

## THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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### EDITORIAL

#### Conservation Publicity

Two publications on bushland conservation have been printed lately. One of these, the 1949 issue of the Journal of the Wild Life Preservation Society, is, in effect, a summary of the Society's past and present activities. The section on sanctuaries and national reserves covers ground familiar to those who take an interest in S.B.W. affairs. But many members gain only a disjointed knowledge of some of the Club's conservation projects at meetings, and we can recommend a reading of the Society's Journal as a means of learning the complete story.

The National Park has always been in the forefront of the Society's interests. Once again there is a disturbing account of encroachments on the parkland for cricket pitches, gravel pits, sewerage dumps etc., while the activities of the Bushcraft Association are deplored. At a meeting convened by the Federat-

ion in March last year "to discuss the administration of the National Park," a subcommittee was set up to prepare a draft Bill for submission to the Minister for Lands. The draft Bill was to set out the powers and type of personnel of the Trust thought desirable for the proper administration of a National Park. "However," the Journal comments, "the Federation has not to date called this committee together and we are beginning to wonder whether it can effectively do so while it refuses to disassociate itself from the Bushcraft Association." It is pointed out too that the official organ of the Federation - "The Bushwalker" 1947, published an article by the Bushcraft Association.

An interesting comment is made on Mr. Lindsay's publication "The Bushman's Handbook," which deals (among other things) with methods of obtaining food by slaughter of bush creatures. "Members of Council were agreed," the Journal continues, "that although many of the suggestions were impracticable, and therefore unlikely to be carried out with success, the attitude of the writer offered serious opposition to our educational campaign for the development of a conservation consciousness in the community. We therefore took the matter up with the publishers, and offered them the outline of a work dealing with Bushcraft to be prepared by members of our society. This has been received favourably by the publishers. It is anticipated that the book will be published during 1950."

The Society is working for Commonwealth control of conservation and allied affairs. The main advantage which is expected to be gained is co-ordination and unification of conservation legislation. An enormous effort will be necessary to bring about the necessary interstate conference or referendum. After this there would be re-organisation of state departments followed by control from Canberra. This would impose the usual disadvantages of inflexibility and delay, but, what is more important, it would be very difficult for interested bodies, such as the Wild Life Preservation Society and the S.B.W. to "get at" the authorities. Conservation is, and will remain, a matter of predominantly local interest. This is borne out by the Journal itself, which, though published by the Wild Life Preservation of Australia, devotes most of its space to N.S.W. Coming even nearer to home, about five pages are devoted to the 38,000 acres of the National Park, which is at the backdoor, and less than half a page to the 1,250,000 acre Kosciuszko State Park, which is 300 miles away. The first objective should be action. This is most likely to result from the pressure of interested bodies in the capital cities. Uniformity, where necessary, is of secondary importance.

The other publication referred to above is Mr. H.A. Lindsay's "Living Monuments," a booklet printed and distributed by the Commonwealth Office of Education. It is priced at 9d. and will be widely read. The main theme of the booklet is established in the first chapter. It is that practical conservation must depend upon voluntary effort and that "the city dweller can take part in the work by joining a Bushwalking Club." Whether or not we agree with the views expressed we are identified with them in the minds of the readers of the booklet.

In Chapter 2 Mr. Lindsay sets out to describe "one of the greatest tasks of the conservationist in Australia." This turns out to be his old favourite - that conservationists - i.e. bushwalkers - should team up with the gun clubs and go out together building nests for ducks. It is a pity that this comparatively unimportant conservation activity should be given pride of place, and we hope that members of the S.B.W. will never help the "sportsmen" to breed up their targets. Why choose the gun clubs and the "blood sports" journals when there are so many other associations and publications which would be glad to co-operate?

Mr. Lindsay's tree planting schemes and his ideas of creating a primitive area have been published in this magazine and should already be known to readers. His view on the creation of a primitive area is, in some respects, very practical - nature must be helped back - it is not enough merely to create a reserve. His chapter on re-establishing the Koala is interesting reading, and rings true, though we are not competent to judge its scientific accuracy.

In the chapter on bushfires Mr. Lindsay suggests that belts of non-inflammable, introduced trees should be planted on the main watersheds. This would require more labour and equipment than are ever likely to be available for such a purpose. Nor could it be expected that such a stupendous task would be undertaken unless it was known that it would be effective. This is a question that the Forestry Advisory Council and other interested bodies might well take up with the Forestry Department. If the experts think it feasible, experiments might be conducted to prove whether or not it was successful.

In the public mind bushwalkers will be linked with all Mr. Lindsay's proposals. For this reason they should carefully consider whether they agree with his ideas and repudiate them if they don't. But though they may resent being dragged into the Lindsay orbit they must admit that he has done something that bushwalkers in N.S.W. have not even tried to do for the last fifteen or more years. He has written a pamphlet which will carry his ideas to a large number of thoughtful people.

#### AT OUR DECEMBER MEETING

The three new members, Mary McGregor, Jim Hooper and Ray Corbett, admitted to the Club at the December meeting, must have felt that the meeting had been convened for their especial benefit. The meeting, reasonable well-attended, lasted precisely thirty-one minutes, mostly occupied with the reading of minutes and correspondence: each item on the agenda was followed by the President's hopeful (but not too hopeful) "any business arising?" and an ensuing desolate silence.

Apart from a news item by Gil Webb to the effect that the

Scouts' Association would welcome us as a hiring body for their new premises - when they had been completed in some five years or so - and brief announcements regarding the Kiddies' Treat, and coming social events, there was a general air of apathy. Even the call for "General Business" almost passed without comment.

Someone, however, raised the respective merits of O'Hares Creek vs. Sandy Benâ for the swimming carnival in February. Having heard opinions from the audience - mostly concerned with 'bus fares ex Campbelltown and the brevity of the walking distance for O'Hares - the interest flagged, and the President had to call for a motion. Someone - alarmed at the stilly quiet - moved for O'Hares Creek, and the motion was adopted without further ado.

At 8.33 p.m. the meeting folded up, and members retreated to corners to discuss their Christmas and New Year arrangements.

That news void that follows long week-ends used to be a heck of a worry to pressmen. Sometimes somebody important dies, and that's good for a few columns, but murderers do not stalk, nor do atomic bombs explode, at holiday week-ends. There are always a crop of car accidents and drownings to fall back on, still, they're not good enough for a feature. But all that is changed now, for the pressman knows that somewhere, somehow, will be found a lost or injured hiker. On Tuesday, Jan. 3rd things looked hopeless after ten days of almost continuous holidays, but sure enough a feature materialised in the shape of "an attractive 20-year-old girl" who was "carried to safety today after relays of men had forced their way through three miles of scrub and bush and then climbed two miles up a precipitous slope in the Jamieson Valley." Half the front page of one evening paper was filled with a photograph of the girl being carried. Headings for the story filled a column, and letterpress another. Another whole page inside the paper was taken up with photographs of the incident. Moral - if anything goes wrong don't tell the press - particularly if one of the girls is hurt. Query - Do they post a man at Katoomba in anticipation of these dramatic events?

Mr. E. Caines Phillips advises that the first official canoe map of the Cruising Canoe Club has now been completed and is available for inspection to those interested. The map (No. 1) is of Bowra River (Bowraville to junction with Nambucca River at Macksville). Map no 49 of the River Canoe Club is also completed. It is of the Nambucca River (South or Taylor's Arm) (Burrachine to Macksville)

## BIVOUAC

Here for a span of three short days was home,  
these few square yards of canvas, and some cord  
tautened by casual sticks and metal pins,  
the earth itself our anchor. Here we lived,  
tramped the bush tracks, prepared prodigious meals,  
pursued our pleasant necessary tasks,  
ate, drank, were merry; and when evening came  
stretched limbs well-worried to the friendly fire,  
and warmed our hearts in kindly comradeship.

Now, we depart; and on the springing turf  
scarce lingers yet the imprint of our bed.  
Only a wisp of fern, some blackened stones  
remain, mute witness to our sojourn here,  
and in the sunlit silence blue wren flits,  
prospecting with his little brownie wife  
for morsels hidden from the human glance.

There have been conquerors who swept the earth,  
and men acclaimed them: but the embittered soil  
brought forth no harvest where their feet had passed,  
and the torn hills might wait two decades long  
before the deep woods clothed their flanks again.

Paltry ambition this, and negative,  
but fame enough: when we pack up at last  
our bivouac of threescore years and ten,  
sufficient if we leave no hurt to mar  
earth's face or man's; but only, where we lived  
may there be sunlight, and such sense of peace  
that wanderers who come upon the place  
must pause, and say: "Someone was happy here."

K.M.

NEWNES, GLEN DAVIS, MT. URATERER TO CAPERTEE MT. AND GLEN ALICE

by "Cerberus"

Note. Photographs illustrating this trip appeared in the December issue of the Sydney Bushwalker.

Old Newnes shale works were being pulled down, the bricks had been sold for £100 and were being cleaned and carted away. Two big chimneys had been blasted down and the third was to go on Tuesday. The red bricks had weathered into the scenery of the valley, quite unlike the aluminium painted tanks, pipes and stacks of Glen Davis, which glitter astride the Capertee Valley. Wattle was in full bloom among the ruins which will soon be no more than a rubble of mortar.

We followed the pipeline across to Glen Davis. We passed the tin shacks of the coal and shale miners (the man at the works complained that miners did not stay long at Glen Davis), the black evil smelling swill from the retorts dumped by the roadside on the way to the coal mine in Running Stream Creek.

A few miles down from Running Stream Creek, crossing two substantial valleys coming in on the right, we came to the first breach in the cliffs on the north side of the Capertee - Grassy Mountain. It isn't grassy at all, unless you look very closely, but it is good basalt soil and stones coming right down to the banks of the river. The basalt holds most of the way up, but at the top there is some easily passed sandstone.

The course from the top is north by compass, and we only ran off our ridge into one valley on the left - fortunately it had some water in it. We eventually came to a hill just west of Green Mt. and could see Mt. Uraterer and Gosper's Knob. Just below this we found a good track and followed it right to the mountain.

Along here were more woody pear trees - we had seen the first along some most beautiful Callitris along the Capertee - indeed all the ridges seemed to have a plentiful sprinkling of them, some of them very good specimens, and many of them with a liberal sprinkling of pears. The small woody pear bushes had vivid red glowing tips.

Mt. Uraterer has been cleared of trees and is grassy. Cattle and horses were grazing and there were some stockyards between the mountain and Gosper's Knob. We lunched right at the top with view all round us. One of the best views I have seen, a view of mountains, not of valleys. Mt. Coricudgy stood to the north like a great crocodile's head. The pyramid of Tyan Pic stood out better than anything else, but Dunn's Mt. and Mt. Capertee, as well as a dozen others, were also prominent. One of our more immediate objectives, Mt. Boonbourwa, did not stand out at all since it was in front of other higher mountains.

It's no use trying to pronounce Mt. Uraterer from just reading the name, but something like Ura - torra might get you by.

North of Mt. Uraterer there are a number of ridges, some<sup>of them</sup> quite long. There is at least Prickly Ridge, Thorny Ridge and Mountain Holly Ridge. All of them except one leads into a deep gorge. We saw exactly the same woody pear on nearly all of them. The formula for getting on the right one can only be applied after walking along wrong ones for at least a day. You come to a point, which the Leader can define for you in terms of compass bearings on Mt. Uraterer and Tyan Pic dimly glimpsed through the trees. From this most precisely defined point you cross a deep gully, find that the ridge is tending too far to the west and in any case comes to a steep saddle, become disgusted, cross back over the same gully, now much deeper, on to the missing ridge. It has a track on it, very faint but very reassuring.

A mile or two before Davis's Hole the track leads down a gently sloping creek bed on the right to an old spring which must have been a regular watering point in the days when the track was regularly used. It would probably be difficult to find coming in the opposite direction, since the track leading on from it was not very distinct and was difficult to pick up again. Our Trackfinder, however, had a method which succeeded time and again, but I am not free to divulge the nature of her secret.

The Cranky One made the first damper in his life at about this stage and it was quite surprising how good it was - at least the strictly rationed party devoured it at a gulp, carbon and all.

As might be expected with a party of such violent characters on a long walk some fundamental disagreements arose about such basic topics as \*

Standard specifications of firewood for camps. The following is suggested - length exactly five feet, straight and sound throughout, no rotten wood to be tolerated.

Standard specifications for a fire. Here there can be no doubt that it must be parallel and must be a roaring mass of flame throughout its entire length. Research into the working of atomic piles, when it is published, may provide a guide to methods by which the complexion of cooks can be protected from radiation injury.

The size and arrangements of stockpiles of fuel and water.

The number of times pots and utensils must be cleaned during each meal period with water of standard temperature and soapiness and with precisely defined scourers.

The gathering of bracken for those who wouldn't under any circumstances gather it for themselves.

It must be clear, however, that issues with regard to none of these topics can be satisfactorily resolved until some outstanding philosopher is prepared to write theses on the following subjects.

- (1) The nature and limitations of a food list, and
- (2) Why co-operation in camp arrangements necessarily doubles the work of each co-operator and imposes a regimentation which would not be tolerated during the ordinary working day.

Until these theses have been written and the conclusions derived from them duly incorporated into the general rules of the Club there is only one safe procedure which might be followed, and that is to select a portion of the bush in which there is no chance of meeting anyone at all and walk alone as a completely self-contained unit.

Davis's Hole was one of the most interesting features of the country which we saw. It is a crater-like depression with basaltic formations visible at the bottom of it and an outlet through a narrow canyon; a high range of hills almost completely encircles it. We would have liked to go down to the bottom of it but we had lost time on the approaching ridges and had to hurry by.

About this time the Cranky One was mislaid. He paused to enjoy the scenery and the rest of the party rushed on. Since the track was not sufficiently defined to follow a delicate position arose. The C.O. feeling secure in the knowledge that he was carrying a major portion of the food supply applied the well-known principle of staying put, retired to the highest piece of ground nearby, ate an orange and made himself comfortable. The R.O.P. came to a halt about a mile or so around the crater and proceeded to burn green gumleaves at a great rate. Unfortunately a fairly high wind carried the smoke away behind the hill and the Lost One never saw it. In the meantime the Leader retraced steps and eventually came upon the L.O. Everything had worked according to the rules.

On past Davis's the track was in use and was well-defined. It was along the tops which were either bare or only sparsely covered with trees; the views were magnificent. In this area, and for that matter for most of the rest of the trip down to Glen Alice, nearly all the valleys were of a characteristic formation, the ridges ending in a series of beehive shaped rocks. Such experience as we had suggested that most of them would be negotiable up or down the spaces between the beehives.

On the top of Boonbourwa we found that our compasses varied depending on the height above the rocks, suggesting that some caution might be necessary in taking bearings around here.

At the Ovens the Trackfinder, possibly again using a secret weapon, saw two foxes, a wombat, six wallabies and sundry rabbits. The C.O. saw a dead horse, but did not employ any secret weapon in making the discovery.

Weariness or laziness prevented us from either following the tops along from here or from climbing Coricudgy. We followed the road along the Cudgegong River until we came to a house at the



foot of Native Dog Hill with Mt. Bin Ben well back on the left. From here we headed straight for Capertee Mt. along relatively flat country, part of the way through a beautiful forest of scribbly gums. We were supposed to find a track leading from Capertee Mt. down to what was shown on the Map as Umbrella Ck.

About Umbrella Ck. Forget it altogether or else you will be led into a lot of trouble as we nearly were since we had arranged for a car to meet us along it. The creek is Capertee Nile Right Arm, and if you call it anything else the local inhabitants won't know what you are talking about.

Capertee Mt. is like most of the other mountains we climbed in the district - sandstone well up with a capping of basalt. There are magnificent trees on the basalt country right up to the very highest point. Boronia was growing on the dry sandstone edges, forming some delightfully colourful masses. It was surprising to find orchids so far west, but the sandstone edges of the mountain facing the north-east were covered with masses of rocklilies and liparis; dendrobium striolatum seemed to be everywhere, but was of a different form to that found around the Grose, having bigger and slightly different flowers.

We spent a whole day looking for the track down to the Capertee Nile. We found dozens of tracks, some of them very good ones indeed, leading around the mountain and up on to it, but none of them led away from it. We know where the track is now, but try as we could we couldn't find it then.

Perhaps the next section should not be written; it certainly cannot be written adequately.

We headed down into a gully. Unfortunately, although we thought ourselves lucky at the time, the final drop was fairly easily made and we entered upon a course of thorny vines of all the worst varieties (except blackberries) that I have ever met, interspersed with giant nettles, all lacing together the fallen trees of the last generation. Have you ever seen the nettles which tower up over you and droop down and dangle in your face? The average height of the mess was from ten to fifteen feet. The language used was much as might be expected, but even with doubling and redoubling the emphasis was often felt to be inadequate, and there were many even more expressive silences.

The leader occasionally took to the wombat burrows, and in happier circumstances it would have been amusing watching him disappear down a hole in the ground dragging his pack after him.

Lower down there were some magnificent tree ferns and near the beginning was the biggest cedar I have ever seen - there'd probably be a fortune in it, but it would have to come out by a helicopter.

We came out on to river flats covered with wattles, all a blaze of colour.

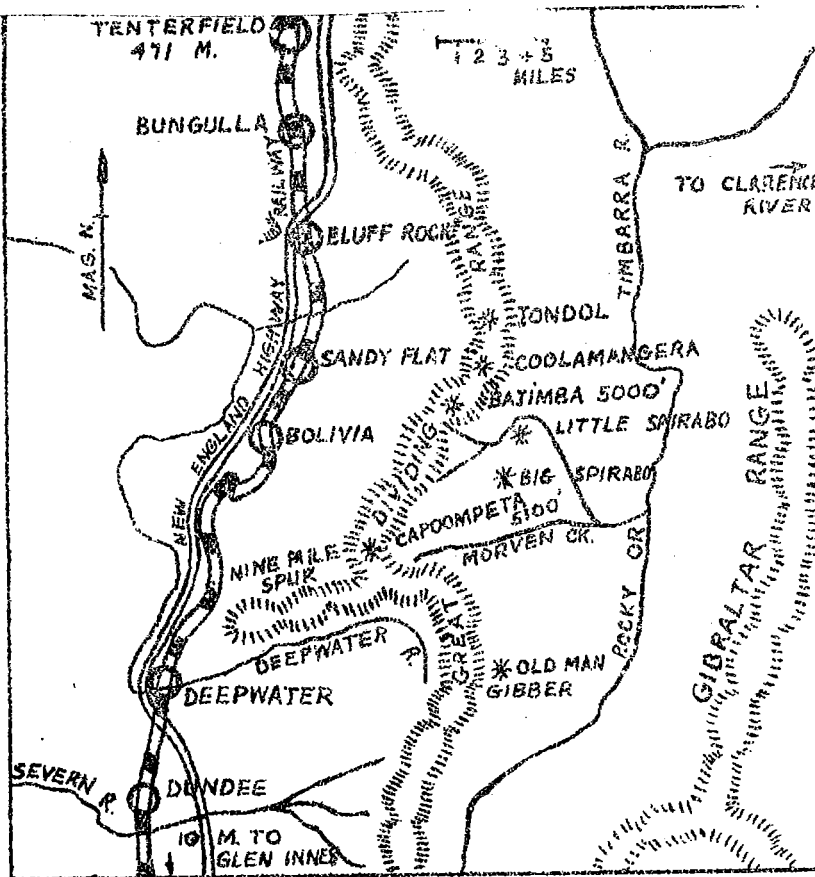
The next day nobody wanted to do anything except the C.O. With restless vigour he decided to explore the way up Tyan Pic from the Capertee Nile Right Arm side. Although the exploration was successful too much time was wasted to make the final ascent - at least that was his story and I have no reason to doubt it.

NOW WHAT ARE YOU REALLY LOOKING FOR?

by A.L. Wyborn

Have you ever noticed how a few small names on a map can be the start of a new adventure in walking? Often bushwalkers pore over maps and then take a chance on a certain area not known to other walkers. The fossicking round for information sometimes leads to quite surprising discoveries, and sometimes leads to a dead end.

We could get very little "gen" about Bajimba, Spirabo, etc., so decided to take a risk and go and see for ourselves. As Laurie pointed out before we went, the Dividing Range between Tenterfield and Glen Innes could not be so spectacular, as on each side of it is country about 3,000 feet, thus leaving only a rise of two thousand feet to the tops of 5,000 feet.



However the uncertainty only served to act as a spur, so Easter Thursday found us on the Brisbane Express, bound for Bluff Rock, two stations before Tenterfield. The station before, Sandy Flat, was to have been our starting point, but the historic interest of Bluff Rock changed our plans. The actual Rock is close to the railway line with the usual type of bluff face, and is easily climbed from the back. Many years ago some recalcitrant blacks were driven off the granite Bluff to their deaths.

Another interesting rock is Thunderbolt Rock, just alongside the railway track about one quarter of a mile past Bluff Rock station. Although only about 30 feet by 20 feet in size, the celebrated bushranger used it to dodge back from the pursuing troopers.

While making a few phone calls to recommended "authorities" on the district, we met burly Reg Irlam, the fettling ganger. With his huge hairy arms, unshaven face, small eyes and red hair, he was the living counterpart of Dobell's "Billy Boy." After being filled with milk, and accepting fresh butter and eggs that were literally thrust upon us by our new friend, we started our tough trip - on Reg's motor tricycle down the line for several miles. The rucksacs and I were on the outrigger board, Clem in front of Reg (the driver), and Laurie behind him, making an unusual load for a railway trike. It was tough going, there being no windshield!

More nebulous advice from a farmer friend of Reg's and we were off, under our own power this time, for the main range about six miles to the east. The range is not particularly outstanding to approach, as mentioned before, and the tops are mostly covered with heavy timber which shields many good panoramas from the walker. On the way across we skirted an isolated hill and were impeded to some extent by many six foot dingo fences made in two heights of wire netting. The top height was flimsily secured by battens to the sturdy ground posts, and caused some amusement as we swayed back and forth to get over.

Jondol was our first mountain, a granite outcrop with views back along the Cottesbrook Creek to Bluff Rock. We camped in a small saddle with clear water at about 4,500 feet, one mile south along the range from Jondol.

The walking next morning was very much up and down ridges, but quite pleasant among open forest lands and grassy tops. Such a top was Coolamangera, where the gums rose well over one hundred feet. Another half mile and we were stopped by a gorge about 800 feet deep, which necessitated a wide skirting movement to the east. Each of several tops we then climbed was optimistically thought to be Bajimba, but this we did not reach till 1 p.m. and there was no mistaking its unique trig. post with a square frame under the usual disc. It was a fitting spot for lunch, though a dry one, as the views were very good over wide level valleys, and glorious clouds hung in the sky.

One of the best glimpses was our next objective - Big Spirabo -

framed through a gap in tall eucalypts, that had obviously been cut by surveyors to take a sight on the peak.

Going down from Bajimba on the eastern side of the Divide we passed through thick jungle flora, and at one vantage point had another nice view of Big Spirabo, this time with Little Spirabo also, about one mile to the north of it.

At the bottom, amid cool ferns, we slaked our thirst from the clear Five Bull Creek, and then, surprisingly, came on a well-made road, which we later learned led to the Sourabo sawmill a few miles east. We did not follow the road for long as we wanted to scale Big Spirabo early next morning, so we climbed and climbed to a small gully about 500 feet from the top and directly under the saddle between Big and Little Spirabo. Water nearby in a deep grass thicket ensured a comfortable camp spot.

We had to wait some time next morning for a heavy mist to lift, thus making the climbing of Big Spirabo worth while. It was easily the most spectacular part of the trip, as the huge rocky outcrop on top ensured panoramic views. Blair Sugarloaf near Guyra was plainly visible 60 miles to the south, while to the east the Rocky River and Clarence River valleys appeared as a series of wild rugged gorges stretching to the coast 80 miles distant. The next mountain we proposed to climb was Capoompeta, but it did not look so spectacular from Big Spirabo, so we decided very little would be lost if we did not have time for it. Up here too, we found traces of limestone in the form of perfectly preserved sea shells, both loose and embedded in rocks. The range is remarkable for its types of rocks. Jondol was granite, Bajimba volcanic, and now limestone.

Down from the peak we broke camp and descended a ridge to the open Morven Creek. We surprised a black-brushed red fox which went streaking away across the swamp land. Large red-soil anfills dotted the flat until we stopped for lunch near a little farmhouse nestling on the hillside. Here, much to our disgust, a young farmer was just completing the ringbarking of a huge peppermint eucalypt because "the roots are stopping the grass from growing" - and thus destroyed one of the few good shade trees available for his cattle in summer. Clem got hold of the axe while still embedded in the tree, and, quick as a flash, I had his photo for future propaganda purposes. We learned from the farmer that "Big Speriby" is 5008 feet high, that further down the creek are big waterfalls and good red cedars, and that Capoompeta is known locally as the "Magistrate."

Taking a rough road from here we crossed back over to the western side of the Great Divide toward Deepwater River. Two miles from the river, as evening was drawing in, we stopped a car coming towards us, and who should it be but Mr. A. Cox, an old gentleman I had been referred to as an expert on the district. He had just returned from the Royal Show, and not having heard of us, looked a little scared at being stopped on such a lonely road by three tramp-like specimens, as I later thought we must have appeared. He was definitely an authority on the surrounding country, and did he let us know it! He ridiculed our tale about limestone and procee

to give us a treatise about 26 different species of granite. To Laurie's demurrers he replied, "Lad, you know nothing about geology." Gradually we pieced together the reasons for his suspicions of us. Maps he had just obtained from the Lands Department in Sydney showed he was trying to lease a certain area of land behind "Big Speriby" where one could look up to slopes covered in huge timbers "like a Spanish castle." Apparently it was such an obsession with him at the time that he thought we were after it too.

Much other land he owned in the district, and on it ran his Black Poll cattle. Amongst them was the "best Black Poll in the world, a sister to a champion bull in Chicago." Times were now good, but tax was so bad he had cut down production by fifty per cent. He left us happily, quite convinced that we knew "nothing about everything," but also that we did not want his land.

That night we camped on Deepwater River, and next morning after a few miles along the uninteresting road we caught a lorry into Deepwater, which was in the midst of barren flat country. With hours to wait for the bus to Glen Innes, 26 miles away, we decided to go by private car, and it was only a few miles along the road before Laurie boarded a modern sedan, while Clem and I had to be content with the back of a utility. However this lift gave us nice time to look around Glen Innes in brilliant sunshine, and see the autumn tints of the many exotic trees.

The end of the trip had turned out very easy. We had found what we were looking for and added another area of New South Wales to our knowledge, even though it was relatively unspectacular.

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ODE TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR RAILWAYS

Dear Mr. Railway Commissioner,  
I see by this morning's Gazette,  
That the start of my doom is approaching,  
I'll soon be one with the dead.

For you in your wrath have decreed  
That "Week-end Returns" are abolished.  
No thought for the weary and overdue mite,  
His hopes of a "ride" you've demolished.

If in the future for a ticket I ask,  
It wont be for a "Second Class Standing,"  
"A fare and a third" will be the password  
To ride on the first class landing.

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W.G.