



With the Compliments of

The Hon.

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POLL FINISHES PARK PLANS

The Alpine National Park now seems unlikely to go ahead following the defeat of the Labor candidate in the Nunawading Upper House by-election on Saturday.

The Liberal Party victory turned out to be a big victory for the Mountain Cattlemen's Association over the Australian Conservation Foundation, which had pledged to have cattle grazing and logging stopped in the proposed park within a year.

The Government had planned to declare the new Alpine Park on December 1 and the bill had already had two readings in the Legislative Assembly. It is now due for its third reading in the Lower House before proceeding to the Legislative Council.

Member for North Eastern Province, David Evans, said this morning the by-election result, which had seen the Government lose control of the Upper House, had assured cattle and logging interests the park would not go ahead.

The National Party had always been opposed to the scheme and the Liberal Party had made a commitment last year to oppose the park. The Liberals had reaffirmed this commitment prior to the Nunawading by-election, Mr Evans said.

The park would have extended from near Mansfield to the Kosciusko National Park in New South Wales, linking the existing Alpine parks of Wonnangatta-Moroka, Bogong, Wabonga, Snowy River and Tingaringy.

The total area would have been 690,000 hectares, of which 295,000 hectares is the subject of Government's new Alpine Park proposals.

Mr Evans, who is the National Party's spokesman on conservation said the pro conservation forces in the by-election had claimed conservation would be a big issue and had been taken on by the tiny 120 strong Mountain Cattlemen's Association,

who are fighting for their traditional existence.

The result had been a drastic reduction in the conservation vote and a "knockout" win for the cattlemen.

Mr Evans said the Government must now settle down to a proper management plan for public land in the state and make a full assessment of the Ferguson Inquiry into the timber industry.

This inquiry clearly showed that the state's forests were now well managed and providing a livelihood for thousands of people.

Liaison officer for the cattlemen, Graeme Stoney said this morning the election result had been a big breakthrough but there was still some work to be done to ensure the Opposition parties honored their commitment.

The result had shown the government that people believed there was an alternative and moderate solution to conservation problems. The association had campaigned on behalf of many interests and not just their own. They included the 16 shires with borders onto the proposed park and which had protested about the proposals last year.

Mr. Stoney said cattlemen were just as interested in conservation as any other group, but did not believe locking up the region was the way to go about it.

In the meantime, the Government had planned to set a project team at Bright to get the proposed park organised. The Department of Conservation Forests and Lands had envisaged employing seven or eight people in the team, in coming weeks, to carry out the planning.

