

With relation to the Warden's Court (Mining Authority) the committee recommends "that the Warden's Court be given *unfettered authority* in all matters relating to mining privileges, *and that these should not be subject to the consent by a National Parks Board.* The Warden's Court should be given discretion, in all areas, whether mining areas or not, to balance the various factors concerned and then make its decision." In plain words this means that in all matters relating to mining, the powers of the National Parks Authority to make decisions would cease, its authority over its parks would become null and void. Surely an amazing and preposterous recommendation!

What is the position really? Certain provisions are contained in the National Parks Act which permit prospecting and mining within National Parks subject to the consent of the National Parks Authority and the Minister's approval. The National Parks Authority consists of the Director General of Lands and his assistant, who are also the chairman and deputy chairman of the Authority, the Secretary for Internal Affairs, the Director General of Forestry, the General Manager of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, one member each from the Royal Society, the Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Federated Mountain Clubs and the National Park Boards—nine members, five being heads of important State departments, the other four representatives of national bodies. Nine men with exceptional qualifications to make decisions concerning National Parks—nine intelligent and reasonable men appointed by law to do the job, and bound by law to have regard to representations made by the Minister; yet the West Coast Committee apparently considers that this body of highly qualified men should be stripped of its authority and the future of the parks handed over to a Warden's Court, which is concerned only with mining.

Surely no sane Government would agree to such a proposition, but it appears in the West Coast Committee's report, and, however preposterous, it must be taken seriously and seen as a threat to one of the finest Acts of Parliament passed in this country or in any other part of the world.

Lake Wairarapa and Wild Life

According to the *Evening Post* of Wellington, of 18th November, the Government will give a £3-for-£1 subsidy for a Lower Wairarapa Valley development scheme estimated to cost £2,449,000. The work is to be spread over 20 years. Some 41,610 acres will be relieved of flooding and more than 13,000 acres will be reclaimed. The scheme has been prepared by the Wairarapa Catchment Board, and approved by the Soils Conservation and Rivers Control Council, while the Department of Lands and Survey is directly interested and will contribute £140,000 towards the costs.

We have no doubt that the scheme is a good one—those concerned with it are all reputable bodies efficiently staffed and controlled, in each case in their own orbit doing excellent work worthy of high praise—yet we fear that in this scheme there is a weakness common to so many other development schemes here and overseas. The weakness is that there is no reference to the Wildlife Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs having been consulted.

Consider the facts: 5,700 acres of lake bed can be reclaimed, also 5,500 acres of low-lying land and 1,900 acres of lagoons. Remember that Lake Wairarapa is the mecca of the duck-shooting fraternity, because it is in those lagoons that the ducks and other waterfowl find their feeding grounds and breeding areas. As a Society we are not interested in duck shooting; nevertheless we do recognise that given sufficient food and protection ducks are endowed by Nature with a fecundity which makes reasonable provision for shooting needs, and we are very interested in the preservation of the various protected species of waterfowl which need, and are entitled to, sufficient habitat to ensure survival. In America and elsewhere, and already to some extent in New Zealand, there is the spectacle of one department draining swamps and lakes while other departments build artificial ones in the same localities in order to restore water tables and provide water fowl habitat.