



For the winner of 'Post's' Cattlemen's Competition, fifteen year old Bernard Allard, his five day camp at Howqua with Jack Lovick was the most exciting holiday of his life.

Bernard, who took his mother, sister and brother along on the trip, has now had his first taste of his life with the Cattlemen and can hardly wait to add to the experience.

He is planning to go along on an eight day safari with the Lovick's during the summer. During his holiday Bernard rode Jack Lovick's own horse, Daffy, and did extremely well.

According to Jack he has a good future as a mountain rider.

"I've given him a few tips and if he works at it he'll become a good horseman," Jack said.

As for Bernard — he thinks Jack is a terrific instructor and enjoyed the lessons intensely.

"Jack's a really good teacher, there's no doubt about that. He shows you how to handle a horse in natural way so that it responds to you," he said.

"I think bush riding is the best and most effective style there is."

During the holiday Bernard and his family were driven up into the country around The Bluff and shown how it looks under snow. This summer he hopes to see it in a completely different light.

Below is a reproduction of his winning essay.

Mountain Men should be allowed to graze and ride the Great Divide!

Early December finds third and fourth generation cattlemen driving their herds up to the high country for summer grazing.

None follow a more picturesque route than the Merrijig cattle that cross the Delatite River and follow the Howqua Valley up onto the snowplains of the 'High Country'. In recent years safari riders 'compete' for the opportunity to 'go along for the ride.'

How I long to join the drive to follow behind the white faced mob and ride the rugged ridges of the Great Divide.

However, this may soon just be a fantasy as the Government of the past decades has withdrawn alpine grazing from large parts of the high country. Following the acceptance, in 1982, of the Conservation Council's recommendations, yet another 10% of mountain heritage was drawn into National Park, thereby depriving all Victorians of the special freedom that the high country has offered for generations.

The freedom to roam the remoteness and undeveloped beauty of the Victorian Alpine region and the sensible recreational use of the high country.

Not only will this new legislation proposed by the government deprive adventurous Victorians of their highland playground, it will also have long range implications for the whole community. Victoria already has extensive areas of

National Park, and neither do we need, nor can we afford any further extension.

The Mountain Cattlemen are making a stand on this issue on behalf of all who sensibly, but practically love and use the high country for work or recreation.

The cattlemen have been voluntary rangers, caretakers, rescue service and friends to all who come to the high country. They understand the mountains much better than theoretical 'Johnny come lately', conservation groups for they have built up 150 years of management knowledge and experience.

If the cattle and cattlemen were removed from the highlands, they will be left open to the ever present and terrifying hazard of fire. Which in one cruel sweep could totally destroy the amazing beauty of our mountain country.

The cattle prevent this by clearing undergrowth and getting rid of rotten material which is fuel for a fire.

The cattle do not detract at all from the beauty of the mountains as whatever they take out is returned in manure-fertilizer which is a management tool to improve extensive wildflower displays.

In the absence of the

cattlemen and cattle, vermin such as feral horses, dogs, cats, rabbits, and wild pigs will go unchallenged and multiply to overtake the natural wildlife which once disappears will never return and a great part of our valuable heritage will be lost forever.

The cattle help keep down the tracks which allow easy and pleasant access into the bush for any visitors.

The cattlemen also provide the vital link, with their invaluable local knowledge, in search and rescue and their huts are equally valuable as refuge for passing visitors.

There is room for all on the high country. If pressure from the radical conservation lobby increase regulations, the cattlemen will be forced to part with their culture and heritage and our freedom of the high country.

Since 1835 they have cared for the high country, so let us hope the mountain cattlemen of Victoria are able to give another 150 years and more of invaluable loving care to preserve the beauty and well-being of our wilderness heritage, the mountains and high country of the Great Dividing Range.

Bernard Allard
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Healesville

TOWN

Art and craft shows, musical recitals, concerts, activities and cultural events catered for at the new centre which opened last month.

The new centre, which is the result of council's determination to provide improved facilities in Montrose, is available for hire by community groups and individuals.

It comprises a main hall with a stage for theatrical productions and public meetings, a well equipped kitchen, well appointed meeting rooms, rest rooms for disabled persons and many other facilities.

The centre is not quite completed but council hopes it will be finished by the end of the year.

Work is continuing on a branch library, meeting room and reading room.

At present the centre is being used each Friday by the Montrose Senior Citizens Group but is available for hire by other organisations.

The centre was developed to fit in with the environment in delicate ecological areas and council believes blends in perfectly with its surroundings.

It will certainly provide a much needed facility for the Montrose area.