeared to see fauna and flora protection as an end in itself.<sup>2</sup> Both fauna and scenery protection continued to receive attention in the press and among interest organisations. The Minister for Lands (E. Mulcahy) in August 1913 stated that the matter of fauna protection had been '... freely discussed in the press and by letters to the Department during the last few years ...'<sup>3</sup> During September and October 1913 the issue of a National Park was further considered. The Mercury mentioned that Crooke had called for a reserve of about 2,000 acres. Also the Mercury suggested that the administration of such a reserve be controlled by the Railways Department, which was increasingly interested in any scenic attractions that would mean increased passenger traffic.

Another editorial on fauna preservation was published in the September 19, 1913 edition. The Mercury commented on an address given by Professor T.T. Flynn to the Field Naturalists' Club, and that the efforts of the club could form the beginning of an effective movement towards a useful scheme of fauna protection. The organisations interested in the creation of a national park included the Royal Society of Tasmania, the Field Naturalists' club, the University of Tasmania, the Hobart City Council, the

Fisheries Commissioners, the New Norfolk Council and the Australian Natives Association. Representatives of these bodies were organised by Crooke into the National Park Association.<sup>4</sup> The Association did not achieve its ends through popular pressure, even though it held public meetings and received press support. The mode of operation appeared rather to be one where approaches were made directly to the Minister concerned, rather than through the medium of popular public opinion. This approach contrasted with the methods used to establish the Cradle Mt. - Lake St. Clair reserve. At the end of 1913 the Minister for Lands (E. Mulcahy) agreed to a reserve of 500 acres and a grant of £500,<sup>5</sup> the Forestry Department acting as caretaker. These provisions did not satisfy the Association, but a change in government gave an opportunity for further negotiations,<sup>6</sup> which resulted in the reservation of 27,000 acres. Initiative did not entirely come from voluntary bodies, the Lands Department report for 1914 - 15 commented that '... The want of a national park for the preservation of native fauna has long been felt in Tasmania and it is reassuring to be able to report that an area of 27,000 acres has been selected and set aside ...'<sup>7</sup> The Mercury of March 10, 1915 editorial on 'The National Park', revealed quite a sympathetic insight into the value of such a park. It was seen as a '... permanent park dedicated to nature ... not a mere wilderness, yet a sanctuary ...' also the writer maintained that the park must not be considered

primarily as a financial proposition but as providing '...opportunities for communing with the spirits of the trees and the brooks ,,, '

The efforts of the National Park Association substantially contributed to the passing of the Scenery Preservation Act of 1915. This Act provided for the reservation of land considered to be of scenic or historic interest, not just the Mt. Field area that the Association had been advocating. Also the Act provided for some security of reserves, a Scenery Preservation Board consisting of government officials and representatives of interested organisations, and made provision for subsidiary boards to administer the various reserves. Even after the passing of this Act, which did not appear to arouse much interest in parliament, the members of the National Park Association were not entirely satisfied. In July 1916 a deputation consisting of T. Gant (President Legislative Council), W. Crooke, R.M. Johnston (Royal Society), W.J.T. Stops (University Vice-chancellor) M. Ansell, (University Registrar), H. Dobson, A.C. Davis (Hydro-Electric Company ) and A.L. Butler and C.E. Lord (Field Naturalists' Club) met the chairman of the Scenery Preservation Board (E.A. Counsel) to ask for the appointment of a subsidiary board. During discussion Crooke mentioned that the National Park Association had only asked for legislation for a National Park but as the Scenery Preservation Act provided for the reserving of many scenic assets so various boards were necessary for the development of facilities. Dobson advocated a board of interested citizens, this being agreed to by Butler.

The matter of a Board and protection of the fauna continued to be emphasised, the Mercury of September 14, 1916 reported that Rodway had discussed such matters in a lecture to the Camera Club. Fauna protection was always an over-riding concern of the Field Naturalists' Club, and at the September 1916 meeting, C.E. Lord stated that the club must take action, and that in spite of many deputations very little had been done.<sup>9</sup> From the Mercury's comments it is apparent that government initiative on the national park had soon waned, in that '... the Premier apparently ... did ... not distinguish between the national park and a mere beauty-spot or scenic reserve ...'<sup>10</sup> By December 1916 the initial labours of the Park enthusiasts were concluded with the announcement that the Government was to appoint a park board in accordance with the National Park Association's ideas.<sup>11</sup> The park continued to receive frequent press comments; in the February 21, 1917 Mercury there was an article on the developmental policy of the Board, that their objective was to preserve the forest, to popularise the attractions and to develop access routes.

The National Park was officially opened on October 13, 1917. The speeches indicated differing views on the park; the Minister for Lands and Works, J.B. Hayes, saw the park as an area for recreation serving both the local population and tourists. Crooke's idea of the park was a means by which the unspoilt bush and forest could be preserved for future generations, other objects were the

preservation of flora and fauna and the recreational potential,  
 '... the tourists, to his mind, came last ...' <sup>12</sup> The Mercury's  
 own comments point to the significance of the park in reflecting  
 changing attitudes and circumstances, but also that '... to many  
 people of the present generation, accustomed as they are to seeing  
 on all hands ... wild scenery ... the full significance of ...  
 this National area may not be apparent ...'

As mentioned, the agitation for the National Park  
 produced a wider effect in providing the impetus for an Act  
 covering all types of scenic and historic reserves and providing a  
 certain amount of administrative machinery. The previous objections  
 of the government to any system of scenic or fauna protection, that  
 of finance, had been modified with the accession of the Labor party  
 to power. Also, with the fiasco of the Tourist Association's  
 finances in 1914, resulting in the establishment of a Government  
 Tourist Bureau under the control of E.T. Emmett, the Government  
 exhibited a more favourable attitude towards scenic reserves, this  
 was especially apparent when the tourist potential of such reserves  
 was emphasised. The direct appeal of the National Park as an  
 accessible tourist attraction may account for the difference in  
 financial treatment of the National Park and the Cradle Reserve. +

\* Prior to 1947 Mt. Field National Park was known as  
 the National Park, and the Cradle Mt. - Lake St. Clair  
 National Park as the Cradle Mt. - Lake St. Clair  
 Reserve. When referring to the Cradle Mt. - Lake St.  
 Clair area before 1947 I shall use the term Cradle  
 Reserve, and after 1947, Cradle National Park.



The 1917 report of the secretary of the Scenery Preservation Board ( W.N.Hurst) mentioned that eight reserves had been proclaimed and in addition the Surveyor General had arranged to withhold from sale areas of natural beauty or historic interest. Included among the original list of reserves considered by the Board was the Cradle Mt. - Lake St. Clair area, but although it was not immediately proclaimed 135,000 acres were withdrawn from selection. 13 Although E.T.Emmett and others had strongly advocated the proclamation of a Cradle Reserve, the creation of the reserve was largely due to the efforts of one man, Gustav Weindorfer. The personality and methods of Weindorfer gave to the campaign a colour and enthusiasm that was to arouse a considerable amount of interest in the reserve, and through the efforts of friends and other people interested in bushwalking, including such men as R.E.Smith, F. Smithies and E.T.Emmett, the Cradle Reserve has become one of the best known and popular in Australia. Before coming to Tasmania, Weindorfer was active in the Victorian Field Naturalists' Club and had a keen interest in forestry. During Christmas 1902 he accompanied Dr. Sutton, a fellow-member of the Victorian Field Naturalists' Club and a keen botanist, to the southern Australian Alps, 14 where he saw the attempts to develop Mt. Buffalo as a tourist resort. Weindorfer first visited Tasmania in 1909 and in January accompanied Sutton to Cradle Valley, and after seeing the valley he described it as a 15 '... veritable Eldorado for the botanist ... ' Later on in the

year he made the acquaintance of R.E. Smith, both of them being keen botanists. Smith was also interested in Cradle Mt., having<sup>16</sup> climbed the mountain in 1907 and 1908. The extent of Weindorfer's vision was revealed when in January 1910 in the company of his wife, Smith and A.G. Black he climbed Cradle Mt. Smith reported that "... standing on the summit ... Weindorfer said : "This must be a National Park, for the people and for all time. It is magnificent, and people must know about it and enjoy it" ... ' When Smith asked how Weindorfer would go about it, the answer was that they would build a chalet and when people started coming the government would make a road, following the same plan as<sup>17</sup> at Mt. Buffalo in Victoria. By March 1910 both Smith and Weindorfer had selected land in Cradle Valley, the former approximately 260 acres and the latter 400 acres. The end of 1912 saw the opening of the chalet Waldheim, Weindorfer's wife managing<sup>18</sup> their farm while the chalet was being built.

The interest of men like Weindorfer and Smith in the area was not that of professional urban men seeking a wilderness experience. Rather it was that of men deeply interested in natural history but at the same time possessing an economic interest in the grazing, timber and fur potential of their land. Waldheim soon became known as a guest chalet; in one of Smith's letters there is mention that approximately 30 people had stayed<sup>19</sup> at Waldheim during the summer of 1913 - 14. This was in spite

of the bad condition of the road, the last eight miles being virtually a track. Although access to Cradle Valley was somewhat difficult, people interested in exploiting the King William Pine forests came near enough to Cradle Valley for Weindorfer to become concerned about their depredations. While in Melbourne he had criticised the Australian lack of interest in forest management, and as part of an attempt to improve the situation he and Smith joined the Forest League in 1918.

It was apparent to Weindorfer that the area would be best protected and his economic interests best served if the area were reserved. He devoted the winter of 1921 to publicising the attractions of the area, hoping to arouse enough enthusiasm to influence the government. Other people were already interested in the idea of Cradle Mt. as a reserve. The Advocate of February 21, 1921 published an article on the Cradle area proposing that it be a reserve. The article was based on a statement of 'A prominent Launceston resident,' probably F. Smithies, who had made several visits to Waldheim. There were conflicting ideas about the use of the various resources, the Advocate in March commented on the control of timber-getting arising out of the Cradle Valley case, and in June there was a statement by the Tasman Oil Company on the prospects of shale oil in the Barn Bluff area. Also there had been a certain amount of small-scale mining in the Pelion region. Attempts to establish a Northern branch of the Royal Society of Tasmania met

finally with success when as a result of a public meeting (chaired by W.R.Rolph) on May 11, 1921, the inaugural meeting of the branch was held on June 26, 1921.<sup>23</sup> The northern branch of the society was soon to become one of the major supporters of Weindorfer's scheme.

In the meantime Weindorfer had approached W.R.Rolph of the Examiner and had obtained press support. The Examiner of July 12, 1921 contained an article on the proposal for a national park in the Cradle area. It was reported that Emmett stated that any movement would have the full support of the Government Tourist Bureau, also that several huts on the Pelion plains had been handed over to the Bureau. On July 16, 1921 the paper contained an interview with Weindorfer and outlined his proposals to create public interest, the extent of the park and the need for fauna protection. After leaving Launceston Weindorfer took the campaign to Hobart where in company with C.E.Lord and B.T.Emmett he met the Minister for Lands (A. Hean) who was quite sympathetic to the proposal.<sup>24</sup> Having set matters moving there was virtually simultaneous action both in the north and south of Tasmania. Because men such as Dr. McClinton, F. Heyward, F. Smithies and S. Spurling were already interested in the possibilities of a Cradle reserve, and were also associated with the northern branch of the Royal Society of Tasmania, the branch immediately took up

the case for a reserve. On July 22, 1921 the proposal for a Cradle Mt. National Park was put before a meeting of the Royal Society, and it was mentioned that the parent society had offered to arrange for Emmett to give an illustrated lecture. The area was proposed as '... a resort for tourists and a sanctuary for game ...' but that caretakers be permitted to trap a certain amount  
25  
for revenue purposes. A special meeting of the Field Naturalists' Club was held to consider the proposal. At the meeting Emmett said that in 1916 he had recommended that the area be reserved but the matter had now been brought to a head through Weindorfer's press publicity in the north and north-west. The promoters of the reserve scheme did not intend to apply the provisions of the Scenery Preservation Act, but to allow limited grazing, timber and mineral  
26  
rights. These proposals were quite different from those behind the founding of the National Park, apparently economic pressures dictated the manner in which the reserve could be established. In spite of the plea of conservationists that national parks and reserves should not be land that nobody else wanted, the extensive compromises involved in the establishment of the Cradle Reserve indicate that in fact reserves do largely constitute unwanted land. The editorial of the Examiner of July 29, 1921 discussed the Royal Society decision to take up the matter of a Cradle Reserve. The interest was not a new development but in the past was '... more personal and individual rather than organised and public ...' the

writer continued ' ... It should be understood that this is a public matter of high importance. It does not represent the fad of a few individuals or the propaganda of a State department ... ' also that the movement had practically originated in Launceston and that it was a worthy cause for public interest.

During August 1921 Emmett gave lectures illustrated with lantern slides in all the major towns of the north-west coast, the tour resulting from a request by J.A.Lyons M.H.A.<sup>27</sup> That a Labor politician, already a leading member of his party, should endorse the movement was itself a sign of wide-spread interest. The lectures resulted in a considerable amount of publicity and the various tourist associations as well as the Devonport and Kentish Municipal Councils gave their support.<sup>28</sup> At Emmett's Burnie and Ulverstone lectures he emphasised the fact that there was no intention to lock up mineral or forest resources in the reserve, but he pointed out that the main financial gain would be through tourists.<sup>29</sup> The same points were made by Weindorfer in his press statements. Other indications of a clash of interests were given by R.J.Quaile of Wilmot (having visited Cradle Valley several times), who commented at a meeting of the Kentish Council that the whole area should be nationalised because ' ... it was not desirable to allow a few selectors to continue there ... ' <sup>30</sup> The intense publicity waned after the end of August, Weindorfer was no doubt preparing

for a record season, and he was not disappointed. Waldheim became almost a fashionable resort, Weindorfer acting as the genial host, and developed into a minor public figure, and the press found plenty of colourful material to write about.<sup>31.</sup>

Although the proposal for the reserve was not emphasised in the press again until early 1922, it is quite probable that

negotiations continued, especially in Hobart, where both Emmett and Lord were very interested in the proposal and in a position to influence government policy. In January and February (1922) the Examiner again printed accounts of trips to Cradle Mt., and that in February the Prime Minister (W.M.Hughes) had been very impressed with a lantern slide lecture arranged by McClinton,

<sup>32</sup>  
Heyward and Smithies. During March 1922 a Ministerial party  
<sup>33</sup>  
visited Cradle Valley, to see at first hand what the fuss was all about. Finally, at a meeting of the Scenery Preservation Board on March 29, 1922 Emmett moved that the area be proclaimed a reserve under the Scenery Preservation Act, but with certain provisions relating to mineral, forest and grazing rights. He also mentioned that the matter of control had been discussed and it was recommended that separate boards for the Cradle Mt. area and the Lake St. Clair area be appointed. Rodway commented that the idea of a reserve was to prevent wholesale slaughter and exploitation but was not to form a sanctuary.<sup>34</sup> From the

recommendation of the Scenery Preservation Board to proclamation was only a small step, and on May 16, 1922 a reserve of 158,000 acres was gazetted.

The manner in which the National Park and the Cradle Reserve came into existence show two sides of the conservationists' approach. One caused little fuss and operated through established organisations, welcomed publicity but was not dependent upon popular support to achieve its objective. The other relied far more upon the mass media to publicise its objectives and achieve success through popular support. Although the people involved or even remotely interested formed only a very small section of the population, E.T. Emmett commented '... preservation of ... places of interest had now ceased to be regarded as a fad, but was receiving the support of a large proportion of the population ...' <sup>36</sup> Allowing for a certain amount of exaggeration, it can be said that by 1922 significant public interest in national parks at least, existed, and that such interest had been largely generated through the efforts of men interested in the outdoors. Not an exploiting interest, but one concerned with preservation, whether it be for scenic or scientific purposes, or just for the pure enjoyment of a natural environment.



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P A R T    II (a) .

TRANSITION        1930    -    1940 .

The decade 1930 - 40 was generally free of any particularly controversial matters that may have affected conservation-minded people. This lack of any immediate threat to wilderness areas may have produced a slightly complacent attitude. The Hobart Walking Club magazine the Tasmanian Tramp commented in 1935 '... there is still unlimited scope for adventure, and Tasmania will still have trackless regions galore [in the time of] ... the grandchildren of today's club members ...'.<sup>4</sup> The founding of the Hobart Walking Club and the two skiing clubs, one in Launceston and one in Hobart, during the 1920's, and their growth in the decade 1930 - 40 made little impact upon public interest in conservation. There was very little public action regarding either the creation or revocation of reserves and the depressed economic conditions meant that the government was concerned with retrenchment or public relief programmes rather than with extensive developmental projects. The administration of the reserves moved into an established pattern, but any extensive development was limited by a lack of funds. Such projects as the pinnacle road on Mt. Wellington, the road from Russell Falls to Lake Fenton and the Cradle Mt. road resulted from government relief programmes, rather than direct pressure from tourist interests or outdoor clubs.

The needs of fauna protection were not adequately

resolved by either the Scenery Preservation Act of 1915 or the Animals and Birds Protection Act of 1919. The campaign for fauna protection was linked with scenery preservation in the years 1907 - 1915<sup>2</sup> but subsequently efforts at fauna protection were distinct from scenery preservation. This was in spite of the fact that people like C.E. Lord and organisations like the Field Naturalists' Club and the Royal Society were involved in both fields. The problem of co-ordinating various interests was greater in fauna than scenery protection. The interests of the professional trapper, the recreational hunter, the farmer, the scientist, and nature lover, all tended to clash at various points. Apart from certain farmers who regarded all native fauna as pests, the interests of the trapper, hunter and scientist could however, be reconciled. All these groups had an interest in the continuing existence of game species, and were reasonably amenable to the idea of open and close seasons. The Animals and Birds Protection Act of 1919 provided specifically for members of the police force to act as game inspectors, and that the government could proclaim any part of crown land to be a fauna sanctuary ; this also applied to privately owned land with the permission of the owner. The unsolved problem was that of open and close seasons and protected species. Under the Act of 1919 the government had sole responsibility, and so was vulnerable to outside pressure. Consequently the 1920's saw a dangerous series of open seasons, declared without any thought

towards conserving the fauna. After continual pressure from the Field Naturalists' Club and the Royal Society the Animals and Birds Protection Act of 1928 was passed. C.E.Lord welcomed the announcement to establish a board under the provisions of the Act :

... but [he said] it is questionable whether the proposals of the government go far enough. It would ... be better to go in for a wider scheme, such as a Biological Survey Commission for the control of all our fauna ... The conservation of our wild animal life of all kinds, intimately bound up with the conservation of natural resources in general has become a necessity ...

3

Dr. W.L.Crowther, president of the Field Naturalists' Club also commented that ' ... for several years the Field Naturalists [had] ... been taking every step they could to impress upon public opinion the necessity for the conservation of our fauna ... ' <sup>4</sup> The Animals and Birds Protection Board consisted of nine members, of whom the Commissioner of Police was one and the remainder representatives of hunting, farming and scientific interests. The Board was responsible for open and close seasons, scheduling of protected species and other matters concerned with native fauna, the scope of powers being quite extensive.

Thus by 1930 there were two official bodies specifically orientated to conservationist, or rather protectionist ends. <sup>+</sup> The Fauna Board and the Scenery Preservation Board both provided an administrative framework through which conservation -

<sup>+</sup> For brevity the term Fauna Board will be used in place of the Animals and Birds Protection Board.

The livelihood of a considerable number of men, especially in the depression, was based on the exploitation of fauna. The existence after 1935 of a Labor government supposedly dedicated to the interests of the 'small man' meant that the pressure for the continuing exploitation of fauna continued, but was limited to a certain class of men. Although the Fauna Board possessed the potential for a significant role in conservation it was more concerned with the regulation of the slaughter of native game, which absorbed the full energies of the Board, leaving little time or money for more specifically conservationist projects. However, the Board was not entirely absorbed in administrative details. The report for 1921 - 31 mentioned that '... land for settlement, forests and native fauna are all valuable assets, each having a claim to use, accordingly as nature has ... fitted them ...', and as it was realised that lands, forests and fauna policies should be more adequately defined, a conference of concerned bodies was held and certain problems discussed.

The years 1932 - 33 saw the death of two of the outstanding pioneers and publicists of conservation in Tasmania. Early in 1932 Weindorfer died from a heart attack; his health had been poor for the previous few years and the isolation of Waldheim meant that he was far from help. The second death was that of

C.E.Lord. Lord's contribution was far more in the field of administration than publicity. It included the building up of the Field Naturalists' Club until this became probably the most active of its kind in Australia; his scientific work as Curator of the Tasmanian Museum, and secretary to the National Park Board. As Board secretary he contributed significantly to the success of initial stages of development in the park. Also he was very active in the field of fauna protection and the affairs of the Royal Society of Tasmania.<sup>10</sup> The death of these two men marked the end of a stage in conservation that was characterised by quite advanced legislation and generally sympathetic governments with initiative coming from the established classes.

Although there was no immediate threat to conservation interests on the scale of post1945 events, the publicity work of the bushwalker/conservationist continued. Outstanding among these publicists were E.T.Emmett and F. Smithies. Emmett continued to promote both winter sports and walking through participation and lantern slide lectures, and as the Tourist Bureau assisted in the publication of the Hobart Walking Club's annual magazine, specifically walking viewpoints were publicised. Smithies was very active as a pioneer bushwalker, penetrating areas that had not been seen since the early explorers and surveyors, and giving lantern slide lectures,<sup>11</sup> sometimes as often as twice a week. His activities were



frequently mentioned in the northern press; both the daily Examiner and the Weekly Courier contained frequent articles, interviews and photographs. Smithies was also involved in other somewhat minor campaigns aimed at retaining the beauty of the countryside in general. In 1928 and 1929 especially, the Examiner gave extensive coverage to campaigns against road-side advertising and the wholesale destruction of roadside trees to allow power and telephone lines to be erected. R.E.Smith continued his interest in the Cradle Reserve and was appointed to the Cradle Reserve Board in June 1930 as representative of the north west and west Tourist League. Smith maintained that he was selected '... because of ... his ownership of land at Cradle Valley and ... his activity in connection with the movement to have the road made for timber, grazing, mining and scenic purposes ...' <sup>12</sup> To forestall timber interests, Waldheim and Weindorfer's land was bought by a group of his Launceston friends, including C.F.Monds, G.E.Perrin, C.K.R.Stackhouse and F. Smithies<sup>13</sup> and the Chalet continued as a guest house under the management of L.D.Connell of Wilmot.<sup>14</sup> So there remained amongst Launceston residents interested in both the outdoors and Cradle Valley, ties of economic interest as well as any that were purely preservationist or recreational.

Proposed extensions to the Cradle Reserve came into conflict with forest and mining interests. During 1933 - 34 there

was a considerable amount of correspondence between the Cradle Reserve Board and the government on the extension of the Reserve boundaries.<sup>15</sup> This matter of the Reserve boundary continued to be discussed between the various boards and government departments throughout the period, but the subject was not felt to be sufficiently important to bring to public attention. The matter of adequate road access to Cradle Valley was emphasised during the election campaign of 1934. The Cradle Reserve Board secretary (R.E.Smith ) supplied the press with a substantial number of articles and letters and also approached parliamentarians on matters of reserve development.<sup>16</sup> In May 1935 L.D.Donnell, who had been managing Waldheim since Weindorfer's death, was appointed ranger for the northern section of the Cradle Reserve. The more liberal, although still inadequate financial treatment of the Scenery Preservation Board and its subsidiary boards, and hence certain minor problems of coordination, may have been the reason for the decision of the National Park Board and the Cradle Reserve Board to hold a combined meeting at Tunbridge in 1935. Also the creation of a separate Tourist Bureau apart from Railways control, under the directorship of E.T.Emmett may have meant that the two Boards saw some opportunity to expand their activities, given active Labor Government interest in tourist promotion. Matters discussed included the continued improvement of the overland track through the Cradle Reserve, the matter of control over the Reserve which

revealed divergent opinions, and the need for two rangers in the Reserve, one at Cradle Valley and the other at Lake St. Clair.

Problems associated with the Hydro-Electric Commission were first mentioned at that meeting. It was resolved that the meeting should ask the Commissioner for an assurance that the level of Lake St.

Clair would not be raised.<sup>17</sup> Publicity for the Cradle Reserve was particularly emphasised during 1935 - 36, from November 1935 to

April 1936 the Advocate and Examiner published weekly articles on the Reserve.<sup>18</sup>

The Mercury published a few articles but did not continue for such a long period. The articles were mainly on the founding and early history of the Cradle Mt. area and appear to have been substantially the work of Smith. The Cradle Reserve Board considered that the increased numbers of visitors to Cradle Valley was a direct result of the publicity, although improved access and recovery from the depression must have contributed to the increase.

In 1936 and 1937 there was a certain amount of work done towards the coordination of forest, scenery and fauna protection. The Fauna Board report for 1931 - 36 stated that '... considering the stage reached in the settlement of the country, the time would seem opportune to more fully consider the connection the natural assets of forests, scenery and fauna have with the major question of land policy and development ...'<sup>19</sup>

One of the results was a map showing various types of land use prepared by the Fauna Board in collaboration with the Lands and Forestry departments. Attempts

at making a biological survey of the State were begun early in 1937. This resulted from the pressure of a committee of Hobart scientists, the chairman being the Director of the Tasmanian Museum (Dr. J. Pearson ). Funds were provided by the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, the Commonwealth Science and Industry Endowment Fund, the State Fauna Board and the Forestry Department. <sup>20</sup> The efforts were handicapped by lack of funds and trained personnel, but indicate that among certain professional groups at least, there was a growing interest in the more scientific aspects of conservation, in that resources had to be assessed and then the use of such resources coordinated. The significance of these efforts did not appear to have any wider recognition. The recommendations of the Fauna Board, the Scenery Preservation Board and the Royal Society were voices in the wilderness, and with the continuing the growing government pre-occupation in the large-scale development of forest, mineral and hydro-electric power resources, such voices went unheeded.

The efforts and interest of the Hobart Walking Club in the National Park and reserves was recognised in 1938 when J.B.Thwaites was appointed to the National Park Board as a representative of the club. In the same year the control of the Port Arthur reserves was transferred from the Tasman Council to a board constituted along the same lines as the National Park and Cradle Reserve boards. With increased prosperity more ambitious

plans for development were discussed. In September 1938 the Cradle Reserve Board approved a proposal to build a road through the reserve from Cradle Valley to Lake St. Clair.<sup>21</sup> An indication of the change in attitude over 26 years was given in a survey conducted by the Hobart Walking Club in 1963 - 64. This survey consisted of a questionnaire on various aspects of National Park development, and the response to the question '... should road construction be permitted beyond the fully developed areas, i.e. a north-south road ? ...' was an overwhelming vote against any extension to roads; 73 out of 80 voting against the proposal. The plans for the road were only in the survey stage when war broke out and so the proposal was abandoned. Attempts to obtain assurance from the Hydro-Electric Commission about possible variations in the level of Lake St. Clair did not meet with success. The Scenery Preservation Board report of 1939 mentioned that considerable damage had been done at Lake St. Clair as a result of the raising of the level of the lake.<sup>22</sup>

By 1940 the Scenery Preservation Board had proclaimed approximately 470,000 acres of scenic reserves and the Fauna Board had proclaimed approximately 800,000 acres of fauna reserves. The latter figure is very approximate and of course all the scenic reserves were included in the fauna reserve total. The decade 1930 - 1940 saw limited efforts towards conservation. Areas for flora and fauna protection had been set aside, but the methods

were very haphazard and initiative came from user organisations or individuals rather than from any official conservation authority or from general public demand. There were some indications of future conflict but affected interests did not regard it necessary to bring the problems to public attention. Change was relatively slow, so a sense of urgency did not prevail and the walker/conservationist did not feel threatened. Men like Emmett and Smithies no doubt looked beyond purely walking interests to broader issues of conservation, but their standing and environment were such that they could work through established institutions. This is not to say that they neglected publicity : both Smithies and Emmett continued their publicity efforts throughout the period and undoubtedly helped to make Tasmanians aware of the scenic attractions of the mountain regions, and the recreational potential of such areas. Perhaps it was the threat to the recreational environment that transformed the walker, who previously had only the adventure and enjoyment aspects of his recreation in mind, to the walker/conservationist, who realised that to protect his recreational environment he must draw public attention to the relation of man to his whole environment.

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P A R T    II (b) .

THE   HOBART   WALKING   CLUB   :  
FOUNDATION   AND   GROWTH .

Walking being very much an individualistic recreation the existence of clubs was not necessary for men to follow their interest. As the Hobart Walking Club's Record of Twentyone Years 1929 - 50 commented '... there is much to be said for the lone walker or for the small group who regularly meet and go out together into the bush and the mountains for peace, relaxation, exercise or adventure ...' <sup>1</sup> Clubs provided certain advantages in that an organised group would provide greater scope for recreational activity and speak with greater authority on matters concerning bushwalking and skiing. So it was these and other considerations that led to the founding of the Hobart Walking Club in November 1929. As opportunities for walking were so plentiful near Hobart the founding of the club came somewhat later than would be expected. Mosley considered that the needs of the bushwalker were for many years catered for by the Field Naturalists' Club, and hence the late start of the Walking Club. Many of the Club members had already participated in skiing parties organised by E.T.Emmett. In fact active organisation of skiing preceded the founding of walking clubs. In 1922, following visits to Mt. Buffalo and Mt. Kosciusko, Emmett attempted to launch the sport of skiing by taking parties to Lake Fenton. <sup>2</sup> These efforts resulted in improved access and accommodation at National Park, and provided a nucleus for the founding of both the ski club of

Tasmania in 1926<sup>3</sup> and the Hobart Walking Club. The inaugural meeting of the walking club on November 12, 1929 was convened by E.T.Emmett and the meeting was chaired by the Lord Mayor , J.T.Soundy, M.H.A. Among those present who were to contribute a great deal to the growth of the club and to popularising bushwalking were J.B.Thwaites, W.E.Taylor (elected President) A.J.White, and G.T.F. Chapman, to mention but a few.<sup>4</sup>

The first few years of the club were more concerned with establishing walks programmes and organisational details rather than extensively publicising the club or walking interests. The first club trip through the Cradle Reserve was led by E.T. Emmett in 1931, and in the same year the club assisted in the making of a film to advertise Mt. Wellington as a scenic attraction. The club magazine, The Tasmanian Tramp, was first published on February 1, 1933. The editors were E.T.Emmett and J.B.Thwaites. The magazine was favourably received by the press, other walking clubs and the public, 2000 copies being printed with the financial assistance of the Tourist Bureau.<sup>5</sup> Emmett, as Director of the Bureau, no doubt saw the founding of the club and its advertisement of the walking potential of Tasmania as assisting the objectives of tourist promotion. Moreover, by the formation of organised groups the interests of visiting walkers and skiers would be promoted. By 1934 - 35 the club was '... beginning to take an active part

in drawing public and government attention towards matters of interest to walkers ...<sup>6</sup> Areas of the state that had not been visited for 15 or 20 years received attention from walkers. This pioneering walking was not centred entirely on Hobart, as Smithies and other walkers of Launceston, including K. Lancaster, penetrated far into the highland and western regions of the state, not for mineral, forest or survey purposes, but for the simple pleasure of walking. Following the exploratory trips of these men, of members of the Hobart Walking Club, private groups like the South West Expeditionary Club, and individuals like M.L. Urquhart and R.M. Livingston; the 'rank and file' of the walkers pressed for better access and erection of shelter huts. Although club membership, especially in the early stages, was constituted mainly of professional, well-off urban classes, the depression affected membership. From an initial 80 in 1929 membership declined to 41 in 1934 - 35 and only reached 68 before the second World War; but by 1936 - 37 reports indicated that the club had consolidated and that the worries of 1933 - 35 were past.<sup>7</sup>

Official recognition of Club interest in the National Park came in 1938 when J.B. Thwaites was appointed to the National Park Board. At this transitional stage such official recognition did not result from any active public pressure upon the Scenery Preservation Board, but was rather the recognition of common aims and objectives

and a result of interests that were shared by both organisations. This was not very surprising as the same people were prominent in the two bodies. As long as men like E.T.Emmett were active and influential in both the Scenery Preservation Board, the Hobart Walking Club, and the Tourist Bureau, conflicts of interest could be minimised.

Frenchman's Cap had exerted quite an attraction on walkers during the 1930's. The Hobart Walking Club had in 1935 recommended that '... Philp's Track, from Franklin River to Frenchman's Cap be cleared and made passable for foot traffic ...' 8 The construction of the Lyell Highway provided far easier access to the mountain with the attendant depredations of hunters and bushfires, so during 1940 - 42 R.M.Livingston conducted a one-man campaign to have the area proclaimed as a reserve. Although the Hobart Walking Club was sympathetic it did not officially participate in Livingstons's efforts. He first put the proposal to the Scenery Preservation Board in January 1940, but it was rejected on the grounds '... that the area was, at present, too inaccessible to warrant the suggested reservation ...' 9

Livingston continued his efforts and was assisted by publicity resulting from lantern-slide lectures; among these was a lecture given by Smithies to the northern branch of the Royal Society in May 1941. 10 Efforts were concluded successfully when on June 4,

1941 23,600 acres of Frenchman's Cap were proclaimed a scenic reserve. The manner in which this area was reserved indicated a movement of initiative away from the official boards to individuals or clubs. Previously proposals for reservations had originated largely from members of the various boards, or from members in conjunction with outside individuals or organisations. The example of Frenchman's Cap and later Lake Pedder and South West National Parks indicated that the official conservation boards were not as interested or as active as the voluntary organisations.

No doubt the members of the Scenery Preservation Board and its subsidiary boards gave as much energy and attention as possible to the administration of the reserves, but boards composed of both government officials and interested laymen faced several substantial problems. Firstly the government officials would probably be involved in the affairs of their own departments and so could not devote sufficient time to problems of conservation. Also the government official would tend to view conservation from the viewpoint and interests of his own department; when any clash came the departmental interest would probably prevail. The layman, no matter how interested, again lacked time and expertise; no doubt representatives of municipal councils and tourist associations did their best, but there was little to guarantee the appointment of conservation minded men. With rising interest in conservation

among bushwalkers the official bodies lost some status. The long tenure of men on these boards, sometimes 20 years or more, meant that attitudes acceptable in the 1920's and 30's continued into the 1950's and 60's. The relationship between walking interests and the Fauna Board was rather more tenuous. Any attempts to improve or direct the protection of fauna came from scientific associations or from the Field Naturalists' Club; the latter for example cooperating with the Fauna Board and Royal Society in a biological survey of the state in the late 1930's. Although official connections between the various clubs and boards may have been infrequent the limited nature of interested classes of people and of Hobart society in general, would have meant that many ordinary members as well as outstanding individuals belonged to more than one club. The connection of the Royal Society with zoologists, botanists and walkers was particularly evident.

One of the Hobart Walking Club's first direct references to conservation came in an editorial in The Tasmanian Tramp of December 1946 :

... We have become more than ever conscious of the lack of adequate public appreciation of our scenic and historic heritage. Much of the State's natural beauty is disappearing through so-called development and industrial expansion, but the greatest enemy of all is the bush fire ... the club continues to support the efforts in conservation of the National Park and Scenery Preservation Boards ... 11

The upsurge in interest in walking after the end of the war evident in the Hobart Walking Club, resulted in the formation of the Launceston Walking Club. The initial guidance came from Smithies and Lancaster,<sup>12</sup> but the development of the club resulted from the efforts of men like H.J.B. Plomley who was the curator of the Queen Victoria Museum and one of the early presidents of the club.<sup>13</sup> Because of the relative youth of club members and that they were more interested in the adventure aspects of walking, the Launceston Walking Club was not closely involved in conservation issues until the 1960's.

Some of the problems in administration of the Scenery Preservation Act were overcome by the re-organisation of the subsidiary boards in 1947. Some of the changes were that the major reserves were to be known as National Parks, and other areas classified in a more systematic manner, such as cave or historic reserve, and that four subsidiary boards be appointed : one to control the whole of the Cradle National Park, one to control Mt. Field National Park, another to control the Port Arthur area, and a fourth to control northern reserves apart from national parks.<sup>14</sup> In the same year Ben Lomond was declared a National Park. The proposal was opposed by the Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club and was the only case where a recreational interest opposed the creation of a national park.<sup>15</sup> The reorganisation of the



subsidiary boards gave representation to the Hobart Walking Club on both the Cradle board and the Mt. Field board; a further recognition of the work of the club in promoting conservation. The outstanding issue of the years 1946 - 50 was the proposed alienation of part of the Mt. Field National Park for timber exploitation. The Hobart Walking Club was outspoken in opposition to the proposal and certain members strove to make the public aware of the issue. The details of the Mt. Field campaign are discussed fully in the next chapter, the issue is only mentioned here as forming a significant part of growing Walking Club activity in conservation issues.

One of the immediate results of the Mt. Field campaign was the formation of a conservation sub-committee in July 1949. The proposal for the formation of such a sub-committee came from Mrs. J.S. Luckman, who had been active in the club for many years and was closely involved in the protests about Mt. Field. As the Field Naturalists' Club had a similar sub-committee it was suggested that the two committees join.<sup>16</sup> After the three years of intensive work on the Mt. Field issue interested persons and organisations realised the '... need for some body of voluntary workers to keep an eye on the conservation, not only of scenic resources and wild life but of the natural resources of the State as a whole ...'<sup>17</sup> So a meeting was

called and a committee of representatives from the Hobart Walking Club, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Royal Australasian Ornithological Union and the Youth Hostel Association ; formed in 1951 the Tasmanian Fauna and Flora Conservation Committee. Apart from the foundation of the Fauna and Flora Conservation Committee another significant fact was that the Hobart Walking Club retained its conservation sub-committee and the club was always willing to comment on any matters affecting scenery or fauna preservation. At a general meeting in July 1950 a scenery preservation sub-committee reported on efforts to preserve the skyline of Mt. Nelson in Hobart and that the sub-committee would approach the city council, government, and press

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on the matter. Again in 1951 club efforts resulted in the refusal of the City Council to allow commercial interestss to remove cutting grass from Wellington Park.

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Further official recognition of walking involvement in conservation was the appointment of J.B.Thwaites to the Scenery Preservation Board in 1952. Efforts of the Walking Club, the Fauna and Flora

Conservation Committee and the Field Naturalists' Club to increase the scientific representation on the Fauna Board met with success in 1953 with the appointment of E.R.Guiler to the Board.

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The appointment of Guiler marked quite a substantial gain for

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conservation interests, and as chairman of the Fauna Board did much to direct the Board towards a more scientific viewpoint.

Increased use of light aircraft for both transport and dropping food supplies made the south west of Tasmania far more accessible, and many of the more experienced walkers turned their attention to this area. One of the outstanding features of the south west was Lake Pedder. With its quartzite beach it attracted the attention of walkers as both a landing strip for light aircraft and an outstanding scenic attraction. One of the members of the Hobart Walking Club, A.C.Knight, proposed to the club that the area be declared a national park. The club took up the proposal and submitted it to the Scenery Preservation Board, which approved the creation of a Lake Pedder National Park. Proposed hydro-electric power developments affectin this park were to create a considerable amount of public controversy in 1966 - 67 but at the time of its creation there were no official indications of any developments that would affect the area. The theme of the south west was adopted in the first ( October 1956 ) of many public screenings of coloured slides held by the Hobart Walking Club. Although bushwalkers had always endeavoured to advertise the scenic attractions of the State the public screenings of both the Launceston and Hobart Walking Clubs contributed even more towards the development of public awareness of conservation.

Conservation matters received further publicity in 1957 when the Federation of Field Naturalists' Clubs and the

Hobart Walking Club cooperated in the preparation and sale of a booklet entitled Why Conservation ? <sup>22</sup> The efforts of bushwalkers to bring public attention to this subject was emphasised in the editorial of the 1957 Tasmanian Tramp '... the Club, itself actively interested in our national parks and with representatives on the controlling bodies, has done much to focus public attention on these national assets ...' <sup>23</sup> The theme of public appreciation of the wilderness was again taken up in the 1959 Tasmanian Tramp, but the editors commented that '... Recent happenings do not augur well for the future ...' <sup>24</sup> The editorial mentioned that it was only after an intensive publicity campaign that proposals to establish a sealing industry on the Macquarie Island sanctuary were defeated, and in contrast there had been little concern about extensive fires south of the Arthur Ranges and the '... desecration of the summit of Mt. Wellington ...' <sup>25</sup> by the erection of two television stations ...

The conservation issues faced in the 1950's, notably Mt. Field and Macquarie Island, and the rapidly changing environment brought to bushwalkers a realisation that the need for conservation had to be emphasised both to the public and to official bodies. Difficulties involved in Lands Department control of the Scenery Preservation Board came to a head in the years 1958 - 61. This was a result of the frustration of developmental plans produced

by the subsidiary boards and the Superintendent of Reserves. Certain recommendations involving the removal of Scenery Preservation from Lands Department control, and amendment of the Scenery Preservation Act were made, but none were implemented. 26 Because of these problems, the further decline of initiative among conservation bodies and the obvious need for a thorough overhaul of both the Scenery Preservation and Fauna Boards; the confidence of walking clubs in these official bodies further declined. At the same time walkers were becoming increasingly interested in the problems of park management and a more scientific approach to conservation. The founding of the South West Committee with Hobart Walking Club representation in 1962, the work of the Club conservation sub-committee and the establishment of a National Parks policy sub-committee in 1963, all indicated the extent of growing involvement in conservation matters.

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P A R T     I I I .

C A M P A I G N I N G : . M T . F I E L D     T O     L A K E   P E D D E R .



Like any other interest about which only a few people feel strongly, conservation could not be expected to receive continuous public attention. It was only when outstanding issues arose involving clear-cut principles that the general public was involved. Three such issues were : A proposal to alter the boundaries of the Mt. Field National Park to allow timber to be exploited; the establishment of a sealing industry on Macquarie Island; and the flooding of Lake Pedder as part of an hydro-electric development scheme. The lessons learnt from each of the issues tended to accumulate, and often the same people were involved. Failure to modify the stand of the anti-conservationists did not discourage interested persons, but rather they were fired with further zeal not to allow any more spoilation. The interests the conservationists were opposing were not individual depredations, but the operations of large private companies encouraged by the government, or government organisations. To achieve any recognition of conservation principles two approaches were possible. One involved a direct appeal to the public through the mass media, the other involved a more direct approach to politicians and public servants. Neither approach was used exclusively by one group or another, or in any particular issue, but certain differences in the dominant method of approach can be perceived in the various operations.

Although large areas of forest had been cleared during the course of Tasmanian settlement, and some of it unnecessarily,<sup>1</sup> the government granted extensive concessions to Australian Newsprint Mills and Associated Paper and Pulp Manufacturers. A certain amount of doubt was expressed as to the relative advantages of these concessions, as the bargains had been made at the expense of the most efficient utilisation of forest resources.<sup>2</sup> The 400 square miles of the Florentine Vally leased to Australian Newsprint Mills in 1935 did not appear to be sufficient, because by 1946 the company attempted to acquire 12,000 acres<sup>3</sup> of the National Park forest by altering the park boundaries. A report prepared by S.L.Kessell, Commonwealth Controller of Timber, in 1945 on the ' Forest and Forestry Administration of Tasmania ' stated that ' ...[Australian Newsprint Mills was] logging the forest practically on a face without forestry supervision ... '<sup>4</sup> and that the company had failed to give working plans for regeneration programmes and protection of forests. The report continued to recommend that until a complete survey of the forest resources of Tasmania had been carried out and agreement on the needs of the two paper companies reached, the government should enter no further commitments involving timber resources.<sup>5</sup> The paper companies had post-war expansion plans that would substantially increase their intake but in contrast to sawmilling interests the paper companies had secured ' ... cutting rights over adequate supplies of timber for

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very long periods ahead ... ' The area to be alienated from the National Park constituted approximately 2% of the concession areas held by Australian Newsprint Mills, yet the company claimed<sup>7</sup> that the area was essential for their expansion programme.

The initial proposals for alienation were rejected by the Scenery Preservation Board,<sup>8</sup> even though the company offered in exchange 7,000 acres of their concessions at the northern end of National Park.

By early 1948 these efforts had come to public notice and signs of opposition had emerged. Commenting on the previous refusals of the Scenery Preservation Board and the proposed exchange scheme, the Mercury of February 13, 1948 stated that ' ... the proposed exchange .. [would] ... be considered by the two boards soon, and it ... [was] ... likely that strong objections ... [would] ... be voiced to the proposal... ' Possible opposition was countered by an extensive publicity campaign conducted by Australian Newsprint Mills. The expansion programme of the company provided good material for the press and hence the Mercury did little to assist the publicity efforts of the conservation interests. The protest against the alienation appealed to the public in several ways. On May 10, 1948 M.R.S. Sharland opened an exhibition of water colours of the park. At the opening he<sup>9</sup> stated that ' ... National Parks are set apart for the people ... '

and affirmed the principle that a national park should be inviolate. This argument was used again and again by conservationists. In some ways it was not an entirely valid argument. As has been mentioned, many reserves, especially the Cradle Mt. area, resulted from a complex amalgam of interests, without any assertions that the boundaries should not be altered. No doubt many of the promoters hoped that reserves should be dedicated to the people for ever, but such hopes were never given the status of policy by either the Scenery Preservation Board or the government. During May and June 1948 a considerable number of letters protesting against the alienation of part of Mt. Field were published. Also various outdoor recreational groups made public protests about the matter; on June 9, 1948 the Alpine Club of Southern Tasmania expressed strong opposition to any alienation of the park.<sup>10</sup> Later in June the Launceston 50,000 league<sup>11</sup> voiced similar opposition.

The initial reaction from various interests was sufficient for the government to consider referring the legislation on park alienation to a Joint Select Committee of both houses.<sup>12</sup> Parliamentarians felt some concern over the proposal. Senator O'Byrne, a member of the Cradle Mt. Board<sup>13</sup> protested and R. Townley M.H.A. also expressed doubts. Certain reservations about the proposed alienation were expressed

in Labor caucus. Dr. R.J.D.Turnbull (Minister for Health ) was thought to be not convinced of the advisability of the bill and wanted to be able to voice his opinion when the matter was debated.<sup>14</sup> The publicity efforts of the opponents provoked the Premier ( R. Cosgrove ) to maintain that ' ... a propaganda campaign is proceeding to bring about premature opposition to the bill. It is wrong for sectional interests to condemn the proposal without being aware of the facts ... '<sup>15</sup> The implication that critics of government policy did not know the facts was used continuously. From the point of 'smear tactics' it probably was quite effective, and to counter such arguments conservation interests did considerable research. Their efforts were assisted in some cases by government officials who gave valuable hints of what lines of argument to follow. The Premier's statement that the area had ' ... no real scenic value ... nor ... was accessible to visitors ... '<sup>16</sup> contradicted the refusal of the Scenery Preservation Board to approve alienation; this relative impotence of the Board in face of strong economic demands was one of the points that emerged from the controversy.

During the latter part of 1948 there were no further developments, as elections in September made the Government wary of controversy. The expansion programme of the Australian Newsprint Mills at Boyer was given extensive press coverage and the articles emphasised the great benefits such ' development '

would bring to Tasmania. The Mt. Field issue was not directly mentioned but there were quite clear implications that any opposition to developments that would bring prosperity to Tasmania must be misguided and ignorant. The issue was complicated when the Lands Department announced that the precise location of the western boundary was in doubt. As a result the Premier stated in February 1949 '... A bill to be submitted in the March session will clear up doubts about the boundaries of Mt. Field National Park and timber concessions held by Australian Newsprint Mills ... and ... about 4,000 acres were involved ...' <sup>17</sup> The issue was raised at the State Conference of the Labor Party in March 1949, Senator O'Byrne was especially critical of government proposals, but the conference decided not to take any action. The rejected proposals for direct alienation had been changed from doubts (Themselves the subject of counter - 'doubts' ) concerning the park boundaries, to a matter of resolving the park boundary. This manoeuvre did not alter the principle of the matter as far as conservationists were concerned. A letter published in the March 22, 1949 Mercury commented that the bill 'confirming' the concession to Australian Newsprint Mills was simply direct alienation, if the surveys found any overlap why should the park miss out. Also if the shortage of timber was so acute as maintained by the Company, a full enquiry was needed.

The promised Joint Select Committee of enquiry began taking evidence at the end of April 1949. Among the organisations who gave evidence were the Hobart Walking Club, the Field Naturalists' Club and the Royal Society of Tasmania. The campaign gave valuable experience to active conservationists. There was a considerable amount of cooperation among the various organisations and individuals. The efforts were directed at several levels and used various approaches. Much of the information gained was in spite of government secrecy. Mrs. J.S.Luckman, who took a leading role in the campaign commented ' ... Information on the National Park affair came from many sources - from within the mills, government departments, and so on; some could not be used since it pointed too directly at those whose job might be at stake yet felt that the principle involved was worth the fight ... ' <sup>18</sup> Some of the arguments concentrated on discrepancies in the Australian Newsprint Mills evidence, others put the case for the preservation of the tallest flowering trees in the world ( eucalyptus regnans ) that existed in the forest, and the inadequacy of the exchange area. The experience gained in preparing and giving evidence to the Joint Select Committee and a deputation to the Legislative Council, consisting of G.D.Lyons, H.K.Aves and J.S.Luckman, enabled conservationists to become acquainted with parliamentary procedure, hear the evidence of their opponents and to assess the

attitude of politicians towards conservation ideas. 19 Some  
measure of their efforts emerged during the debate in the  
Assembly when the Premier attacked the campaign against the bill. 20  
The bill was referred back to the Joint Select Committee on  
December 12, 1949, but it eventually passed through all stages  
during the 1950 session, the Royal Assent given on December 14,  
1950.

The Tasmanian Fauna and Flora Conservation  
Committee whose formation resulted from the Mt. Field campaign  
was very closely involved in protests against the establishment  
of a sealing industry on Macquarie Island. Between the formation  
of the committee in 1951 and the Macquarie Island issue in 1959,  
interested organisations like the Walking and Field Naturalists'  
Clubs continued their close attention on conservation issues.  
The Fauna and Flora Conservation Committee established itself as  
an unofficial advisory body, occasionally being asked for advice  
by government boards or departments. Much of the work of the  
committee was done through private approaches and through letters  
and deputations to ministers and members of parliament. The  
value of this somewhat 'soft' line became apparent during the  
Macquarie Island campaign. Because of the practice of persons  
giving hints and information before official announcements about  
matters of possible concern to the committee, the campaign against



the sealing venture to Macquarie Island was able to leap into full operation as soon as a public announcement was made.

The proposed operations on Macquarie Island were first publicly mentioned on March 13, 1959, when the Mercury headlined the proposals of the sealing venture, and that an expedition to Macquarie Island was leaving the next day. A.J.Powell, the managing director of the Melbourne firm of W.J.Powell P.L., had obtained the permission of the State government and Fauna Board for the slaughter of male elephant seals on the island. Immediate protests came the next day. Some of the steps included a telegram to the Prime Minister, moves to organise protests among animal welfare and conservation interests throughout Australia, and a cable requesting assistance from the International Union for the Protection of Nature in Brussels. Conservation interests argued that the island was a breeding stronghold for penguin, other sea birds and various species of seals, and any sealing industry would lead to decimation and the possible extinction of the elephant seal. The Fauna Board was also attacked as it was felt that no adequate safeguards could be imposed since official supervision was not possible.

From March 16 to the return of the expedition on April 7 the Mercury published letters of protest almost daily. The paper also published three editorials on the subject as well as many articles on the island and its wildlife. Part of the

editorial of March 17, 1959 stated ' ... Objections already voiced are sufficient to raise grave doubts as to the wisdom of the decision which the government has apparently take. It would be failing in its duty, therefore, if it did not at least submit the whole scheme to parliament ... [and that the] ... suddenness of the news ... suggests that in the expectation of an unfavourable reaction, it was thought best to maintain silence on the negotiations as long as possible ... ' The Fauna and Flora Conservation Committee passed a resolution :

... That this committee is shocked ... with news of the proposed establishment of a sealing industry on the unique faunal sanctuary of Macquarie Island. Recognising that the island is the sole breeding ground of mammals and birds of great zoological interest and high scientific value, and that sea elephants are protected in the area by government proclamation, it believes that the Animals and Birds Protection Board is seriously at fault in not having objected to the possibility of the fauna being exploited for commercial profit ... 21

Some of the letters of protest came from outside Tasmania.

Captain F. Hurley, who had accompanied both Mawson and Shackleton on their antarctic expeditions, was quite outspoken in

opposition. 22 The London Times published an appeal by Clive

Sansom of Hobart to British scientific societies; 23 Sansom was

also very active in letter writing to both the Tasmanian and

mainland press. Various associations including the Tasmanian

Field Naturalists' Club, the Canine Defence League, the Tasmanian

Animals Protection Society, also made public protests. The issue was taken up by the Liberal Party who protested against the high-handed action of the government and maintained that the seals were not a menace to fish and that the island was not over -

<sup>24</sup> populated. The extent of the opposition forced the Premier ( E.E.Reece ) to call a conference to discuss the sealing proposal and related fauna sanctuary matters. The delegates to the conference were Dr. P. Law, Director of the Antarctic Division of the External Affairs Department, Dr. Bryden, Director of the Tasmanian Museum, the Director of the Tasmanian Government Film <sup>25</sup> Unit and three representatives of interested organisations.

The Premier defended the government position by maintaining that few of the people or organisations that had been making public statements had sufficient knowledge of the island, and although not in favour of desecration of sanctuaries he was prepared to listen to proposals to remove excess wildlife under <sup>26</sup> proper control.

Similar comments about the lack of public knowledge were made by Powell on his return from the island. He contradicted government statements that the expedition was purely for survey purposes by the announcement that a licence had been <sup>27</sup> issued before the ship sailed. Powell's statement was in turn contradicted by the Minister for Agriculture, J.J.Dwyer, who said that the application had been for a temporary licence under the

Grown Lands Act of 1935 for one acre of the island. Some of the objections of the conservationists were overruled by Dr. Law, who stated that the Antarctic Division had approved the proposal providing there was adequate supervision, and there was sufficient data about the seal population to allow controlled slaughter.

Agitation opposing the proposal continued. Among the continuing flood of correspondence there was a letter quoting V.B.Scheffer of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, as stating that any interference with the seals would lead to their extinction, and a protest from the University of Adelaide Zoology Department.<sup>29</sup>

The issue was resolved on April 14, 1959, when the government announced that they would not issue a licence for the taking of the seals. This decision was justified on the grounds that the project received a considerable amount of opposition, and it appeared that little benefit would accrue to Tasmanians from

<sup>30</sup> such a project. Apart from public pressure there were other factors that influenced the government's decision. The Parliamentary Labor Party was at that time faced with a very small majority and the refusal of Dr. R.J.D. Turnbull to resign from the party complicated matters. Problems within the party, plus the prospect of an election in the near future meant that the government could not afford completely to ignore public opinion. Also as the processing plant was not to be based in Tasmania and the project was not part of any large-scale development that could be publicised as essential

to Tasmania's progress, the government was not committed to its support.

The Lake Pedder issue of 1966 - 67 brought unprecedented publicity to conservation; but the campaign to 'Save Lake Pedder' was only part of a broad attempt to publicise the need for conservation. The whole of the south west, hitherto only of interest to bushwalkers, was brought to public attention through proposals for a South West National Park and the problems involved in the Hydro Electric Commission's Gordon River power scheme.

In the years preceding 1967 the south west of Tasmania had become more and more popular as a recreational area, giving practically the ultimate in wilderness experience. Many people having observed the increased rate of encroachment on such areas, realised that something had to be done to prevent any further spoilation. By the end of 1961 there were a few indications that hydro-electric works might affect the Lake Pedder area. Many saw such works as opening up previously inaccessible areas and considered that any modifications would enhance the scenic attractions. Opening up such regions was, however, a matter of degree, foot tracks and vehicular access to the edges of such areas were acceptable to bushwalking and conservation interests. One man so inclined to the

idea of limited development was R.H.Brown M.L.C. He saw in the south west considerable potential as a tourist attraction, through improved access and fauna protection.<sup>32</sup> One of his first objectives was a south west fauna reserve. By the end of 1961 he announced that the government was considering such a proposal and that Dr. E.R.Guiler of the Fauna Board had inspected the area.<sup>33</sup> Brown continued his efforts towards a south west fauna reserve during March and April 1962; making statements both in parliament and in the press. His proposals were fully endorsed by the Hobart Walking Club; the March 23, 1962 Mercury printed a letter from a member of the club, B.W.Davis, who commended Brown's suggestions and stressed the need for action before it was too late. The efforts of Brown and the Hobart Walking Club made some impact upon the government, for the Minister for Lands and Works, D.A.Cashion, agreed on the need for fauna and fire protection in the south west, but said that there was not enough money for a national park.<sup>34</sup>

The efforts of 1961 - 62 brought the realisation for the need of a committee to coordinate efforts aimed at the development of the south west. So on November 12, 1962 Brown convened a meeting of representatives of organisations interested in the south west. At this meeting '... it was resolved to form an organisation to work for the conservation of the area and the introduction of a rational plan for the development of its resources ...'<sup>35</sup> The emphasis laid by the committee on '... a

rational plan ... for development ... ' represented one of the first attempts to present conservation as something more than preservation. Conservation was presented as something dynamic in an attempt to counter arguments that bushwalkers were a selfish minority wishing to lock up vast areas for their exclusive use. In some ways the dynamic aspect of conservation was not sufficiently stressed; it may not have been until after the campaign that the full implications of such an approach sank home. The formation of the South West Committee was closely followed by government announcements about Hydro-Electric Commission exploration work in the south west and how such developments would bring great benefits to Tasmanians including opening up areas of great tourist potential.<sup>36</sup> A certain amount of doubt about the scenic value of such developments was expressed by the Mercury of December 14, 1962, ' ... Tasmanians are paying a big price for their hydro-electric power, not only in the bills they pay as consumers, but in the loss of scenic assets resulting from the construction of power schemes ... ' The Fauna and Flora Conservation Committee had also considered the problems of the south west and had prepared plans for the controlled development of the area.<sup>37</sup> Major features of the plans were proposals to zone various areas according to land use, a point that was well received by the press. The efforts of the South West Committee and interested individuals continued to give the south west publicity, which definitely increased public interest in the area.

The first annual report of the South West Committee ( April 1964 ) mentioned that they had carried on a considerable amount of correspondence with the government regarding conservation matters. The report stressed the need for increased publicity on the conservation of the south west.

The cause of a South West National Park received a setback in August 1964 when the Premier announced that there was no need for such a park. He maintained that Tasmania had sufficient national parks and scenic reserves and that to make the south west a reserve would hinder development of hydro-electric power, mineral, and forest resources. <sup>38</sup> An initial project involving the South West Committee's policy of planned development resulted in an outline plan on the future protection, access, development and control of the south west. The plan was the work of a subcommittee consisting of B.W.Davis, J.B.Thwaites and M.S.R.Sharland. Provisions included the retention of Lake Pedder National Park, the extension of the present foreshore reserve at Port Davey, greater fire protection, creation of a game reserve, the representation of conservationist organisations on a committee to control south west development, and the preservation of such areas as the Arthur Ranges and Mt. Anne. Throughout all the publicity on hydro-electric power developments very little specific information was divulged. This was in line with the general practice of the Commission of submitting only one project at a time for parliamentary approval, and not



revealing any information until planning was virtually completed. Hence each individual project was discussed in isolation without reference to any coordinated plan of resource development. The issue the South West Committee attempted to stress was not the effect of individual programmes of development, but the lack of coordinated development.

Definite information that Lake Pedder would be 'modified' came as a result of the Premier's reply to a nine-year-old Devonport girl.<sup>39</sup> Many of his statements were strongly attacked; one writer stated '... From his remarks about preservation of beauty ... it would seem that the Premier's and the government's - 40 ideas on conservation are years behind modern world concepts ...'

The pressure of conservation interests contributed to the formation of a government Inter-Departmental Committee to advise on all aspects of south west development. The South West Committee was invited to nominate a person for membership, but Cabinet decided that membership of the committee should be confined to representatives of the departments concerned.<sup>41</sup> Conservationists viewed the Inter-Departmental Committee as a gesture rather than any firm step towards coordination, as the representatives would push departmental interests rather than approaching the problems from a more unbiased position. The cause of conservation received further publicity through the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science

conference held in Hobart during August 1965. Among the papers given at the conference there were several specifically dealing with Tasmanian efforts towards conservation. Dr. J. G. Mosley of Newcastle was particularly interested in the south west and stated that ' ... Not many Tasmanians were yet aware that they were very close to losing a unique resource ... through the technological invasion of the south west ... [ and that the answer to the problems of development in wilderness areas ] ... was a system of balanced functional classification based on the best possible knowledge of parkland capabilities and the environmental requirements for different uses ... ' <sup>42</sup> As well as continuing approaches to the government the South West Committee extended their publicity programme to include the publication of 5,000 pamphlets and continued coloured slide exhibitions. The committee had also received offers of support from conservation organisations throughout Australia. <sup>43</sup> One notable achievement was the declaration of 1,600,000 acres in the south west as a Fauna District in April 1966. The Tasmanian Tramp of 1966 emphasised the need for conservation in the south west. The magazine editorial mentioned Mosley's suggestions for national park development and hoped that they would become the basis for government planning. Above all the editors stressed the need for urgent action. <sup>44</sup>

The unofficial contacts that conservation interests had developed, revealed in August 1966 that the Lake Pedder area

would be flooded to the 1,000 foot contour line. This involved the creation of a vast lake completely obliterating Lake Pedder with the possibilities of extensive mud flats.<sup>45</sup> In the same report the South West Committee mentioned that W.M.Deacock, the newly appointed secretary of the Australian Conservation Foundation, had recently visited Tasmania and had given several public lectures on conservation. In accordance with its general policy of planned development, the committee had for some time been preparing a 'Submission Covering Conservation and Development in the South West.' This was forwarded to the Premier for government consideration on August 30, 1966. The recommendations of the submission were :

- ... 1. The setting up of a competent authority with special powers to plan for the future coordinated development of south west Tasmania ...
2. The formation by this Authority of a master plan for south west development on a long-range basis. However until this is available the provision of effective interim protection for the region's scenery and plant and animal life.
3. The creation within the south west of a large national park, incorporating the present reserves at Port Davey and Lake Pedder.
4. The zoning within the proposed park of areas specifically for recreation or conservation purposes and the establishment of wilderness areas for the conservation of habitat, to the exclusion of intensive recreation.
5. The preservation in a completely natural condition of viable samples of all the principal endemic environments of the south west, to conserve representative samples of Tasmanian plant and animal life.
6. A critical appraisal of the potential of the south west as a tourist attraction, including the possibility of accommodation in certain areas ...

46

Individual clubs as well as specifically formed organisations like the South West Committee continued to emphasise the need for

conservation. The Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club submitted a 'Case for Money for National Parks' late in August 1966. The 'Case' received quite extensive publicity and coupled with the continuing flow of letters and articles on the south west and Lake Pedder, conservation issues were kept before the public. Among the letters were many from outside Tasmania; one from Queensland emphasised the point that Lake Pedder was a national, not just a State asset,<sup>47</sup> another from Sydney agreed with a statement made by Sir Edmund Hillary in 1960, that the south west was some of the finest walking country in the world.<sup>48</sup> In reply to the critical tone of correspondence the Premier said that the Inter-Departmental Committee was watching all aspects of development in the south west, and the government realised the need for balanced development. Also he maintained that '... some people had suggested the State should not interfere in the area at all ... and that some of the interstate organisations who had contacted him had no experience and little knowledge of the area ...'<sup>49</sup> The Hydro-Electric Commissioner (A.W.Knight) stated that development in the south west would not affect the scenic beauty to any great degree, and that it was premature to discuss what effect the works would have on the south west.<sup>50</sup> Such statements constituted the main government defence against criticism, especially the point that development opened up previously inaccessible scenic areas. Conservationists replied

that to the government the tourist and scenic aspects of such projects was only an incidental consideration, and in fact projects were not planned to preserve scenic attractions.

With the growing realisation among some bushwalkers that Lake Pedder was definitely going to be flooded and that organisations like the South West Committee were not ( in their minds ) making sufficient protests about the matter; a group, mainly drawn from the Launceston and North West Walking Clubs, formed the Save Lake Pedder National Park Committee. The apparent lag in initiative of the South West Committee resulted largely from its methods of operation. Although the committee attempted to publicise its objectives as much as possible a large amount of work was done in a semi-confidential manner involving deputations and correspondence with the government. As the Premier was making announcements stressing the government's close attention to south west developments, the committee could not overtly attack government actions. The Save Lake Pedder Committee had no such inhibitions. The president of the committee was W.D. Atkins, a very active bushwalker and president of the Launceston Walking Club; the secretary was P.C. Sims, of Devonport, another very active walker. Both men were somewhat younger than the Hobart people involved in conservation matters. The aims of the Save Lake Pedder Committee were simple and direct : raise money through public subscription,

appeal to all organisations and individuals possible for support, and seek the maximum amount of publicity over the particular issue of flooding Lake Pedder. With the entry of another more outspoken group letters to the press substantially increased. In contrast to earlier campaigns in which the letters could be traced to a somewhat restricted group, the number and range of letters published on Lake Pedder and the associated topic of hydro-electric power generation, indicated that the interest ranged beyond bushwalking and other outdoor clubs.

The findings of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the south west did little to enhance confidence in government management. The loss of Lake Pedder was described as of 'no consequence', the committee saw no need for a coordinating body, and rejected proposals for a large national park.<sup>51</sup> When the Hydro-Electric Commission's plan on the Gordon River project was tabled in parliament late in May 1967, a deputation from the South West Committee discussed with a few members of the Legislative Council the desirability of an independent enquiry. These negotiations combined with the intense public interest in the matter resulted in the formation of a Legislative Council Select Committee on June 14, 1967. The terms of the enquiry were :

- ... 1. The establishment of the proposed Gordon River power development and its effect on Lake Pedder and the Lake Pedder National Park.
2. Whether any modification of the proposed scheme is practicable or desirable.
3. The proposal to establish a thermal power station in Tasmania ...

The Select Committee received evidence from 44 persons and 12 organisations. Included were the Launceston and Hobart Walking Clubs, the Save Lake Pedder and South West Committees, the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, the Scenery Preservation Board and the Fauna Board. The conservationists went to considerable trouble in the preparation of evidence and consulted all possible Australian and overseas organisations and individuals. Peter Scott, the British wildlife expert, sent a strongly worded cable to the Premier ; Sir Edmund Hillary did likewise. While evidence was being taken the Save Lake Pedder Committee continued to distribute pamphlets and car stickers, and circulated a petition against the flooding of the lake. Tasmanian and mainland newspapers published extensive articles and photographs on Lake Pedder, the Saturday Evening Mercury printed practically the whole of the South West Committee's 'Submission.'

The efforts to save Lake Pedder failed; but they created an intense interest in problems of conservation. The recommendation of the Legislative Council Select Committee revealed signs of a new attitude towards conservation. The committee recognised that '... The proposal to flood Lake Pedder had attracted a spontaneous nation-wide interest which clearly indicated a changing community attitude to the principles of conservation and the preservation of natural environment ... and that the case for rational conservation

has found both acceptance and approval within the ranks of ...

53

the committee ' Many of the recommendations of the Select Committee were not implemented by the government but the conservationists managed to gain a limitation of the level of the new lake, and the promise of new National Parks and Conservation Legislation within a year.

The operations of the Save Lake Pedder Committee and the South West Committee could be seen as complementing one another. The semi-official status of the latter enabled the members to gain information that would otherwise be unobtainable, and imparted some degree of reasonableness to their demands. The Save Lake Pedder group were always outspoken, and being based in the northern part of the state they could not have ready access to government officials. South West Committee members however acknowledged that the 'noise' made by the Save Lake Pedder Committee proved very useful in the publicity aspect of the campaign. This was in spite of early fears that the existence of two groups would divide the effort and so weaken conservation forces. The efforts of the conservationists did not cease with the approval of the Gordon River Development bill, but Lake Pedder and the south west provided an issue that generated an extensive public interest in conservation; and a large part of that interest was due to the growing involvement of the bushwalker.



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EPILOGUE.

Certain inadequacies existed in the three main conservationist organisations. The Save Lake Pedder committee was only created for agitation on an isolated incident. The committee may have looked further than the Lake Pedder issue, and was open to public membership, but it could not become a conservationist organisation in its own right. The Fauna and Flora Committee and the South West Committee had broader aims but their general appeal was limited because membership was constituted of organisations, not individuals. The experience of the post - 1946 campaigns and the developing connection with World conservation interests meant that the stage after Lake Pedder would have to be one that appealed to a wider group than bush - walkers or naturalists. This need was met in the formation of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust. The previously established bodies were in favour of the Trust. It did not however, mean the end of their work, because until the Trust became established as a pressure group, the other bodies would fill a need. The Trust marked an attempt to move outside the orbit of outdoors clubs and appeal to all people interested in conservation. It is far too soon to assess the impact of the Trust, and whether in fact it will appeal to groups beyond outdoors clubs. One detail is reasonably clear ; bushwalkers and their clubs have contributed a great deal towards the formation of the Trust, and perhaps of even more significance, towards the growth of public interest in conservation.

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SCENIC AND FAUNAL RESERVES  
P.13 ATLAS OF TASMANIA



- Historic Sites and Buildings
- Miscellaneous Reserves
- Waterfall Reserves
- Cave Reserves
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- Fauna Reserves and Sanctuaries

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