

## THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER.

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney  
Bush Walkers, C/- Ingersoll Hall, 256 Crown St., Sydney.

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### EDITORIAL.

#### The Magazine.

In the past few months the sales of the magazine have fallen and there has been a reduction in the number of literary contributions. Because of the important part the magazine has played and should continue to play in the development of the Club it is time that the position improved. To do this the help of all members is required.

The body of the magazine normally consists of contributions from members and they may write on what they please providing that it is likely to be of interest to some Club members. If a member disagrees



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with Club policy or some action of the Club and submits a signed article giving his or her views it should be printed. A reply to a very controversial article would probably be printed in the same issue.

A club magazine serves many purposes. It is used to disseminate club policy, it gives details of projected or completed unusual trips, keeps members informed of what is going on and in later years is a valuable record of club life. Articles and verses of literary merit are always welcome.

Contributors are needed. Keep the articles and gossip items coming forward. Forget past differences, contribute and make the magazine the way YOU like it.

### The Bushwalker and the Community.

The Bushwalker is a social creature, not a nomad wandering through the bush between periods spent, monk-like, with other bushwalkers. As a social creature he spends most of his time among people. People whose interests are his interests, whose well being is his well being and whose misfortunes are his misfortunes. Thus it is that fire and flood, taxes and train fares affect the bushwalker not only as a walker but as a member of his community.

There are many activities of local or national importance that deserve support from all. It is impossible for an individual person to take an active part in everything that deserves his interest, but he should support some civic ventures. Those activities in which he has special knowledge or interest or has developed a broader and more balanced viewpoint are the activities that should be supported.

Because of knowledge and interest gained from seeing different sections of the country at different seasons and under differing climatic conditions the bushwalker is better able than most city dwellers to appreciate the problems of the bushlands. He has seen the effect of drought, fire, soil erosion; of the despoiling of the bush near large centres of population by wildflower pickers and vandals and of theft of the peoples' heritage by pocket politicians. He has seen for himself, or heard others speak, of what the bush was like years ago.

Action is needed before anything can be achieved. No matter how wrong a particular thing may be the people who strive for it will get what they want if there is no opposition.

Constructive acts also require action before something is achieved. It is the agitation for and support of constructive acts that enable them to be carried out.

In this issue three articles are published that bear on the problem of what bushwalkers can do in the way of community effort. The first, on the sales tax fight, shows what can be done by individual and co-operative effort. Allen Strom's article and Betty Hall's letter outline the bush-fire menace and suggest a line of action.



What the S.B.W. can do will be debated at the January meeting. This is not purely a bushwalking matter, it concerns every member of the community. If everybody in the walking movement acts, something can be achieved.

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At The December General Meeting.

By Jim Brown.

About 50 members were present when proceedings opened at the December General Meeting, the numbers swelling to about 60 later: first, the President welcomed three of the five new members, Jean Aird, Marjorie Barnes and Phil Mason, an apology from Isabel Wilkie being received.

Minutes were read and Gil Webb rose smartly to speak on the current prohibition on outdoor fire-lighting. He suggested the flippant comment of the previous meeting could be corrected by a motion requiring a notice to be posted on the Friday night before a fireless weekend. Bill Gillam seconded and spoke of the nightmare toll of recent fires, and then Ken Meadows moved an amendment, requiring leaders of Saturday walks to ascertain the position and post the requisite notice. Amended motion was carried.

We moved on to the adjourned debate on Kevin Ardill's motion asking the Editor to refrain from critical editorial comment on matters which could perhaps more equitably be discussed at a General Meeting. After Bill Gillam had indicated he would prefer not to open discussion and the President had pointed out that he had sought the adjournment to obtain further data, the Editor said he considered the motion was undemocratic, and denied the principle of freedom of the press. On undertaking the work of Editor he had intended to make criticisms without fear or favour, and this he had done. He accepted full responsibility for the editorial matter he had written, and had taken quite a deal of time over it. He did not believe the magazine was the official organ of the Club.

Ken Meadows appeared with another amendment, stating that the editorial should express the official policy of the Club: also requiring that editorials or articles written by Club officers and dealing with policy matters should be vetted by Committee, and that official utterances of Committee should be published in the next issue of the magazine.

In support, Ken stated it was the practice with most organisations, unions and business houses for any editorial remarks to represent the policy of the organisation. He believed that Committee should be responsible for the material appearing in the magazine, and thus Committee should be vested with authority to control it.

Don Frost seconded, and Jim Brown spoke for the amendment. Tracing the history of the dispute, he quoted from the November editorial, stating that certain points cited as facts actually contained inaccuracies. He



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referred to the previous month's debate and the comments on diminished cash sales, and the failure of some regular contributors to write on account of editorial policy. A General Meeting decision of 1932 indicated that the magazine had been regarded as the official organ of the Club since that date.

Phil Hall, while agreeing with the amendment, thought the previous speaker had inclined too much to discuss personalities, and Betty Sisley complained that the critical tone of recent editorials was very bad publicity with outside recipients of the magazine. Alex Colley could not support the amendment, feeling it was unnecessary after all these years, and would add only another task for Committee.

The Editor spoke to the amendment, acknowledging that a small falling off in cash sales had occurred, and that there had been a dearth of articles, but insisting that the Editor should not be fettered by the routine suggested. Brian Harvey, as Business Manager, said sales had decreased, and he was afraid there may not be so many subscribers in the coming year, but his principle concern was the consistent small size of the present issues.

Stepping down from the chair, which was temporarily occupied by Allen Strom, the President spoke to the motion, indicating that he received comment and complaint from many people by reason of his position. He believed the magazine was an agency in continuing the ill feeling which had been evident during this year, and that the Editor, while acting in good faith, was on the wrong path. He held that the General Meeting was the correct place to air grievances. Enquiring if the Editor wished to reply, he then moved the closure, which was carried, followed by the Meadows' amendment and the adjusted motion, both carried.

The President resumed the Chair, and the Editor rose to explain he was unwilling to carry on under the conditions now laid down, and tendered his resignation. Barry Frecker suggested he should be willing to accept the direction of the General Meeting, and Kath Brown asked him to reconsider, pointing out that all other Club officers had to submit their correspondence and programmes for Club approval, but as the Editor was adamant, his resignation was accepted.

Some little time was spent in seeking a replacement editor: several declined. Someone suggested Jean Harvey "may carry on". (Question: "Who with?" Answer: "The Business Manager.") Eventually the ubiquitous Meadows volunteered to act as editor for a month, nominations to be called at the January meeting.

Belatedly (9.50 p.m.) we welcomed new member Colin Pitt, and read correspondence. There was a lengthy letter from Betty Hall (published elsewhere in this issue), and Alex Colley suggested, in view of the late hour, that it appear in the magazine, and be discussed at the next meeting.

It was announced that we have a Re-union Committee, and January would see the determination of the site for 1952.



The Secretary reported again on production of the Club by-laws, explaining that contradictory motions on two matters needed up-to-date resolutions. One, requiring walks programmes to be in the hands of members a fortnight before commencing date, was speedily decided. The other sought determination on the question of visitors to the Club room, when, how often, and at whose discretion. Roy Bruggy had a motion, but Ken Meadows pipped him with Amendment 3, and Roy could see he wasn't in the event, so withdrew. There was some discussion before we decided that visitors would be welcome to any Club night except Annual, Half-Yearly and Extraordinary General Meetings, but that Club executive officers might ask a visitor to leave at their discretion.

Only one thing remained, so to round off his night Ken Meadows moved that we arrange to book a hall for next year's Christmas Party to be held on a Friday. Not satisfied with that, he phrased an amendment for somebody else to present - "that it be Friday December 12th" - and when the Treasurer argued that we were short of ready cash (unless we traded bonds at below par), offered to grub-stake the finances for £10 deposit on the hall.

We had had it at the witching hour of 10.45 p.m.

#### THE NEW ZEALAND ALPS AND THE BUSHWALKER.

By Colin Putt.

The Alps lie directly across the path of the warm, damp, westerly winds from the sea, and their Western slopes and summits are subject to heavy rain and snow all the year round, while the winds continue, thoroughly dehydrated, over the dry eastern plains. However the easterly winds often manage to penetrate to the mountains, bringing first snow, and then fine weather. The main range runs between 20 and 50 miles from the West Coast, the peaks are from 6,000 to 12,000 ft. high, a few of the passes are as low as 4,000 ft. The mountains fall steeply towards the sea, with rugged buttressing ranges and mighty glaciers and rivers between them. There is little flat ground on the southern west coast, and the mountains are covered up to the snow line in dense rain forest. The ridge tops are high, jagged, and covered in ice, the slopes are incredibly steep and broken, so you must hack your way through the steep, dripping jungle by the river. Even where there are tracks the going is seldom easy, for you wade in deep mud, or scramble over, between and under huge boulders, while it rains incessantly. Tough country, the West Coast, but the scenery makes up for the hardships with its glorious contrasts of crimson rata trees, white snow, and deep green bush.

The eastern side of the mountains is entirely different. The ridges are still high, jagged and ice-bound, but the foothill ranges are more extensive and between them run the rivers in broad shingly valleys amongst grassy flats. The forests are of beech, and where the undergrowth has been eaten out by deer the going is easy and open in the bush, at least by New Zealand standards. Everywhere, high above



you, waterfalls leap from the clifftops and plunge for the valley below. The rivers often look small and innocent to the newcomer; actually, though shallow, the water is numbingly cold and may be moving at 30 m.p.h. The technique of river crossing is not as highly developed as that of climbing; but to enter any of the larger rivers or even their side-streams without using the correct technique, is courting disaster. Avalanches, too, can be dangerous to a party without the necessary training and common sense; especially in winter and spring. At the only way to deal with avalanches is not to be underneath when they fall, it is essential to know roughly when and where they are likely to occur.

The weather in the high valleys and on the passes can change suddenly and devastatingly. The traveller must be equipped to meet this, with spare sweaters, long woollen trousers, gloves, storm coat, and a really watertight pack. Inferior boots or socks can cause frost-bite on new snow, and deficient nailing, or lack of nails on heel and toe, have caused fatal skids on ice. Above the bushline there is little fuel and often a primus and kerosene must be carried. The body, too, needs more fuel in the cold climate, and the menu must be properly and carefully planned, with the emphasis on calories.

Reading back through the article, this seems to be a hell of a country to walk in. Actually, the cool climate makes the heavy loads lighter, you may never even see an avalanche, and you will certainly see some wonderful scenery. I must say that I have had many enjoyable trips there.

#### POPPING OUT TO PIGEON HOUSE.

By Kevin Ardill.

In these droughty, bushfire, stricken days it seems strange to recall the week prior to the October holiday weekend. On the seven o'clock news one night a voice unemotionally announced that seventeen inches of rain had fallen on Milton on the South Coast. A peep at the map shows that Pigeon House is only about a decent dog paddle from Milton and I start wondering if we can change our bus transport from Nowra for something in the shape of a paddle wheel steamer.

When it comes to a spot of worrying there are not many to beat me and though the sun shines on Friday there is still about 16½ inches of rain on my mind as I join the train at Sydney. The seat so cunningly booked holds three persons. There is a decided dip in the centre so with previous experience of such seats I grab the window seat. Len Fall perches on the other end and when one the ladies arrives she is immediately in the groove. Once the train is in motion we find ourselves clustering rather closely around the cook as she dispenses some very Dagwoody sandwiches.

As usual, the Coast Train is packed and our arrival at Wollongong sees various bodies descend on the platform by exits that are normally used for ventilation. The Refreshment Room resembles a Rugby League



scrum (only bigger) so I return drinkless to my seat. Not so Ern French and as he sips his solitary coffee he informs the other envious walkers that the cup of fragrant brew had not cost him anything. Nowra platform hove into sight as I still conjectured if Ern had been fortunate enough to meet a Good Samaritan or maybe a Boy Scout. In the confusion of Wollongong, did he cop a cup of coffee that was meant for someone else? Who knows, but the bus driver evidently senses the feeling in all by one member of the party, and tarried long enough for us to sip and bite at a cafe.

The trip through the starlit night was swift and we bedded down in comfort near Drury's Farm. Came the dawn and with it a fine view of our objective to the west. The fine morning hurried us on our way and we paused only long enough to say good morning to the folks. A Blondin act by all saw us on the other side of the "burnt bridge" and an uneventful walk brought us to the foot of the ridge that leads to Pigeon House.

We had lunch at a convenient creek and had our first view of Clem Hallstrom's provender. If you guess cucumbers you're wrong, but the main item of food seemed to be three large bunches of radishes. Isabel, being a prospective, is polite enough to accept a radish but as she is also responsible for cooking for Len and myself for the three days, I begin to wish Clem had not such a large quantity of radishes.

A strong westerly was blowing as we dropped our packs before the final ascent of the mountain and a hop, skip, and a jump landed us on the top. Realising that a day such as this was a rarity we disregarded the strong wind and were rewarded with fine views of The Castle and surrounding terrain. The profusion of rock lilies on the peak itself was surprising but all the more appreciated. Pat Sullivan crouched beside a clump of 24 blooms and showed a fine set of molars as Will Rogers clicked another colour shot (wish I had a camera).

Down the ridges to the Clyde River and with tents up, eighteen hungry people began preparing the evening meal. Perhaps I should have said seventeen - after all, a radish does not need much attention prior to passing the palate. Eight o'clock next morning we were on our merry way. The Clyde River was still showing the effects of the rain and after following it a short way we came to the conclusion that the day might be put to better advantage by roaming along Yadborough Creek than by going down stream and possibly being unable to recross it where we intended. As Paul Barnes put it, it was the first time he had got up at 6 a.m. to spinebash. The flowering pear trees and green sward surrounding deserted Yadborough House made a pleasant picture and we returned from a short trip up the creek in time for lunch. The afternoon had peaceful prospects until Max Gentle started things by doing exercises with a dead tree. In no time there was a horde of competitors performing before the admiring (we hope) glances of the ladies. I don't know how high the bodies went but by the bruises around my kidneys I'd say that some of the elevated ones were a lot heavier than they look.

By 4 o'clock, when the strong men had run out of ideas, I felt as if I had done a week's walk but after a plunge in the icy river we were looking forward to tea and the camp fire.



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With Clem as master of ceremonies the camp fire was a huge success. Two New Zealand visitors contributed novel turns and when we were reminded of the early start on the morrow, we dutifully toddled off to bed. The next day was as hot as anticipated but we were well on our way before the crispness of the morning had disappeared.

On the return to Drury's, Len Fall put on a star turn by diving face first into the ground. Maybe he got tangled up with a mirage or maybe it was a cunning move to capture feminine sympathy. In any case a battered countenance showed the dive was a genuine specimen but nevertheless his indomitable spirit carried him through to Drury's, Nowra and Home, Sweet, Home.

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### MY FIRST EXPERIENCE.

By John Bookluck.

There is a saying "Be in it to win it". Similarly, with a Hooper party, you have to be in it to believe it could happen. Yes, it could happen to you at an "H" party as it happened to the bushwalkers and others who so trustingly ventured to Mosman just before Christmas.

A contrivance of poles, ropes and pulleys supporting a hobnailed clodhopper greeted the incoming guests. "Hm, let us know which house" we thought. But we didn't know the Hoopers! One of that fiendish tribe manipulated the diabolical contraption and a swift kick in the rear gave us an inkling of what was in store for us.

The evening passed swiftly until just before supper a game of forfeits was announced. "Forfeits?" Ah, but the forfeits you used to play was adolescent fare. Nothing like that here.

I am sure Mrs. "H" must spend many sleepless nights thinking up forfeits to games that are virtually impossible excepting a few easy ones to gain the confidence of the party. Shylock was keen to have his pound of flesh and so is Mrs. "H" her forfeit.

How well I remember the first contestant in name the song title in which the contestant must mime the song title without benefit of speech or sound. If the audience could not name the title, the contestant, now the victim, must pay the forfeit. How our faces fell. Butterflies swept the insides of many. But a bushwalker is never dismayed, especially when filled with Hooper hospitality.

Stan Madden looked most piquant in his short revealing skirt. Roller skating up and down the street went Stan, all arms and legs.

When Bob Dyer throws an apple pie some lucky person collects £50. Its different at the Hooper's. I am sure that the pie dish of concentrated garlic juice will leave its mark on Allen Wilson for ever.



SNAKE BITE OUTFIT  
- NERTZ....  
NEVER CARRY IT.  
I GO LIGHTWEIGHT.



CHUFF  
CHUFF

NADO.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS xxx



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Shades of Jimmy Durante! There I was, at two o'clock Sunday morning, lantern and butterfly net clutched grimly in my intrepid hands, while I crawled the streets of Mosman singing for the lost chord. Mum is still wondering why my best suit has gone at the knees.

Such beautiful women! Such handsome men! Tilly Devine had heard so much about Betty Swain and Fay as the Principal Boys of the Hooper pantomine that she made a special effort to get back from Melbourne. Unfortunately she was detained.

As a prima donna Pat Sullivan - well, ever travelled by ferry on a foggy morning?

Eric Pegram's rattlesnake juice punch, Jenny Madden singing carols under the street light, on and on it went until dawn, heralding a new day, drew the curtain on another Hooper party.

#### TAX ON BAGS AND RUCKSACKS.

By Phil Hall.

At the August meeting Len Scotland raised the matter of the high taxation of bushwalking as well as other sporting gear. He pointed out that although the tax on most of our gear had been raised to the high level of 20%, on sleeping bags and rucksacks, two of the three main items, it was already 33.1/3rd per cent. This had had the effect of increasing the prices to £12. 0. 0 for a best quality sleeping bag (£8.12. 6d. the cheapest) and £7. 2. 9d. for a man's steel frame rucksack. On top of these worries we had the threat of still higher taxes hanging over our heads in the form of the new budget which was to come out after the Referendum and it seemed that if nothing were done, at least in the way of getting a reduction in the tax on bags and rucksacks, then young people especially would soon find it extremely difficult to find the money to start bushwalking at all.

It was with these ideas in mind that the meeting elected a sub-committee to find and act upon means of putting forward an effective protest.

As a result of the meeting and the work of the sub-committee :-

A petition was circulated among Club members which 140 signed and which subsequently was sent to the Treasurer.

The Club sent an official protest to the Treasurer.

About 20 members who are not able to come to meetings were circularised with the half-yearly notices and some of these as well as some other members protested through their local Members.

A letter was sent and was published in the "Herald" protesting about the increase.



The Federation and all affiliated Clubs and interested organisations in this and other States were written to explaining what we were doing. From these we were sent six replies saying that they agreed with us and either was acting or had already registered their protests. At least some of the other Clubs also sent protests.

The final result of our work was although we were unsuccessful in achieving an outright reduction, when the Budget fell upon us in October the tax on sleeping bags and rucksacks remained at 33.1/3rd per cent whilst the tax on other sporting bags rose to 66.2/3rds per cent. That this was due to the action taken mainly by our Club is amply shown by the letter from the Treasurer in which he says,

"I have received other requests along these lines and have indicated that the submissions made will receive full consideration when the sales tax law is under review prior to the introduction of the Budget".

### THE WALKS PROGRAMME.

By The Walks Secretary.

During 1951 some changes occurred in the presentation of the Walks Programme. A noticeable change has been the inclusion of Walk Numbers. What could be their purpose? Numbered walks give the Secretary a quick means of reference to a report file on official trips. Members can also see at a glance the number of "blanks" remaining to be filled on a programme. (This can be of doubtful benefit as the Walks Secretary recently discovered. - Ed.)

Searching through a twenty-year pile of programmes throws some light on the Club's walking activities. Counting and estimating data where a few programmes are missing, it is revealed that 2,510 official walks have been carried out. This figure is based from January 1928 which is several months after the Club's foundation. The average mean distance of walks up to today has been 15.25 miles. Calculating at this rate it simply means that the Club has walked a distance of more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times around the world. May our feet never grow tired!

At the top of the next programme will appear a "WALKS PEG". This indicates the number of 1000's and the number of 100's of programmed walks (e.g. 2.5 = 2,500 walks). The Walk Numbers will contain no more than 2 figures (1 to 99), and will run consecutively from programme to programme. In combination with the Walks Peg you can therefore tell the complete number of walks done since 1928.

### EXTRA SPECIAL SOCIAL NOTE.

Suzanne Reichhart, ex-S.B.W., has made a special trip from America to show her old Club the beauties of the Californian Sierras. Super colour shots and Suzanne to give you a musical treat as well. 18th January was a free night - but not now!



HOT STUFF.

By K.A.

You like a bit of company  
 So you light a blinking fire,  
 Then it scorches all your whiskers off  
 And makes a bloke retire.

You wait a bit and freeze a bit  
 And when the flames subside  
 You cook a bit of tucker  
 To warm your poor inside.

The sleeping bag is calling,  
 You're crawling off to bed,  
 But you lift your hat in passing  
 'Cause the blinkin' fire's dead.

LETTERS.

"Dear "Diogenes",

Your expressed wish to help is a delight to numerous hearts.  
 Could you also fill a space or two on the next Walk's Programme for  
 the Club?

Regards,  
 Jim Hooper."

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"The Secretary.

Dear Jim,

The recent bushfire damage has been so serious and widespread that I feel that the situation should be discussed by the Club, particularly in respect to Reserves. It is probable that the Pastoralists and Graziers affected will bring pressure to bear on their M.P's while I know that residents in some Sydney suburbs, particularly Gray's Point, have held public meetings to discuss what steps can be taken to ensure adequate water supplies to the district. The citizens of Katoomba have formed themselves into a Bushfire Committee, and I feel that the least the Bushwalking movement can do is to take the matter up from the point of view of Reserves and general conservation, which is in line with the Club's general policy of conservation.

One thing has become painfully apparent during the recent crisis and that is the total inadequacy of present fire fighting arrangements to cope with the situation. Even where it has been possible to save homes and property, this in the main has only been possible by fighting the fire at a break, beating it back into the gullies to burn itself out and destroy bushland and valuable timber with the ever present possibility



of a fresh outbreak with a change of wind. Many bushwalkers too have recently had first hand experience of the fire danger to their homes.

The question is, what is going to be done to prevent the future recurrence of such disastrous fires? Unfortunately, by the reports in the papers, the answer is "Very little". As you will see by the enclosed cutting, a Senior Fire Brigade Officer stated his opinion in the "Sun" that £1 million spent on the correct type of fire fighting equipment (which he describes) could have provided "reasonable protection" against the £5 million worth of damage suffered in N.S.W. Mr. Evans, of the Fire Brigade Employees' Union also writing in "The Sun" drew attention to the fact that the water supply in the Mountains was inadequate even for domestic purposes and non-existent in time of bushfire fighting. Also, an interview was reported in "The Herald" with a representative of the C.S.I.R.O. in which he said that C.S.I.R.O. had carried out no research into aerial methods of fire fighting and so far as he knew, there was no provision for such research in the future. I am of the opinion that the bushfire menace is inextricably tied up with the whole problem of conservation in Australia. Burnt out forests mean less water supply and also quicker run-off of water, which can be a contributing factor to floods in wet seasons. Soil erosion is also part of the pattern and without going into details I would emphasise that burnt out homes, flooded farms, shortage of milk and butter, high priced vegetables and timber cutting in reserves are not disconnected happenings, but all part of the same problem of conservation.

In view of all this, the importance of conservation to a country with a finely balanced soil economy such as Australia cannot be over-emphasised, BUT in "The Herald" we see a report by Mr. Weir that the Conservation Commission had been cut by one million in its estimates, and this at a time when the problem of conservation is coming closer to all of us.

In the past, the standard Government reply to most conservation demands has been that "Funds are not available". I have no doubt that this excuse for inaction will be used again, but personally I am not prepared to accept that statement. The Federal Government has budgeted for a surplus of £115 million, conservation is vital to the survival of Australia as an independent nation, and Australians must insist that part of that surplus is used for this purpose. Bushwalkers by reason of their interests have a better appreciation than some for the need for conservation, and it is up to us to give the lead and bring this pressure to bear on the Government. We found in our recently successful campaign against the proposed rise in the tax on sleeping bags that it is possible to influence Government decisions on matters of nation-wide application and I think that we should utilise our experiences there in the interests of Conservation. With this in view, I wish to put the following motion :

"That the S.B.W. write to the Prime Minister, the Rt.Hon. R.G. Menzies informing him of the following resolution -

1. That the Federal Government make funds available for the provision of adequate equipment for Bushfire fighting in each State.



2. That the Federal Government provide adequate funds for research and education in fire prevention and fire fighting methods.
3. That the Federal Government pursue a policy of conserving the natural resources of Australia by such means as flood control, water conservation, re-afforestation, the prevention of soil erosion and the provision of flora and fauna reserves".

In addition to this resolution, I would suggest that a letter be drafted and copies of the same made available to club members embodying this resolution and that each club member should post a copy to his or her Federal Member, for as we saw from Sir Arthur Fadden's letter on the tax on sleeping bags, the same matter raised in many quarters has far more weight than a single communication.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I would be prepared to assist in whatever course of action the Club chooses to take.

Yours sincerely,  
Betty Hall."

#### SOME THOUGHTS ON BUSHFIRE CONTROL.

By Allen A. Strom.

Bushfire prevention has been a failure! The timber resources of the North Coast and the Pilliga - the grazing lands of the north west - the residential and recreational areas of the central coast - all have suffered badly; and within the first few weeks of summer.

Lots of people have been affected by wireless talks, posters and bushfire danger periods and there are more organised fire fighting brigades. But it is obvious that it takes only one careless act on the right day, one malicious firebug, to turn a State Forest to ashes, and an enthusiastic brigade without effective equipment is hopeless.

Let us continue our propoganda towards Bushfire Consciousness by all means - but we must not stop there; for no matter how intense our campaign, there will always be the few offenders who, given the optimum climatic conditions, may do as much damage as a whole flock of destroyers. The amount of damage that a single offender might do with a bushfire is infinitely greater, time for time, than the law breaker with a revolver set to take human life. And then of course there are the considerable numbers of fires begun on the plains by lightning strikes in rainless storms.

Paradoxically then, bushfire prevention must fail to eliminate the scourge and furthermore, whilst we pin a hope to prevention we will leave off preparing to fight. Early detection of the menace as in a disease of the body is imperative. Power to fight must then be immediate, power to control and extinguish, as no bushfire is "under control" until it is thoroughly and finally, OUT!



Officialdom's reaction has been threefold -

to throw the blame on to the householder for not clearing the hazard about the home nor burning breaks,

to look with despair at the thought of "blow-up days",

to distribute funds, far below the estimate of damage, when the havoc has been caused.

How important is clearing undergrowth and burning firebreaks? In recent fires, trees have burst into flames up to 200 yards ahead of the main front, the fire has passed along the tree tops (the litter being burned at a much later time), and fifty yards wide firebreaks (or the remaining burned trees in them) have been consumed. In some cases flames have leapt a roadway and a railway running side by side, to catch on to railway property.

We cannot then rest content with clearing and firebreaks; in fact, it is dangerous to do so or to allow the authorities to sink into complacency behind them.

The weather bureaux give very accurate information on "blow-up" days. How do we adjust our life accordingly? Are efficient firespotting squads at their posts; is the State "netted" by a mesh of air observance; are highways and railways patrolled for the thoughtless offender? Does the fire fighting squad stand-by during the whole of the emergency, ready to pounce on the first flicker and long before the flames come roaring with miles of "build up" behind them?

Everybody would like to know just how much of this does occur. In the suburbs, we hear of husbands racing home in taxis to fight the blaze threatening their homes; in the mountains, fire-fighters waiting to arrest a wall of flame with a thirty or forty mile gale behind it; in the country, a stock and station agent calling for volunteers to meet at nightfall to journey anything up to a hundred miles.

Does the Forestry Commission fare any better? It wouldn't appear so, and largely, from the words of one of its own officers, not because of the kind of effort, but because of the size of the effort.

And this brings us to fire fighting potential. There is no doubt that water at the right time, efficiently handled by trained personnel can work wonders. Have you ever advanced on to a bush fire armed with a piece of green bush or a wet bag or even a "regulation" beater? It's pretty hopeless if the fire's got a "go on". As a matter of fact you'll be lucky if you can get close enough to do any real good; and if it's in the tree tops - well!

If it's a scrub fire, the knapsack spray works wonders; the forest fire wants water tenders, pumps and miles of hose.

The fire fighters must stand by on "blow-up" days and they will need to be well trained for the work and compensated for their loss of employment.



To summarise -

The emphasis in our campaign against bushfires must shift from prevention to control and fighting. A considerably increased sum of money must go into training, fire spotting and equipment for fire fighting. Bushfires are a national calamity and they concern every citizen: training should involve some compulsion and service should be a demand; we don't equip our defence forces on a piece-meal, parsimonious policy so why should we falter when it comes to an army that will resist destruction of food, timber, homes, recreation or even life? Of what avail is Conservation and Nature Protection if fire can undo in one day the work of a generation or more?

This period of destruction will pass; we will forget! Authority will be only too happy to pass on to other fields. It is a vigilant, persistent minority that will keep the danger awake in the mind of the general public - particularly the great hordes that live in the cities and never "see the stars".

A first step might be to seek a conference with the Premier in order to let him know that certain changes in the approach to bushfire control must take place; to discuss with him ways and means of achieving these changes. From there, Commonwealth Co-ordination and increased finance are imperative.

#### FEDERATION NOTES.

Brian G. Harvey.

NARROW NECK. The Federation has written to the Under Secretary for Lands requesting that portions of Parish of Megalong, comprising the tops of Mount Solitary, Ruined Castle and Narrow Neck Peninsula be resumed as a Primitive Area, or failing that, be declared Reserves for Public Recreation. Some of the Portions are now lapsed Mining Leases, and are at present reserved for classification. The Federation has sought the support of Blue Mountains City Council, the Wild Life Preservation Society and the Parks and Playgrounds Movement.

BUSHFIRE FIGHTING. Clubs are being asked to consider a motion on Federation's books that a Bushfire Fighting and Flood Rescue Section be formed, such Section to be organised in conjunction with the existing Search and Rescue Section.

NEW AFFILIATION. The Cruising Canoe Club has been admitted to membership. The Hon. Secretary is Mr. G. Whymark, 44 Wetherill Street, Croydon.

NATIONAL PARK FIRE-SPOTTING. The offer to the National Park Trust of teams of weekend firespotters still stands, but no arrangements have been concluded yet with the Trust.

SEARCH AND RESCUE SECTION. The Broadcast over the A.B.C. 6.45 a.m. news period before Christmas was sponsored by the Police Department. The police have advised Federation that before any search is commenced the Search and Rescue Section will be consulted.



RAISING AGE FOR USE OF FIREARMS. The Federation has written to the Chief Secretary offering congratulations on the new legislation which prohibits the ownership or use of firearms by persons of 16 years and under. (Note: The very recent fatal shooting incident near Yass of a lad of 15 emphasises the wisdom of this legislation.)

FEDERATION FUNDS. The special Federation funds will be reviewed with a view to increasing some or all of them so that they may achieve the purpose for which they were established, or, if they are found to be redundant, the amounts may be transferred to General Funds.

### THEY'RE CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN.

Why spend six shillings when five shillings will obtain the same result? Those who buy a magazine for 6d. each month can save 1/- by becoming an annual subscriber to "The Sydney Bushwalker", the annual subscription for which is 5/- per annum, and their copy will be reserved in the Club room until picked up. Those who wish to have the magazine posted should add 2/6d. to cover postage.

Those folk who are already annual subscribers are reminded that their sub. expires with this issue and to ensure unbroken continuity of issues should remit to the Business Manager as soon as possible. Please advise any change of address. Please make cheques payable to "The Sydney Bushwalker Magazine Account", and postal notes to "The Sydney Bush Walkers".

### "ONE EAR TO THE GROUND".

Congratulations to Betty Sisely and Vera Matasin for organising an excellent weekend at Lake Eckersley. Games, folk dancing and an aquatic carnival were held while the Saturday night supper and the prizes were a token of Betty and Vera's generosity.

A recent prospective included "John Bootlace" among the names of members with whom he had walked.

Once again the swelling qualities of rice were demonstrated on the Pigeon House October trip. One cook, despite protests from the informed male members of the food party, plunged a heap of rice into a small billy. Reliable reports inform us that the lid of the billy ascended several inches into the air with motive power other than steam and though the males were too polite to comment you could tell there were at least two unexpressed "I told you so's".

Even if I don't know where the flies go in winter time I know where the married couples go at Christmas. Seen at Era - Bob and Christa Younger, Betty and Phil Hall (plus infant Marion), Gwen and Sam Myers (plus infant), Norma and Russ Wilkins, Jim and Kath Brown, Norma and Eric Rowen, Heather and Irving Calnan (plus baby son), and Colin and Alice Lloyd. A few free bods were also around.

Joe Turner and family were down at Era at New Year from Armidale. Dave Roots wishes they weren't so far away.



ONE NINE FIVE TWO.

Paddy salutes all Bushwalkers and wishes them good camping for the coming year. May the creeks flow clear and the cliffs rise sheer. May we all have opportunities of seeing what lies beyond the ranges.

Paddy is now safely installed in his new shop and the factory should within a few weeks be working on all cylinders. Supplies should soon be back to normal in all departments.

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Here are the headlines :-

GRENFELL CLOTH in Green, Maroon, Drab and Navy Blue is here. Wind jackets and Blizzards made to order in Grenfell cloth or green japara. Price from 46/-.

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There is still some golden tan lightweight japara left for tents. This lovely cloth should appeal to the lightweight enthusiasts.

.....

Compactum knife fork and spoon sets now only 5/- (last price 7/6d.).

.....

Rucksacks, billies, in good supply.

.....

Can take orders for sleeping bags.

PADDY PALLIN,

CAMP GEAR FOR WALKERS,

'PHONE: M 2678.

201 Castlereagh Street,

S Y D N E Y.



