

Cattle or wilderness

from J. Patterson

The concept of wilderness is not fully appreciated by the majority of the community. Those who fought for the preservation of such areas as south-west Tasmania understand it; those who have a real affinity with their natural environment (such as the Aborigines) recognise it; and those who wish to preserve at least a fraction of these largely unspoilt scenic areas support it.

I am sure that those who use these areas for profit will also claim to recognise the concept, but their arguments for the continued exploitation of these areas are entirely selfish. Unless these areas are preserved, their pastoralisation ultimately will lead to their demise.

Anyone who has carefully walked through grazed areas of the alps will confirm the damage done by the cattle. Springs become trodden quagmires, cattle tracks become eroded gullies, and rare and beautiful plants (such as the icecream plant) are quickly eaten out.

The cattle farmers will continue to stock these areas to maximum capacity for maximum profit, and their ridiculous arguments (eg the public will be denied a walking place for their pet dogs) are irrelevant and contrived red herrings.

Just as clever advertising sways the masses, R. M. Williams boots, Drisabone coats and droopy moustaches persuade public opinion by the association with an imagined rich heritage of some rugged and idyllic mountain life-style.

The reality is that these idyllic areas do exist, but they must be preserved and allowed to exist without industrial exploitation.

JOE PATTERSON,
Mansfield.

Adjourned

THE AGC
20/8/85

A Supreme Court action by the jailed union leader, Norm Gallagher, against the refusal of the Legal Aid Commission to grant him legal aid for his four months long trial, was yesterday adjourned until 28 August.

Last week, Master Evans granted Gallagher's application for a review of the commission's refusal. The order to review was returnable yesterday.

However, Mr Michael Dowling, QC, for the commission, asked Mr Justice Tadgell to make an order by consent adjourning the hearing until next week.

SBS demonstration

SYDNEY. — About 100 Special Broadcasting Service workers demonstrated outside the SBS head office in Sydney yes-

IN BRIEF

terday and then disrupted a board meeting.

The protesters, members of five trade unions, chanted and held placards showing their opposition to SBS management, which they claim had broken promises made 13 months ago.

Parkville compo

The Melbourne City Council will hold a special meeting in camera tonight to discuss compensation to ratepayers involved in the legal brawl over former footballer Doug Wade and his Parkville home.

It is believed that the council will look at paying compensation from municipal funds for legal costs incurred by the parties in the dispute. These would include Doug Wade and the Parkville neighbors

who objected to extensions on his house at 17 Fitzgibbon Street, Parkville.

The Attorney-General, Mr Kennan, said last night he had received a letter from the Town Clerk regarding the Wade case. He said he would not disclose the contents of the letter but agreed amendments to legislation to enable the council to make an ex gratia payment to parties in the case were being considered.

Birrell resigns

The state Opposition spokesman for Health, Mr Birrell, has resigned from the Australian Conservation Foundation because of what he described as its "hostility" to the Liberal Party in the Nunawading byelection campaign.

Mr Birrell said the ACF's decision to direct its first preferences to the Australian Democrats had severely damaged its credibility as a "broadly based" conservation group.

Fair dinkum

WERE the mountain cattlemen who were so evident during the late and unlamented Nunawading byelection campaign real, genuine, 24-carat, fair dinkum mountain cattlemen? No, says veteran Labor MP Keith Remington, whose story about three splendidly attired Toorak cowboys at a Nunawading polling booth was reported in this column yesterday. Yes, says youthful Liberal MP Prue Sibree, who after reading Mr Remington's tale promptly phoned us with a counter-story.

Ms Sibree, it appears, was on glad-handing duty for the Lib. outside the Mitcham polling booth about midday Saturday when a car pulling a horse was in a minor accident nearby. An impact threw the horses in the float off their feet and one of the steeds became stuck under the float's central dividing bar. The beast seemed uninjured but was badly frightened and resisted all attempts by bystanders to help it regain its feet. Enter one of the mountain cattlemen who was handing out leaflets at the polling booth. He grabbed the nag by its tail and hauled it bodily from beneath the bar.

According to Ms Sibree, the horse staggered to its feet, shook its head and promptly relieved itself on the nature strip. Whether this could be interpreted

as a political comment we do not know