

1969

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

CONFERENCE OF
COMMONWEALTH AND STATE MINISTERS
ON WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Held at
CANBERRA
29 July 1969

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

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Proceedings of the conference :
conference of Commonwealth and state
ministers on wildlife conservation, held at
Canberra, 29th July 1969

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE

REPRESENTATIVES

COMMONWEALTH

The Hon. Malcolm Fraser, M.P., Minister for Education and
Science. (Chairman)
The Hon. P. J. Nixon, M.P., Minister for the Interior.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hon. T. L. Lewis, M.L.A., Minister for Lands.

VICTORIA

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rylah, K.B.E., C.M.G., ED., M.L.A.,
Chief Secretary.

QUEENSLAND

The Hon. J. A. Row. M.L.A., Minister for Primary Industries.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Hon. C. R. Story, M.L.C., Minister for Agriculture.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, M.L.C., Minister for Health and
Minister for Fisheries and Fauna.

TASMANIA

The Hon. K. O. Lyons, M.H.A., Deputy Premier and Chief
Secretary

CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH AND STATE MINISTERS ON WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION HELD AT CANBERRA, 27 JULY 1969

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Gentlemen, I welcome you to Canberra and to this meeting. This is the first occasion on which Ministers concerned with wildlife conservation in Australia have met together. I believe that all of us will agree that the problem of assuring that future generations inherit an environment which allows them the opportunities that we have today is one of the most important issues facing people of all nations and their governments. Australia, as custodian of a great number of species of animals that are totally restricted to this continent, has a special international responsibility to ensure that they are conserved and available for all people to study and enjoy. I believe that mankind has only recently become aware of how difficult this problem is and how important it is to take effective action in the rapidly changing social environment.

The Commonwealth Government has been active in wildlife conservation and has achieved a great deal in its Territories. Substantial reserves, national parks and sanctuaries have been established in its Territories. Biologists of the Department of the Interior and the Northern Territory Administration are continuing to assess the wildlife resources. The Government has also been active on a wide front through the CSIRO and ANARE. The Divisions of Wildlife Research, Plant Industry and others in the CSIRO have undertaken

considerable research throughout the continent. ANARE has pursued an extensive research programme on Antarctic biology. The work of these organisations has provided much information that is basic to the formation of wildlife conservation programmes. The Government has also taken action on specific problems of the environment, such as air and water pollution and pesticides, by the establishment of select committees of inquiry and in other ways.

Many other nations have found it desirable to attempt to step up and to integrate their activities on the environmental problem. To mention only a few examples: Britain has had for some years a Nature Conservancy and has recently strengthened it as part of the National Environmental Research Council. The United States of America is moving towards a national policy for the environment and the President has recently established a Cabinet level Environmental Quality Council. The United States has, of course, a great deal of work in progress on wildlife conservation. Sweden has taken some forward looking steps and has moved in the United Nations for a major full scale meeting to be held on the problems of the environment, under the auspices of the General Assembly, in 1972. I need not say that Australia is not the United States of America, Britain or Sweden. However, even if different, the pressures on the Australian environment and its wildlife have similarities to the pressures that exist in those countries. The rate of change and the increase in pressure is accelerating, but we are fortunate in having

the experience of other nations to go by and time to plan.

The Fauna Authorities Conference has achieved much and it has shown up some unresolved matters where the solution might be collaboration between the States and between the States and the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government has called this meeting to explore those possibilities. In addition, there has been a strong public demand for the Commonwealth Government to concern itself with wildlife conservation. A number of organisations and individuals have written either to me or to the Prime Minister about this. The 1968 Fauna Authorities Conference recommended that the State and Commonwealth Ministers be requested to give consideration to the question of meeting together. I am well aware - as were the officials who made that recommendation - that flora and fauna in the States and Territories are primarily the responsibility of each State government and the Commonwealth Government. But equally I believe that some of the problems that have arisen in the discussions at the Fauna Authorities Conference are mutual problems and can be resolved more readily by our collaboration.

The activities of the Australian Fauna Authorities Conference have been beneficial. I am very conscious of the efforts that have been made. A great deal of collaboration has resulted from that meeting. Objectives have been clarified, progressive moves have been initiated and difficulties and misunderstandings have been resolved. But inevitably, in complex problems such as the Conference has faced, much remains

to be done. Some agenda items have returned in successive conferences. I hope that today's meeting will resolve, or plan to resolve, some of these long standing questions.

Australia is fortunate in having a unique flora and fauna with much of the environment still relatively undamaged. But our wildlife is vulnerable because of its unusual nature. It is vulnerable to the effects of introduced species, fertilisers, pesticides, cultivation, the clearing of land and many forms of development. No-one wishes to see planned development impeded, but there is a widespread feeling that greater attention to wildlife conservation is urgently needed as an integral part of national development. Public interest in the matter is, of course, widespread.

As you are aware, gentlemen, a meeting of officials took place in Canberra on 30th June and 1st July. I am grateful for the help which was provided to my Department in the drafting of the paper now before us. I believe that that meeting simplified the task of this meeting of Ministers concerned with wildlife conservation. The difficulties of finding solutions to the problems concerning wildlife conservation result from the immense complexity of the inter-relations between organisms. It is now well known that DDT is present in birds that have never left the Antarctic region, having reached them through complicated food chains. No-one knows whether it is deleterious in these animals or, for that matter, in humans. What we do know is that changes in the environment such as those induced by pesticides may have consequences which are

completely unexpected.

An added complexity in Australia is that birds and mammals have always been in low density in comparison with the position in other countries. We do not know how many of the species we now regard as endangered are in jeopardy because of the activities of modern man. The fauna is adapted to a habitat which is very delicately balanced and which can be upset by very little interference. For example, arid and semi-arid land simply cannot stand the tramping by tourists and so on that the vigorous coniferous forests of the northern hemisphere can stand. Yet, even in them degradation is happening fast. Some small animals were perhaps on the way out when man arrived, but many more were started on that road by man's interference with their habitat.

I would expect that at this meeting we may reach a better understanding of each other's attitudes to the problem of wildlife conservation. I should like to comment on the agenda and on the papers which have been distributed to you. Although the officers agreed, as I am informed, on the items and on the form of the agenda before you, I wish to make it clear that this agenda was drawn up with one view only, namely, to simplify our discussions. It is not intended to be exclusive or in any way to inhibit discussions. I would welcome additions to it, so long as the items that might be suggested fall within the framework of this meeting. For example, I know that since the meeting of officers Mr Lewis has circulated a number of

items for consideration. Some of these are covered under other agenda headings. Those that are not covered under an agenda heading can be easily taken under the item 'Other Business'.

Before asking Mr Lewis to make any remarks he might wish to make, I want to say that in conformity with the normal practice at these conferences, as I understand it, Hansard reporters are present. During the course of the day I hope it will be possible for us to agree on a Press statement from the conference as a whole. Depending, of course, on what happens, I hope to have something to put to the conference at a later time. After Ministers make their opening remarks I would like to see what attitude they take to the agenda as circulated. Again I welcome all of you here. Mr Lewis, would you like to make some remarks at this stage?

MR LEWIS - Thank you, Mr Chairman, on behalf of New South Wales, for your welcome. Frankly, I am still a little confused as to why the meeting has been called, as I suggested to you in some letters, and about the papers that have been circulated. In fact I do not know the authorship of those papers. It has not been noted. It seems to me that in general they do not offer anything new to the States at all. I say in general that there are some specific suggestions to the effect that the States are not getting on together in the field of wildlife yet this has not been pointed out in any of the papers. I think that if the Commonwealth has some criticism to offer about the States not getting on together then it should be specific. If we are going to go through the suggested agenda and if this means that we are to listen to the presentation of a lot of papers then I would suggest that at lunch time we should get on with any resolutions that the states may wish to discuss - something specific which may help wildlife. I suggest this course rather than that we

should listen to a lot of lengthy papers which we have all read and which in general do not offer anything new to the States in the field of conservation and wildlife. Other than to reserve the right of my State to make any comment on this conference afterwards, I am quite happy to be present and I hope that some fruitful discussions might arise.

MR MALCOM FRASER - Thank you, Mr Lewis.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Mr Minister, I did not have the opportunity of hearing the whole of what you said. I would like to make a few remarks although they may be unrelated to what you said earlier. Perhaps you will excuse me if that is the case. Victoria welcomes this conference. One of my worries is that I have some doubts whether anything specific will come out of it and therefore I think that considerable attention must be given to any Press statement that is made from the conference and not leave it to be agreed upon in a last minute rush. As I see the problems today, the first one of them is that although every State is doing a considerable amount in the field of conservation of wildlife every State is hampered because of lack of funds and personnel. This is not uncommon so far as State problems are concerned but perhaps it becomes particularly important in a matter of this sort about which the public gets emotional yet at the same time nobody can afford to put funds into this type of thing in the way that they would like because of other urgent priorities. The Australian Fauna Authorities Conference has been functioning for a number of years. To some extent it lacks teeth and it certainly lacks a secretariat. I believe

that one constructive suggestion that has come out of the officers' meeting is the continuation of this conference with a proper secretariat. If this objective can be achieved then I believe we can get somewhere. There is an extraordinary lack of knowledge on the part of the public as to what is really going on. It is quite common for an overseas visitor to Australia to pin down the Minister in charge of Wildlife and accuse him of having allowed all the kangaroos in Victoria to be destroyed. I am quite sure that some people who come to Australia expect to see kangaroos in College Street. I can take you to places where there are an awful lot of kangaroos - in some cases far too many. Of course, Victorian members of the Federal Parliament are not unknown for their ability to get up in the House and give similar expressions to the public through Hansard. I use kangaroos as an example but it is merely an example of how uninformed the public is generally. I do not know how we can get over to the public what is being done without disclosing our shortcomings because of our inability to do anything like as much as we would wish in this field. Perhaps that is a problem that this conference might consider. It has been extremely encouraging in Victoria to see the extent to which private enterprise has been prepared to support specific and general projects in this field. I am sure that in this field we can encourage much more private support provided we have the proper public relations. Coming to something specific in this direction, I agree with you, Mr Minister, that consideration should be given by your Government to providing more assistance to the States although perhaps it should not be

direct assistance because I know that this creates all sorts of problems with the Treasury. However I believe that research grants could be made available for specific projects provided that the States are taken into consultation when these grants are made so that they could ensure that there is no duplication and at the same time ensure that our own people are fully conversant with the problems and can act as advisers about what should be done and where the grants should be spent.

I agree with you, Mr Minister, that pesticides are a real problem. We do not know enough about them. I think it would be fair to say that we are not doing enough work in this direction. We in Victoria have some proposals in mind which we are now putting into operation. There will be some legislation on this aspect during this session. This may be an opportunity to better inform people of the problems. There is some suggestion in the papers that there is a lack of co-operation and lack of uniformity among the States. I deny that there is lack of co-operation and I do not know whether uniformity in this field will be of any great value so far as Australia is concerned. Australia is a very big country and the policy in regard to kangaroos in the Northern Territory could easily be quite different to the policy for kangaroos in Victoria. There is one basic problem and I do not know the answer to it. For instance, take the duck problem in the rice fields in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government permits - and I believe it must necessarily permit - ducks to be shot in the rice fields at times when they are doing considerable damage to the crops.

This creates a problem for Victoria because anybody who is **picked** up for shooting ducks out of season in Victoria can claim that he shot them in New South Wales and that he was not breaching any law. There is a similar problem with regard to kangaroos. The Victorian public generally realises that red kangaroos are fully protected and that grey kangaroos can be shot only after a permit has been issued and then only in limited numbers. People are realising that Victoria is handling this problem satisfactorily yet other people believe and claim that we are aiding and abetting the destruction of kangaroos in other places because we permit kangaroo meat and skins to be sold in Victoria. I am afraid that we have to live with these problems.

Referring to co-operation, there is considerable co-operation between Victoria and New South Wales and Victoria and South Australia. We talk the same language when dealing with most problems even though, for various reasons, we may not have exactly the same rules. I think I can say fairly that in recent years this co-operation has increased greatly. I regard the agenda today as a useful basis for discussion. It may well be that having cleared up the agenda items we can then get on with a more useful discussion of the problems that arise as a result of consideration of agenda items. I commend you for calling the conference. I do not think it need be a regular thing but I think it is a good idea to have one. At the same time I would like the Australian Fauna Authorities Conference

to be put on a proper basis with a proper secretariat because I think we would get tremendous value from it.

MR MALCOM FRASER - Thank you Sir Arthur.

Mr Row, would you like to say anything?

MR ROW - Firstly I would like to express my appreciation to you for calling this conference. I was quite happy to come here to hear the discussions and take part where possible. As you know, Queensland is a vast State, second in size to Western Australia, covering an area of 670,000 square miles. The preservation and conservation of our fauna does present some problems. Like most States we are under-staffed but generally, by and large, we have got some particularly good men on the job and they have their fingers on the pulses. We do get pretty accurate surveys and statistics on the decimation or otherwise of our native fauna population. At the same time we must agree, I think, that at times there is a good deal of emotionalism on the part of conservationists who write letters to newspapers saying that we are destroying all our native fauna without any care for the future or knowledge of what will happen in the future. Of course the correct view is to the contrary.

I must say that we are hampered a good deal by the lack of funds to carry out a complete survey. We do depend a great deal on our fauna officers and our honorary fauna protectors. As you know, our fauna officers are members of my own department, members of the forestry department and members of the police force.

They are official officers. On the other hand there are honorary fauna protectors. who play a big part and more people are being encouraged to take a more active part in this work. I believe that greater publicity throughout Queensland and throughout Australia would do a lot to encourage the formation of small fauna societies within districts. We in Queensland are placed in a somewhat different position to the other states.

This applies particularly in North Queensland where there is quite a large migrant population. In that area they will shoot anything from a Willy Wagtail to a Laughing Pigeon, as these people call the Jackass. They make spaghetti and other dishes out of these birds. These people have to be taught that these birds are protected. There is a great deal of difficulty in getting the message across to these people. We have to teach these people that these are native birds and that they have to be protected.

Regarding the establishment of a Commonwealth Secretariat, I think that will depend a great deal on the outcome of our discussions today. If we feel that the discussions are fruitful, it might be worthwhile forming a Commonwealth Secretariat, in order to get some cohesion and co-ordination between the States, in the same way as we have one with the Australian Agricultural Council and the Australian Fisheries Council. As you appreciate, Mr Chairman, each State has its own individual problems and difficulties regarding fauna protection. Fauna protection is not like agriculture where we have Ministers for Agriculture in the various States. Fauna protection comes under different portfolios: This is where some difficulty arises.

Sir Arthur Rylah referred to the question of ducks in the rice growing areas in New South Wales. We have the same difficulty with respect to many species of birds in Queensland. For example, I remember that our good friend, Dr Delamothe some time ago spoke as a private member

about Brolgas or Native Companions. He said that these birds were eating grain sorghum in his electorate of Bowen. He made an impassioned speech in the House, in which he said that we should allow the destruction of Native Companions. Of course, you can imagine the furore which his speech caused throughout Queensland. Hence he received the nickname 'Brolga'. But that is beside the point. I think that in all of these matters we have to adopt a balanced and sensible approach. I think that if the Ministers and their advisers can get together in a meeting like this, something good must come out of it. I have a very good adviser in Dr McDougall. He would be one of the soundest men on this question that you could find anywhere. In his slow, laconic way, Dr McDougall thinks that he can find some of these animals, which are supposed to be extinct, in many parts of Queensland. He could be right.

We have to appreciate the fact that one can travel miles and miles in Queensland and not see a kangaroo, but there are many of them still around. This applies to many of our game species; they are still there. It is a question of adopting a sensible and balanced approach to the question. I am sure that you, Mr Chairman, will be able to collate our thoughts so that something worthwhile can come out of this meeting.

Another matter which we have to consider is sanctuaries. We have a number of sanctuaries in Queensland. Our national parks are classified as sanctuaries. We make available to interested people large areas of water for sanctuaries.

Here again, we have to have people who are prepared to act as honorary fauna officers and protectors and look after these sanctuaries and see that no indiscriminate shooting takes place in them. I am keen to see something come from this conference. As I have said, I think that the establishment of a Commonwealth Secretariat will depend largely on the result of this morning's discussions. I go along with Mr Lewis. I think that before lunch we should deal with the matters which are on the agenda, and if possible, in the short time at our disposal after lunch, we should deal with matters of State or general application.

MR STORY - I likewise welcome the opportunity to be here. If this conference does nothing else, I believe it has focussed very clearly upon the States the frailties in their own situations. When we were deciding who should come to this meeting, it appeared that as I hold a number of hats I could come for a number of reasons. I think there is a very great need in the States to consider how we have organised this matter of flora and fauna conservation, and also what we have done in our parks. I understand that the main purpose of our being here is to talk about wildlife. However, I am quite sure that we cannot divorce habitat retention from the whole question of conservation because I believe these questions are integrated. If we are to form a permanent Commonwealth Secretariat, I believe that one of the things we have to do is to concentrate upon public education. On the one hand, we have people who will destroy everything that they see move. On the other hand,

we have the bleeding hearts who will set up a society for the retention of blowflies. We have to try to educate the public somewhere down the middle.

I am quite confident at this stage that many of the problems which we face have resulted from complete ignorance of what has been and what is intended to be accomplished by the States. We must remember that we have to manage within our limited financial accommodation - whether it be on the State or Commonwealth basis. I think that one of the questions we must consider is where we can raise the necessary finance in order to make these things possible. I was interested in the reference to research in the Prime Minister's letter to the Premiers. I believe that this is a very good thing, but I would hate to see research centralised. I should like to see research carried out in the areas in which there is a need for it. I was a little perturbed by the letter which the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia wrote to Mr Gorton and also to the Premiers in each of the States. Lest there be any misunderstanding in the minds of the members of the Wildlife Preservation Society or in anybody else's mind, I point out that we will not leave this meeting with a bag full of gold with which to do all the things which we are expected to do. I refer to the second paragraph of the letter of Miss Henley, the National Secretary of the Society, in which she says that she hopes the Government will take advantage of this offer of co-operation in the many problems associated with nature protection. She also said she welcomed the

opportunity for federally financed research into particular State problems. She said that as though it was a fait accompli. At the moment I have not seen anything on which she could base that suggestion.

When we leave here today, I think we have to be very sure exactly what we have agreed upon. If there is an offer of finance, I will be the first one to accept it because I would like to take a little bag of gold back with me. I believe, too, that there should be as much co-ordination as possible between the States, the Territories and the Commonwealth Government on the many matters on which Ministers have spoken. But it is important we should remember that birds and animals have no comprehension about State boundaries or section 92 of the Constitution. Therefore, it is very important that each State should know what the other State is doing in all of these matters. I welcome the opportunity to be here and to participate in discussions upon the various matters.

MR MACKINNON - I think that most of the other speakers have voiced my problems, but perhaps not quite as forcibly as I would have done. I agree with most of what Sir Arthur Rylah has said, except what he said with regard to this Conference itself. There is one reason I am not happy about it, and this would worry no-one but myself, and that is that it is being held in Canberra, which is such a hell of a place to get to from Western Australia. I always faced these conferences like a washed out dishrag after travelling all this distance. I do not know why we cannot hold them somewhere else where we can easily reach them. This worries me about the Secretariat being in Canberra, but it is the nature of things and we need a secretariat. At least the mail can get here a little easier. Another reason why I am not happy about it is the very reason touched upon by most other speakers - fauna conservation, wildlife conservation and general conservation is a very delicate and touchy area. It touches upon the emotions for the various reasons that Mr Story mentioned. You get everything from the duck shooters to Mr Row's migrants who want to shoot everything for the pot and those who want to conserve everything. The situation is extremely difficult.

You, Mr Chairman, said that there are many demands on the Federal Government to take a place in respect of fauna conservation. This does not impress me because at many of the meetings I attend I get requests to do something about defence. My answer is that I will do everything

possible to assist the Federal Government because defence is its proper and rightful sphere. I do not think that fauna conservation is the Federal Government's rightful sphere; it is the States'. There are ways in which assistance could be given to the States, but the mere fact that the Federal Government receives requests from people throughout Australia does not impress me. I suppose it comes down to a matter of funds, but not funds alone. We can do with additional finance, but I would not be happy if you shared out money between us and we put it in our satchels and took it home. I think this is a matter that has to be handled properly through Treasury. What extra money we want would have to be phased over a period. I do not see a great deal of diversity with regard to the basic policy on conservation. Most of the problems are administrative in respect of the differences in agriculture, habitat control and so forth in the various States. We have our own problems as between ourselves and other States. We have a problem that relates to Queensland. About 5,000 Johnson crocodiles are smuggled out of the Kimberleys to Queensland where they are treated. We have reason to believe that legally taken crocodiles in the Kimberleys are being handled by taxidermists in Queensland and are being sold in our shops in Western Australia. There is nothing you or we can do about it from a legal point of view or a legislative point of view because it impinges on section 92 of the Constitution. I have no doubt that sooner or later we will be able to get together with Queensland and resolve this difficulty. We are looking

at it now.

I agree with Sir Arthur Rylah that, for these various reasons, constant and regular meetings of Ministers are not needed. I would suggest that every 3 years is probably sufficient. I might even go so far as to suggest 5 years, but certainly 3 years, to my mind, would be sufficient for Ministerial meetings. We can get differences of opinion on many aspects of this problem. I would disagree with something that Mr Story touched on about an organisation for the control of conservation of fauna and flora. One of the officers with me today, Mr Shugg, recently had a trip around the world looking at these matters. He examined the organisations that exercise control and came back with no clear cut decision as to how control should best be organised. Different States work to different methods to suit their particular conditions. We have big forestry areas. Mr Meacham is the forestry officer and we co-operate with him and with fishery officers in conservation work. This arrangement suits us. It may not suit us for all time, but it suits us at present and we get along nicely with it.

I must admit that the agenda is quite unlike what I would have expected. This Conference was not called at the instigation of the States; it was called at the instigation of yourself, Mr Chairman, and I have no doubt you called it for very good reasons. I admit that I had to hurry some proposed amendments to our legislation through, because I have no doubt that had I announced them next week all the credit would have gone to you. This is the way politics run.

I suppose that everything we do for the next 6 months, and which we have worked on for 3 or 4 years, will register in the minds of the people as arising from this meeting which you have called, particularly as it has been held in Canberra. What strikes me about the agenda is that the various matters that are of Federal import have not been highlighted. I notice that taxation concessions get a slight mention in the private reserve section.

There are difficulties, from the Department of Primary Industry point of view, regarding the future of kangaroo meat as a human consumption item within Australia and for export. This might sound odd in respect of conservation, but such is the nature of our kangaroo crop that it is a legitimate business worth about \$700,000 to Western Australia at the present time. With proper conservation and management it could continue to be worth this amount and perhaps more if we can get it out of the area of feeding dogs into feeding human beings at a reasonable price. These are matters which I would have thought would have been on the agenda, rather than matters that are a carryover from the fauna conference and which relate to basic research into pesticides. We have our own committee of control which works very well. It is starting to have some effect, but there is need for a deal of Australia-wide basic research. The other matters that we will touch on are matters of scientific application in a particular area.

I have no doubt at all that much of our research done in one State would have application to another, but much of it

would have no application elsewhere. I cannot imagine that the research work done in our Prince Regent Reserve in the Kimberleys would have any application to Mr Lyons's work in ~~Tasmania~~ or Sir Arthur Rylah's work in Victoria, but other research could have application elsewhere.

I agree with Sir Arthur Rylah in respect of Press releases. I say this partly from my interest in conservation and partly from my interest in self-survival. This is a difficult area because of the sort of letters and the sort of stuff that is put out by people who will be looking at this conference. If we go back to our States with nothing, we carry the can: If nothing ~~comes~~ of the Conference then we carry the can. Because of the very real concern which you felt, Mr Chairman, and which led you to call this meeting, far more has become attached to this Conference than perhaps you originally anticipated. This is going to have political kick-backs which may be somewhat difficult to live with because of the vociferous nature lovers whom Mr Story graphically referred to as 'bleeding hearts'.

So we have to be tremendously careful about the Press release in order to safeguard ourselves, and indeed, to safeguard the very careful research management control and all the other things we have done in great depth over a number of years in the States. I do not know whether the other States are in the same position, but we are ready to move forward. This is not just taking place in Australia. World wide there is a public welling up of interest in fauna conservation, nature conservation and the like. We have seen this coming and we are ready to take advantage of it. I see some very real dangers tied to the conference today. I may be unduly pessimistic, but I hope that the profits are commensurate with the risks.

MR LYONS - I would have thought that of all the States Tasmania is the most self-contained in this regard, and probably the most advanced in what it is doing. Nonetheless, I welcome the opportunity to be present at this conference and to join in the deliberations because I can see vast fields which require some attention, particularly as they affect State boundaries or the migratory habits of wildlife across State boundaries. I do not come with quite the same pessimism or fear on the political front that some Ministers appear to have. Perhaps it is because I do not face an election for another 5 years. Nevertheless, these things have to be faced. Even if some of them are politically unpopular, if they are correct that is the course of action to be taken. I do not share the great fears Mr MacKinnon expressed, but perhaps he has greater problems within his own areas than I have within mine.

In Tasmania we are in a very satisfactory position in this regard because we have reached a very active stage with regard to conservation, not only of flora and fauna but in the widest sphere that the word 'conservation' embraces. When I came here perhaps I had not done my homework as well as I should have and I felt that this conservation conference would be wider than just on the wildlife aspect; but I accept that. In Tasmania particularly the planning and control of wildlife habitat is probably the most pressing problem facing us. Something is going on in that regard. We have $2\frac{1}{4}$ million acres of our State with some degree of protection for flora and fauna, which represents 13.5% of our total area. So one can see readily that the problem is well under control. As to fauna, since 1928 it has been rather rigidly controlled and we do not have any worries in that field.

It seems to me that the setting up of a secretariat is desirable because we want a permanent vehicle for co-ordination. We have to get co-ordination if we are to achieve the maximum advantage from our efforts as State Conservation Ministers. I am here purely because I happen to be Minister for Tourists. It is just another thing put on my plate. However, I am interested in the sphere, so that is perhaps doubly fortunate.

I am not too sure about these 3-year to 5-year ministerial conferences. As there is so much doubt in Ministers' minds at the moment, I think that at least for the first year or two there should be annual conferences. Then when we have it in order it could be extended to 3 or 5 years. I do not feel that there is much point in my saying any more at

this stage except that I agree with a lot of what has been said. Education is the basic problem and will remain so for some time because there are not people equipped in this field who can educate. This is probably the major point to which we should direct our attention, as to how we can overcome the problem of getting sufficient experts in this field to carry on the necessary education through the various strata of society. I look forward to the conference.

MR NIXON - I welcome the conference. Already we have heard an expression of different views that will give the conference a purpose if they alone are resolved. Ministers have spoken in two ways, so far. They have referred to the real matters of conservation and wildlife protection, and also rather on a political level. Having in mind what Sir Arthur Rylah said, I think there has to be recognition of the fact that in the Federal Parliament we have also been under some pressure politically about wildlife conservation. Sir Arthur mentioned that Victorian federal members **have been raising** the matter and getting it recorded in Hansard. Perhaps I should remind him that most of the attention has come from petitions, not from Gippsland and Wannon electorates but from the suburbs of Toorak and South Yarra. We do have a political problem. There is a great deal of recognition of the need for a study of the Australian practices and habits in this area.

I would have liked to hear more from the State Ministers about their activities. We have heard from Mr Lyons about what Tasmania is doing and has in prospect. It seems to me that we do not have a great deal of knowledge of each other's

activities in this field. I base that on some Press reports of some time ago. The Commonwealth is doing a great deal in the Australian Capital Territory, including Jervis Bay, and in the Northern Territory. I would be happy to provide any interested Ministers with details of ordinances and other information that is relevant. I look forward to the day's deliberations.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Thank you, gentlemen, for what you have said. It is quite clear that there are divergent views on this problem. In answer to the point my colleague made, the States have provided - and they are incorporated in the documents - lists of the work being done within the States. There is an opportunity for discussion or amplification of that under that agenda item, if that is desirable. I hope that some of the differences that have become evident from Ministers' comments might in part be resolved, together with some of the doubts that have been expressed. In particular, I appreciate the important point made by Sir Arthur Rylah and Mr MacKinnon concerning any Press release that might come from the conference. It is recognised that this is a highly sensitive area and that anything that needs to be said must be given a great deal of thought.

Perhaps before morning tea we could turn to a discussion of the proposed agenda. The purpose of calling the officers together and the invitation to the States concerning the items that were later placed on the agenda, is to give everybody the fullest possible opportunity to influence the matters that would be discussed.

I can reiterate what I said earlier and that is that I believe the meeting of officers was useful and the suggestions that came from the States were useful in helping to form the agenda. But this does not mean the agenda is exclusive. Other matters can be raised. It is certainly not intended for my part, unless anyone wants it, that any of these agenda items be read out. I take it they would have been read and if anyone wanted to make comments as we went through, that is the way it would happen. This would save a good deal of time. Is there any discussion?

MR LEWIS - I propose to move that if we have not finished the items up to item 11 on the proposed agenda by lunch time, we get on to the circulated resolutions brought forward by the States, and even those that have not been circulated but which the States would like to bring forward. Then we could go back to the papers afterwards.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I think that could be unduly restrictive.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - This is only an academic question. I think we can finish the agenda comfortably before lunch.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - That may be. The point I was trying to make is that the matters raised by New South Wales are covered. For instance, No. 3 would be under item 12, No. 2 under item 8, No. 6 and No. 7 under item 3. They fit into the agenda. I would prefer not to bind ourselves but to keep our hand free so that we can see what the position is. If Ministers want to take a resolution immediately before or after lunch, it is in their hands to do so.

MR LEWIS - What are we meant to do with the agenda items, just read them?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I have already indicated that Ministers would be able to make their comments on agenda items, that they would not be read out unless someone wanted that done and that I would take it they had been read.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I am right with you in this. What we want is a discussion, not formal motions and resolutions. One point of explanation I might make for Mr Nixon's benefit is that I did not go through, and I do not think other Ministers went through, what was being done in the States only for the purpose of saving time. It is all set out in the papers. We would regard this as an extension of the Fauna ~~Authorities~~ Conference and there is no need to cover the ground that that conference covered. This will shorten the proceedings. But if there is any information that Mr Nixon would like on what is happening in Victoria, he is welcome to it. In fact, we will give him a personally autographed copy of our papers and supplement them as and when required.

MR MACKINNON - I think this would underline the position as we see it. This is regarded as an exploratory conference and that should be the basis of our release. That might let us all out to a big extent. On my assessment of the papers and the reports of my officers, this is what I understand it to be more than anything else. If that is so, I would not be happy about any sort of resolution. This is in the main an exploratory conference. Is that your idea?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I think that is right. It was in my mind that with some of these items a need might be revealed for a further study and we might want to establish some working parties that could report back. That can be dealt with if the occasion arises. Is anyone prepared to move that the agenda be adopted?

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Do you want a formal motion? I think it is agreed, perhaps with Mr Lewis dissenting.

MR LEWIS - I do not really mind. I am still confused about what we are doing here anyway.

Agenda Item 1 - ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARIAT ON WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Some Ministers have already commented on this item in their opening remarks.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Victoria is in favour.

MR ROW - I am sorry if I am difficult, but I would like to see the continuation of the present policy until we see the outcome of this meeting today.

MR STORY - I support the establishment of a secretariat.

MR MACKINNON - I support the establishment of a secretariat.

MR LYONS - I agree.

MR NIXON - I agree that we should have a secretariat.

MR LEWIS - I agree that we should have a secretariat.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I have the authority of the Commonwealth Government to offer secretarial services under certain terms. There was a good deal of discussion about this in Cabinet. I do not think the terms pose any problems. For better or for worse, the decision of the Cabinet was that the Commonwealth Government could provide the secretarial services for meetings of Ministers and associated working parties. To bring it within the ambit of this offer, the Fauna Authorities Conference is to be regarded as an associated working party.

MR MACKINNON - Would you explain that a little further?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - The decision related to the terms for offering secretarial services for meetings of Ministers and associated working parties. For this purpose, the Fauna

Authorities Conference is to be regarded as an associated working party.

MR LEWIS - If the Commonwealth cannot do it, New South Wales will not only provide these facilities but it will also provide the facilities of a registrar of research work. It will also provide anything else that is needed.

MR MACKINNON - That confuses me more. Why are we having this meeting? It seems to me that we would be better off accepting the New South Wales offer.

MR STORY - Are there a number of things to be discussed under this heading?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - This is the only matter under the agenda item. I cannot really see what the problem is.

MR LEWIS - There will be far more than secretarial work involved in the Ministerial conference. I understand that these will be held only once every 3 years.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I have made it quite clear that the Commonwealth will be able to provide secretarial services for the working parties.

MR LEWIS - I think you need a continuous service in order to keep a list of the research work that has been done. For example, New South Wales has resolved to keep a register of major - and let us not discuss what the word 'major' means - nature reserves and habitats. It should be kept up to date. There should be a central body to keep it up to date. If the Commonwealth cannot do it we should be told so.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - We are arguing about terms. It will be on a continuous basis.

MR LEWIS - Will there be a continuous register of animals, areas and so on?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - A register has been compiled. I understand that it is kept up to date.

MR MACKINNON - Is the secretariat that you are proposing to be a discontinuing thing? Will it come into operation one month or so before a meeting?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - No, it will be continuous.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I am not happy about your offer. I think it is a denigration of the Australian Fauna Authorities Conference to call it a working party. That will only confuse the public. I do not think it is in the interests of the top level officers who constitute that body. I would like to suggest that you take this matter back to Cabinet and inform Cabinet that it is the view of the Conference that the Australian Fauna Authorities Conference should have a secretariat. I believe that the other Ministers support me on this. I would go so far as to say that if Cabinet is not prepared to change its mind Victoria will accept the offer made by Mr. Lewis.

MR MACKINNON - Yes.

MR ROW - I agree with that.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - We are arguing about words.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - But they are terribly important.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - We are not arguing about anything that will appear in public. I have made known the precise

nature of the decision that was taken by Cabinet. In an endeavour to overcome this particular point I am prepared to take the matter back to Cabinet.

MR LEWIS - If Cabinet refuses the request by the States you should advise New South Wales one way or the other.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - As at present advised, I would be prepared to do that. But I will not commit myself today. I will rely on the ability of Mr Malcolm Fraser to persuade Cabinet that its decision should be changed.

MR MACKINNON - If it is a matter of words, why was Cabinet so chary as to go to the trouble and care of selecting these words? The Federal Cabinet must have a reason, but the reason escapes me. If it is just a matter of words, why did it go to the care and trouble of framing the matter this way? I have tried to look beyond the words in order to determine the reason for this decision. It seems to be a very odd decision. We are having a **meeting** to try and upgrade the Conference and on the first item we get a Cabinet decision which to my mind denigrates the Conference.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I do not think there is anything sinister behind the choice of words.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Of necessity the secretariat would be extended to Ministers' meetings when they were held. There is no suggestion that they should be excluded.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - It is the secretariat which would do both jobs. This is what I envisage in any case. I was saying that to conform strictly to the Cabinet decision, as it was made, for internal purposes it involved regarding that conference as an associated working party of the meeting of Ministers which might be held from time to time. If there is an objection to that point of view then I hope I cannot see any problem in getting the terminology altered.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Excellent.

MR LEWIS - At a national parks conference attended by Ministers from the mainland States it was agreed that a secretariat should be set up roughly on the same lines. The Commonwealth was not represented at this conference. New South Wales is taking it up. It would be a pity to divide the national parks secretariat from the wildlife one. In fact the Ministers at that conference suggested that there should be far greater co-operation and meetings between the two bodies rather than to separate national parks from wildlife. Would you other Ministers suggest that Mr Malcolm Fraser also ask Cabinet to set up a secretariat for this also?

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I would not commit myself on that. I would like to have another look at the idea. We have been careful in Victoria not to mix national parks with wildlife and I would not like to depart from that idea.

MR LEWIS - We are providing a secretariat for that.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - This ~~is~~ something which Ministers might like to discuss at some future meeting, if there is another meeting.

MR MACKINNON - It would serve the Ministers' conference, the Fauna Authorities Conference and committees under that.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - That is what I meant by associated working parties. It would be any committee that one might want to establish.

Agenda Item 2 - WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND TOURISM

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I think that this is a matter for information only.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAND - I have one comment to make. The second **last** paragraph on **page 2** refers to the lack of uniformity in Commonwealth and State game laws and laws affecting conservation. I think it would have been better had that not been said or that it should have been spelt out in greater detail. There always will be a lack of uniformity. I cannot imagine Victoria bringing in uniform laws to protect crocodiles.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - That reservation could be noted.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAND - I think we have to be careful. I think it goes much further than the reference in this paper. This cry for uniformity in everything is going right throughout Australia. Once kangaroos are completely protected in Victoria there will be a demand for them to be

protected completely in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory and this would be crazy. We should not fall for uniformity in this field except where there are similar problems in neighbouring States. If this paper is published the tourist people will grab it and they will come along and say: 'Why do you not make your laws uniform? Why does **not** Lewis allow ducks to be shot in the rice fields at a similar time today?'

MR LEWIS - I do not like uniformity just for the sake of uniformity. I think there is a certain amount of confusion over what we describe as nature reserves or what we describe as national parks. I have been endeavouring to try **to** get a reasonable standard of nomenclature in this respect so that a person who arrives in Melbourne and then travels through the eastern States to Queensland will not be faced with different ideas in each State. Classification may be all right. I strongly agree that we do not want uniformity **in** laws because the competitive spirit is helpful and we learn from each other.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAND - This paragraph refers specifically to the Commonwealth. It states:

...confusion arises because of the lack of uniformity in Commonwealth and State game laws affecting the conservation of wild life species and unique environmental features.

I agree that we should have common terms for reserves.

MR MACKINNON - I do not think the paper on wildlife conservation and tourism highlights as much as I would have

liked the confusion between a national park, an area to which tourists can go, and an area set aside purely for conservation purposes, particularly for our animals. I find some confusion among people, particularly when they visit other countries such as South Africa where there are different animals and where they quite happily mix tourism and conservation. There is a belief that you can mix these two things in Australia. However I do not believe that this can be done, particularly with a number of reserves. Perhaps this paper does not highlight this point as much as I would like. I would thoroughly agree with Sir Arthur Rylah's comments about his game laws. We cannot have the same game laws throughout the length and breadth of Australia. You have to consider the different seasons. There is difficulty in the southern areas in getting the same opening date for duck shooting. This will come in time. But you cannot have the same season in the Kimberleys and in the Bunbury area.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - This criticism is noted. Sir Arthur Rylah said that if this paper were published it could lead to some difficulty. There is no **point** that these papers should be published and therefore there is no problem in that regard.

MR MACKINTON - You say there is no point in them being published. This is something which none of us can quite guarantee. I think it would be a good idea if we put lines through that part of the paper.

MR LYONS - Park planning is an integral and vital part of our tourist setup in Tasmania. I believe we have to have a more special role than most of the other States because of the concentrated nature of our tourist sites. They are closely aligned with our wildlife reserves and our general reserves. I cannot take the matter any further.

MR NIXON - Canberra is in the same position. Over 500,000 visitors come here each year. Invariably they want to see some wild life. We are trying to achieve the same things that Mr Lyons is trying to achieve. We want to make it possible for the tourists to see some wild life.

MR MALCOM FRASER - The only point I would like to make - and I do not say that this should be done now - is that at some stage it may be considered desirable for some contact to be established with those who meet at tourist conferences. Tourist Ministers meet. I know from my Commonwealth colleague that they are planning developments which will extend the range of places to which tourists can go. If the choice of such places is left entirely to them, tourists Ministers either in the Territory or in some of the States could raise propositions which could cut across some of the objectives of Ministers responsible for wild life and conservation. I am not quite sure how this scheme should develop, but I would like to have my comments noted. It might be desirable to establish contact with the meetings of tourist Ministers, probably on an official level, so that we can be kept informed of what they are proposing to do in relation to their own activities. An official or a member

of the Secretariat could ask to listen in at the tourist conferences at which these matters are likely to be raised. I put that forward as a suggestion. I do not know what your reactions will be.

MR LEWIS - I think this is a little pointless. Tourist Ministers could have representatives from the Department of Main Roads, from the Department of Electricity Supply and other people listening in to their conferences. Any Minister should be able to liaise with his colleagues at a ministerial level. In New South Wales we have quite good liaison between the various departments such as tourism and national parks and wild life conservation. No difficulty arises. I cannot foresee any difficulty arising.

MR ROW - We have that same kind of liaison in Queensland. The only matter that I would raise is that of hunting safaris. I had an argument with our previous Tourist Minister, who is not with us now. He wanted me to grant a permit to all these tourists to enable them to carry guns and rifles. I strongly opposed this. The only person to whom I would grant a permit would be the driver so that he could shoot a dingo, or something like that, if he had to. We had quite an argument about that. I would like to hear the views

of other Ministers about hunting safaris. I think they get a tremendous amount of adverse publicity. Recently some sailors went out from St George shooting kangaroos. Someone dug up a picture of an old fence where kangaroos were yarded. I do not know how many years ago this happened. We could find no evidence of this. Some newspaper had a picture of these fences. There was tremendous controversy over it. This may have happened over 30 years ago.

MR LYONS - A football club organised a kangaroo shoot at Avoca, but it was not a kangaroo shoot; it was a wallaby shoot.

MR ROW - I would not encourage these hunting safaris. The people who go on these safaris would shoot anything - even a human being.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I do not object to these. I think they will develop, anyway. I think the Secretariat will want to know the thinking of both national parks and tourism.

MR MACKINNON - I do not know whether other Ministers are relying entirely on liaison. We do not. We have a specific authority. We are gradually increasing the amount of land available. The total alienated land for fauna currently is about 4.5 million acres. More and more land is being vested in a wild life authority. There is a National Parks Board on

which Tourist Development is represented. There is liaison between these departments and ourselves. We foresee a time when, purely from a tourist point of view, areas in those national parks probably will have kangaroos running, but this will be a long way from being a fauna conservation area. The whole concept will be different. Those kangaroos will probably be slaughtered, marketed and replaced with a new lot. I agree with Sir Arthur Rylah. I foresee a time when certain animals will be put into large areas of national parks. Thousands of people come to Perth. They have 2 days to visit the 1 million square miles of Western Australia. They want to see kangaroos. They will be able to go to a national park and see some, which will probably be half tame.

MR MALCOM FRASER - I think the point made by Sir Arthur Rylah is a relevant one. I think the Secretariat should develop these relationships.

Agenda Item 3 - BIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF AUSTRALIA

MR MALCOM FRASER - Victoria has prepared the paper under this Item. I would like to say something about the approach made to me by the Academy of Science. I wish to explain my attitude to that approach. The approach involved a very expensive proposal to establish a new organisation called the Biological Survey to do the work envisaged and set out in

the Academy's paper. It had the support of a number of museum directors. Some of them were involved in a deputation to me. I understand that since then all museum directors have supported the Academy's approach by resolution or by one way or another. At the time I foresaw - and I now foresee - some difficulty if the Commonwealth were to provide the substantial sum involved - \$2.5 m. I can foresee the establishment of a glamorous institution at Canberra to do this kind of work and possible starvation of State Museums and herbaria, which is not my objective. Therefore I would like to know your reactions to the Academy's approach. We are looking very closely at this to see if the objectives can be supported or stimulated in other ways. These examinations are still in the early stages. I think they could be helped by having the views of the States.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I agree entirely with regard to this expensive institution. Our paper was intended to say that, in our view, this was not what was needed.

It would not be a worthy expense in the long run, as suggested by the Academy of Science. We merely ~~set~~ out what is being done in our State in order to give some indication of land classification and environment, which are just as important in a biological survey. The two matters have to be brought together, if you are to have another look at this matter, bearing in mind the ideas which you have stated and having regard to the existing facilities that are available. I suggest that we leave it in your hands, without any commitment in the future if we do not like the suggestion.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - This is something which I should like to put to the appropriate Ministers on a subsequent occasion.

MR LEWIS - I read the report of the Academy of Science on this question. I think it is a marvellous idea, but if the Commonwealth cannot afford to implement the proposal, surely the States cannot be expected to do so. However, I do not think we should leave it at that. You will note that in resolution No.6 I have said that wildlife authorities within the States and the Commonwealth met to make recommendations to their respective Ministers as to the definition of animal and plant communities which are reserved for wildlife conservation purposes. I cannot see why, if the criteria are laid down by wildlife authorities, the States cannot help in a survey which is undertaken throughout the Commonwealth. In other words, let us put down what we want; what the biologists want. Let us find that out, then let us ask the States whether they can help through their museums, wildlife

authorities, fauna and flora authorities and forestry people. Let us see whether we cannot get a central registry.

Earlier we referred to the establishment of a Commonwealth Secretariat. I would imagine that one of the functions of such a Commonwealth Secretariat would be to collect all the biological, zoological and anthropological data from each of the States or Commonwealth Territories. Whilst we cannot help the Academy of Science in what it has proposed, I think that there should be a biological survey throughout Australia, along the lines which have been suggested. It might not be possible to do this immediately. Perhaps it could be done over a period of time. The information could then be supplied to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Reference has been made to research grants. Perhaps we could give some thought to the question of research grants. It may be necessary for each State to provide something in the way of research grants so that more work can be done in order to complete this survey. We have done a lot of work, but we are very short of funds. There are areas in which a lot more work should be done, if this biological survey is to be worthwhile. I throw that suggestion into the ring for consideration.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I cannot pre-empt what the Commonwealth will decide or the way in which the proposal might develop. But we did have in mind that if the Academy's proposal were to be taken up, it should be in a way which would exploit the abilities which the States already have,

and which, perhaps, would supplement them, if the Commonwealth could be persuaded to do so.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Which is really the opposite to what has been recommended.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Yes. This is something which could be considered before I have further discussions with Ministers either by correspondence or at a meeting. Perhaps there could be value in a working party looking at the proposals.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I agree with that.

MR ROW - This proposal would have only fringe benefits to fauna conservation. There are a number of well established and recognised biological museums throughout Australia. In Queensland ~~the~~ museum is under the control of the Education Minister. We have a particularly close relationship with the museum. If there is an over-lapping, it does not do very much harm. We believe that this saves the State a great amount of money. I think it is worth exploring whether there could be an interchange of information between the existing museums in Australia - if it is not already being done. Those are the only comments I wish to make.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Before I ask any other Minister to comment, I may be able to clarify the tentative views that we have at the present time. There is, as you know, an organisation called the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, which basically operates by making grants to support research work in different areas. I think it does little, if

any, research in its own right. This was the model at which we were tentatively looking to see whether it might fit a biological survey.

MR STORY - What were the recommendations of the museum directors regarding this matter?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I have not seen the precise recommendations, but I am informed that they supported the Academy's proposal. We have not seen anything in writing from the State museum directors.

MR STORY - I think we all have some idea what our own people thought, but I do not know what the official recommendations of the body were. I think this is reasonably important because, after all, these people are State people. When we are dealing with Commonwealth-State relationships, we want to know where we all stand on these questions. If the State museums go off on a tangent which is different to that adopted by the fauna and flora conservation people, we could be in some difficulty, particularly if we are to co-ordinate this matter at the top. I am very much on the side of those Ministers who have already spoken on this item, that we should be very interested in up-grading and expanding our work, and in having sufficient funds and personnel to do a decent and complete survey of our own resources. We have not really got around to tabulating them.

MR ROW - We have not the funds.

MR STORY - This has been through lack of funds, but probably lack of people. Before we get down to a biological

survey, we ought to know what are our own resources and what is their potential.

MR MALCOMM FRASER - The museum directors did not come direct to me. This was all done on the Academy's initiative and through the Academy's working party.

MR MACKINNON - I am delighted to hear what has been said up to date. The Western Australian museum director said that the biological survey proposed by the Australian Academy of Science to the Government of the Commonwealth will in time provide information on the distribution of different kinds of wildlife throughout the continent. He also said that the conference could support the provision contained within that proposal for a means of financial assistance to State instrumentalities and departments, and in particular to museums and herbaria, making such a survey. That is along the lines which have been suggested.

We are interested in this aspect because we are currently building a new herbaria at a cost of \$600,000. It will house 8 graduates and 13 assistants. They are to undertake a survey of our flora.

This herbaria is used by all departments, including the Forestry Department for their ground stuff. That Department has some limited stuff of its own also. We are currently planning a \$2.5m extension to the museum. I believe, with other Ministers, that the proper way to handle this is through the local museums which need the stuff for their teaching. I still believe it would be desirable to have a duplication - and there is duplication in universities - of a complete cover of Australia. This, I would guess, would take anything from 50 to 100 years to accomplish. This ought to be done by collaboration with the States and by the infusion of money into research programmes in the States, either through the herbaria or the Department of Wildlife or whatever it is called in the different States, and through the museum with an arrangement whereby you get the skins, samples or descriptions of whatever you want. Gradually over a period a central store could be set up for the scientific study and for the purposes of universities and visiting students. This is different from the original concept. Most of us thought that you would set up an extravagant organisation and rush it over the country. I am delighted that you have taken a completely reverse attitude which is in accord with our ideas and the ideas of our directors.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I am in trouble with the Academy for having taken a reverse view. Would it be useful to have a working party to look at this particular matter? Obviously it is something that we cannot thrash out in detail and if

I am to put something to the Commonwealth I want it to be something that the States are happy with.

MR LEWIS - I cannot agree on the basis of the Academy of Science report. This is not in my field. I am like the Queensland Minister - this has to do with the Department of Education. The museum has nothing to do with me. If we are dealing with wildlife surveys, OK, but I will buy out of this field.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I am prepared to make an officer available. I happen to own the museum, too.

MR MACKINNON - There is one aspect that I should like to elaborate. There may be some danger in this sort of thing getting carried away. Much of the collection work can be done not as a direct result of money being allocated towards actual collection. Most of our research in depth has been done in fauna management. Professor Mayne is doing a lot of this work, and we have appointed a PhD as manager. The danger I see in having money allotted for specific purpose grants like this is that frequently you do not get best value for that money. If there is any allocation of money for the purpose of securing this information, thought should be given to close liaison with the States as to what will be the most productive. In our situation at present it would be in the area of survey management where we have proper controls and where we utilise university students. We can do a complete study under a management programme. What you are looking for in this biological survey would flow from a management programme as a benefit. The money should not be allotted just

for a survey of an area. The money would not be allocated directly for this collection but, in our case, it would be better allocated for management research and planning. The collection would flow automatically.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Would you like to make an officer available to help examine this matter in more depth?

MR MACKINNON - I fail to see the need. I have stated how I think it ought to go. Are you referring to the way in which the money ought to be allocated?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - It is how we pursue the basis of the Academy approach, but in ways with which the States are happy, not the way the Academy adopted which, quite clearly, is not going to meet the wishes or the needs of the States.

MR MACKINNON - Frankly, no, because we have a fairly small allocation and we are straining against the bit. It has cost us \$1,500 to manage this up to date and it comes out of our departmental vote. I cannot see any financial profit in it yet. I would be quite prepared, I think, to keep in touch with Sir Arthur Rylah and save my officer an arduous journey and get some value out of him back home. I think his thoughts are akin to mine.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Mr Lyons, would you like to comment on item 3?

MR LYONS - I was out of the room and I have no comments to make.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Perhaps I can recapitulate. This was the Academy proposal for a scientific survey which would involve \$2.5m being spent and a new institution being

established in Canberra. I felt that this might have unfavourable implications for States and for State museums and herbaria. I am looking closely at the proposal to see whether instead of establishing an entirely new organisation to do this work the objectives might be achieved in a way with which the States would be happy, which would be by using the resources of the States and the resources of their museums. I instanced the example of the Institute of Aboriginal Studies, which is really a body that makes money available for research in different areas. This is an indication of the way my thoughts have been going on this particular matter. I had suggested that this is not necessarily an entirely simple proposition. It may be that this is something that should be put to Ministers when we have taken our own examinations further. I further suggested that there might be some advantage in having a working party representative of more than just the Commonwealth. Sir Arthur Rylah is prepared to make an officer available for this purpose. I think that sums it up.

MR LYONS - I think that is a commendable approach and I go along with it. I do not think there is any need for me to comment further and delay proceedings.

MR STORY - What I am fearful of is that when we get involved in this sort of biological survey we get down to the penny packet approach. We have a very big job to do on a broad scale and we cannot get down to the minute things that somebody wants to do a doctorate on. I believe that this is what will happen. It will become fragmented. We have a drastic need in South Australia for a complete survey of our

areas where we have all manner of rare species that we have not been able to fully investigate. At present, for instance, a survey is being made of dragon flies in the Kosciusko National Park. To me, that would not be something which is of tremendous importance.

MR LEWIS - It is not very important to me either, if you want to know.

MR STORY - I do not think a survey of moths in the National Park in New South Wales is of great importance. I am frightened that when we get down to these biological surveys they may be fragmented. I want to see something on a broad scale where we get down to conserving some of our rarer fauna and flora.

MR NIXON - As I understand it, Mr Chairman, you are proposing that the officers be made available to study the resources.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I was, in a sense, seeking help. There is a job to be done and we want to know the best way to do it, which meets the position of the States and does not cut across their requirements. I think I have the sense of the meeting of the Ministers on this item.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - So that you will accept the offer of my officer?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Very willingly, Sir Arthur.

MR MacKINNON - The point Mr Story raised underlines the point I made about reserve management. This is the very thing that I am frightened will happen. The Katanning Reserve covers about 3,000 acres. It has a proper management programme. About 151 species have been catalogued and about 8 have been rediscovered that were thought to be lost. I agree with Mr Story about this PhD jazz where one species is examined in depth. That is why I wanted to stress the management side.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - It is stressed in our paper, too.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I think we can move on to the next item.

Agenda Item 4 - RESEARCH REPORTS

MR MALCOLM FRASER - This is a description by the States of the work that is being undertaken at the present time.

MR ROW - I have no comment.

MR MacKINNON - I notice that most of the States have put in a fairly detailed report. For instance, it is stated in the New South Wales report that they are doing a study of ants at the Kosciusko Park. Ours has been submitted in a very broad way, on half a page. It has no detail at all. If detail is wanted for the record, we are quite prepared to supply it later.

MR LEWIS - I think I should point out that the studies of ants, moths and dragonflies are being undertaken by CSIRO, and not by the New South Wales Department of Wildlife.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Mr Chairman, you are in charge of CSIRO. As an illustration of the problems we are up against, I appreciate that CSIRO does extremely valuable work and I think it is very difficult to assess from this paper the extent to which the work is valuable. I would like you to bear in mind that, for instance, in Victoria a very important survey of kangaroos and their habits has had to be discontinued because of lack of funds. It may well be that you could assist us through CSIRO, or through research grants to continue that type of important study.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I was about to make a request and in part an offer in relation to this matter. I see value in having a working party established to determine what needs to be done in the different areas. One of the reasons I have always had for having meetings is that CSIRO has some capacity

for research in these areas. A modest increase in the work of the Division has been planned in the forthcoming year. Probably it is mostly committed, but for the future I would like to give the States the maximum opportunity to influence the direction of CSIRO research. If Ministers are prepared to agree, a working party could examine the future research needs in the States and make recommendations.

MR LEWIS - The Fauna Authorities have been meeting for years and have made recommendations to the Commonwealth; for example, three times on pesticides. The recommendations have not been adopted. The working party is there. The recommendations have been made by the reports every 2 years of the Fauna Authorities.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Perhaps the Fauna Authorities are the people who have done it and should be doing it. If this is so, we would like them to give continued attention to this particular problem so that their views can be taken fully into account in formulating the future research programmes of CSIRO.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - If you can influence Cabinet on the establishment of a secretariat on the lines we have suggested, this will solve itself.

MR STORY - It will flow from it.

MR MacKINNON - It might be worth while. I refer to Item 47, resolution 12, which refers to a working party consisting of representatives of New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, with New South Wales providing both chairman and secretary to do precisely this. It might be

preferable for officers from each State to first prepare a report on what are considered to be the most important research projects and submit it to see how much similarity there is. This would save attending a meeting and you would have a basis for, say, deciding on the top three in order of importance.

MR LEWIS - I refer to resolution 1 on pesticides. In 1965 and 1968 New South Wales undertook to write, and I understand that this has gone to the Prime Minister. Twice CSIRO has been requested to undertake work on pesticides in relation to their effect on Australian fauna. It was recommended that investigations include a nation wide survey to determine which pesticides are in common use, the extent to which they are used and the effect they have on non-target species. Secondly, it was recommended that CSIRO be asked to determine alternative methods of pest control whereby the deleterious side effects on wildlife would be removed or minimised. I understand that Victoria has been doing some notable work in this field. That was the resolution of the Fauna Authorities in 1965. They have already asked twice and the Commonwealth has done nothing. Is there much point in having continued working parties which ask for something that is not done?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I do not think it is entirely accurate to say that nothing has been done.

MR LEWIS - May I read your reply?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Not my reply.

MR LEWIS - The Commonwealth's reply.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I have a reply here, but you read yours.

MR LEWIS - This was written in 1965:

However, because of the many competing claims on the funds which can be made available to the Organisation, priorities must be allocated to the various research projects which are being undertaken. At the present time a major research effort to study directly the effects of pesticides on wildlife cannot be embarked upon.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I will not necessarily answer the points seriatim. I understand that there is available a survey of pesticides in common use and that some work has been done as a survey within the Department of Primary Industry. I am advised by CSIRO - and this would be a scientific judgment - that it is virtually impossible to provide answers on the effects of pesticides on non-target species. Different views may be held around the table and I would like to hear them. I am advised that it is very difficult and that to be effective it might take very great resources. Mr Lewis made another point. The Division of Entomology is at present putting the greater part of its efforts into trying to find alternative methods of pest control to the use of pesticides. The Division is pursuing a number of different projects in this area, so it is not accurate to say that the Commonwealth is doing nothing in relation to this matter.

Another point needs to be borne in mind and I would have thought that the States would have had it very much in mind. I feel here that it is not only a question of what CSIRO should do or whether CSIRO should do it all. If we could get continual advice on those research programmes that are thought to be important, we may see that some may well be better situated for a State to undertake than the Commonwealth. There may be others that CSIRO is better situated to undertake. This is an aspect that would be advantaged from a continuous review by one means or another. I would welcome the views of other Ministers.

MR STORY - We seem to have moved away a little bit from the point we started to talk about. We are now talking about pesticides. We were discussing whether we should have a working party to go into a lot of matters that have already been dealt with over a period of 5 or 6 years. When one has a look at the report of the proceedings of the 1968 Australian Fauna Authorities Conference, one sees that we have firm resolutions. I believe that many of those resolutions would be confirmed by this conference, if they were put. It may be necessary from time to time to add to the programmes we have. But I think we go back to where Sir Arthur Rylah was a minute ago when dealing with whether we should have the secretariat set up. We already have a working party and that is the Australian Fauna Authorities Conference. I do not know how other States are placed, but we have a limited number of officers available. If they are chasing around the country on all sorts of working parties, they are not getting on with the job I think they

ought to be doing and that is finding out something about the fauna and flora in our State. I think this could be done by correspondence. I would like to think that the Commonwealth would take those recommendations under consideration before the next meeting of the Fauna Authorities. We will each make a contribution when we get to that part of the agenda dealing with what we are doing in the States with pesticides and what information we have available. I would like this studied very closely, because it seems that a lot of officers are wasting a good deal of time at conferences if nothing comes from them, and we are still going back to rehash it all.

MR ROW - It is important to read out resolution 10, page 45, item (c) of the 1968 Australian Fauna Authorities Conference. It is:

The Commonwealth Government has advised that funds were not available to allow work to be undertaken on pesticides in relation to Australian fauna.

The New South Wales Government had submitted a request to the Commonwealth Government for an investigation to be made by CSIRO into the effect of pesticides on fauna, but the Commonwealth said that money was not available.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I think we are arguing over nothing, really. This does highlight the fact that we have a working party, the Australian Fauna Authorities Conference. If you can persuade Cabinet to agree to the secretariat, it will upgrade that body. It will also be more efficient and will provide a direct liaison with the Commonwealth on these projects. It could well be that when you have looked at this

and at the previous item we have been talking about - that is, the biological study - out of this will come some constructive thinking about what can be done in the future. It may well be that the CSIRO believes it should not get into this field of research, and I understand that is its view. That is all right. If it is necessary and desirable, as I believe it is, we will have to find some other way of doing it. This will work itself out. But it is important to get the secretariat established and for you to do some thinking, with our assistance, on what can be done in the biological research field.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I go along with that.

MR MACKINNON - I agree basically with Sir Arthur Rylah. I have been going through the papers. As Mr Lewis's paper is very complete, I have used his. It appears to me that there must be a number of research programmes in the various States of interest to everyone and the Australian taxpayer could be saved a bit of money if the results of this work were shared. Looking through the list quickly, I would say that those listed on the first two pages would probably not be of much general interest. Then on the third page we have the effects of ~~low~~ **grazing** in Kosciusko National Park. If this were done in depth, it could be helpful. New South Wales has done some work on low intensity fires and regeneration. We have done very close research on this for 11 or 12 years. Our purpose has been to establish the period during which fires should be put through for various purposes, for flora regeneration or habitat retention. Information on such work should be circulated at reasonably close intervals. This could save

money for other States. If we are doing a fair study on fires, other States can let this work go a little and then apply the results of our research. New South Wales is doing work on the biology of the feral cat, which is probably a problem to all of us. If this is done in any depth, it could be helpful. Then there is work on the use of plants in soil erosion. This is fairly well documented. In this list I can see at a quick glance about half a dozen items that could be of general interest. There is a study of spiders. We have university students and others doing this work, too. Other items have application to all the States in one degree or another. Duplication could well be avoided. The secretariat would obviate this duplication, because it would circulate the information to us all.

MR LEWIS - That would be the purpose of a continuing secretariat. The type of thing that Mr MacKinnon has highlighted is what the various States would like. A list could go out twice a year, if you like, and if any of the services wanted information, they would write to the secretariat and a mimeographed copy of the information available could be sent to them. That is the advantage of having a centrally located collating body. Do I take it that what Mr MacKinnon and I have said will be undertaken by the secretariat?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - That it collect this material and pass it around?

MR LEWIS - Yes.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I would foresee something more being necessary than a mere collection of material and passing

it around.

MR LEWIS - For a start, that would be helpful.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - For a start it would be. I would have hoped that officers might be able to meet and some States might be able to save themselves some money by using the results of research in other States and overall we might get better value for the money that is spent, whether by the States or the Commonwealth. This would involve a pretty detailed discussion of research programmes. Certainly it would involve more than handing around information on work done in a State.

MR LEWIS - Specifically, do you believe that this exchange, whether it has advantages or disadvantages, is part of the work you envisage the secretariat would do?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I should think it would, yes.

Agenda Item 5 - THE NEED FOR COLLABORATION IN
MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATORY BIRDS

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I ask Mr Story to comment on this item first.

MR STORY - I am very much in favour of this item. South Australia is doing some work on this at Bool Lagoon, which is in the south east of the State. We have done fairly extensive bird banding. We have received very good co-operation from the various voluntary bodies within the State. We are working with the CSIRO on a part-time basis. We are most appreciative of the fact that the CSIRO is working with us. I believe that the more we know about the migratory habits of not only Australian birds but also international birds the better it is. I believe that the work we are doing, which is closely related with the Department of Agriculture in South Australia, will help us quite a bit in relation to another item that we will come to a little later on - pesticides. We are endeavouring to establish the level of the various pesticides. We are catching fish and birds and sending them to our own research laboratory. It is very important to the sporting fraternity - and we have to cater for them equally with the conservation fraternity - to know about the migration duck. They want to know the movements of quail and birds of this nature during a particular part of the year. This will give us some indication as to whether we should extend or close our open season. We keep this fairly flexible.

We do not have a fixed time for open season on various ducks. This depends upon the seasonal conditions. I think that the banding work which is going on and the studies that are being made of this particular item are most important. I commend the item.

MR MACKINNON - This matter is divided into three parts. The first part relates to wild ducks and other game birds. This part is adequately covered by the Committee on Water Birds that was set up by the Fauna Authorities Conference. I understand that there will be a meeting shortly.

MR LEWIS - It will be held in Sydney next month.

SIR ARTHUR BYLAH - This matter is covered in page 39 of the paper.

MR MACKINNON - The next one relates to Australian migratory fauna other than game birds. There is no committee on this one. There is probably insufficient information. You will notice that on page 5 of the paper relating to this item the question is asked: 'Are the individual States giving enough attention to the national and international problem?' In our opinion the answer to this would be: 'Not in the case of fauna other than game birds'. The next question asked is: 'How is better co-ordination of policies to be achieved?' The answer to that is: 'By obtaining more information about all aspects concerning migratory fauna other than game birds throughout Australia and overseas where necessary.' It is probably desirable that there should be a committee. The next question asked is: 'How far could or should the

Commonwealth become involved?' This is another matter for the secretariat. The CSIRO is probably the best way for the Commonwealth to become involved. Certainly it should undertake a survey of the birds which migrate outside of Australia. This is the proper responsibility of the Federal Government. It is certainly not a field in which the States could act because the States do not have the constitutional set-up or the people travelling overseas to do this. It is the proper responsibility of the Federal Government. We have our own research programme on wet lands and water fowl, mainly game birds. This information will be passed on at the meeting next month. But we do not have the same sort of information on the other migratory birds which are not game birds. Certainly we have no control over those that migrate overseas.

MR LYONS - It seems to me that the question asked - a need for collaboration in the management of migratory birds - can be answered in the affirmative. There is a need. The paper gives a very good run-down on the basic problems. The fact that we have agreed to set up a secretariat to collate and disseminate all of the information between the States is about all we can profitably say at this time on the question. From Tasmania's point of view, the water fowl are the ones that provide the great escape for surveys and conservation. By and large, there is not much in the way of migratory birds in Tasmania that cause grave concern. If a secretariat is set up and it operates properly these things will automatically flow and benefit will be derived therefrom. I think that is about all I can profitably say at this stage.

MR LEWIS - I do not think that ~~we~~ gain very much from the paper. We know that collaboration has to take place. In his opening remarks, Sir Arthur Rylah said that New South Wales ~~is~~ involved with Victoria in the duck shooting season. New South Wales has another problem that Mr Nixon should know about as I have written a couple of letters to him about it. We believe that the parks and wildlife in the Australian Capital Territory should be under the control of New South Wales. We have an open season for quail shooting, but the ACT, which is a small area in the middle of New South Wales, does not allow any quail shooting. We have a duck shoot but the ACT does not allow any duck shooting. That shows how a small area in the middle of a geographically large area can cause problems. The three suggestions that we have are that there should be additional research; that the ACT and the Northern Territory should come under our game laws or at least we should ~~be~~ allowed to administer the parks and wildlife in the ACT; and that the Commonwealth should participate - and it may be doing so - at an international level with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I agree substantially with what Mr MacKinnon and Mr Lewis have said. I exclude ~~from my remarks~~ any conflict with the ACT.

MR NIXON - I wrote to Mr Lewis explaining the ACT's position. I will not bother to recount it again. I believe that there is a need for a secretariat. One of the purposes of the secretariat would be to achieve what is set out in the paper. I support the idea.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Would it be worth while having the terms of reference of the Committee on Water Birds enlarged to cover some of the recommendations in this other area?

MR LEWIS - A meeting is to be held next month. It is too late to do that now.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - But there will be more than one meeting.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Victoria is providing the secretariat for that meeting. I will have a look at the matter.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - It is not incompatible.

MR MACKINNON - Widened to what extent?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - To make some recommendations on the international aspect, for one thing.

MR MACKINNON - I think that there should be a separate committee for that. I think it should be referred to the Fauna Authorities Conference for the setting up of a separate committee on the question of the conservation of other migratory birds.

You have two different problems. The major matter so far as water fowl and game are concerned is the impact of shooting, their breeding and that sort of thing. The other migratory birds generally are not hunting birds. There are some, of course, such as the mutton bird, which are hunted but mainly they are not game birds. This is a different category and I suggest a different division.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Will we ask the Fauna Authorities Conference to establish a committee to do this?

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Fair enough.

Agenda Item 6 - THREATENED FAUNA

MR MACKINNON - This is a problem which touches all of us. The paper highlights the tremendous number. The only thing from which we can take any comfort is the fact that it is possible that there were a number of species which were on the way out anyway. The Aborigines were responsible for the loss of quite a number of them so we are not solely to blame. We are amending our law to extend conservation measures and to alter the nature of fauna. We want to include some invertebrates which I will be able to declare by notice so that we can extend research into habitat control. Fundamentally our belief is the same as that held by other people; we are caretakers of the wildlife on behalf of the Australian people, and, indeed, the people of the world to some extent. We are trying to preserve all the known habitat of wildlife in order to prevent extinction of species. We have rediscovered several species. We cancelled a gazetted town site in order to

preserve the scrub bird. Habitat reservation and protection is only the first step in the conservation of threatened species. Much research is necessary and Western Australia is able to undertake only a fraction of what is required because of insufficient funds. We are gradually extending our activity. Whether we will manage to do this work before it is too late depends on how much money is available. The habitat is changing so rapidly. One of our biggest problems is that over the last 10 years we have opened up another eight million acres of land for agriculture and this means a very marked habitat change. At the same time we have had an increase in our own activities. We will not know whether those activities are sufficient until after we are all dead.

MR LYONS - We in Tasmania are in no trouble with extinct species except with the possibility of the tiger, although we believe they are there.

MR ROW - They found one the other day.

MR LYONS - Reports are coming in all the time. Some are reasonably authentic. The general belief is that they are still there. That is the only species about which we are in any trouble at all. Things like the native cat and tiger cat are common in Tasmania although they are extinct on the mainland or have just about reached that stage. The same would apply to the brown bandicoot and the striped bandicoot. By and large Tasmania has no problem in this regard, because, as I said earlier, we have had pretty rigid control over all these things since 1928 and the laws have been properly

enforced. In that time, with the exception of the tiger, there has been no real problem.

MR LEWIS - I have no comment.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Not nearly enough is being done so far as we are concerned. Inadequate finance is available. We have already spoken about the need for research and research grants. I think you could make your name for posterity, Mr Minister, if you could find some means of producing substantial funds to enable some of these specific activities to be extended.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Would the States be adverse to making a report of the things they need to do in their own areas and which they believe ought to be done? The Fauna Authorities Conference might have this information in its archives already. Perhaps the fauna authorities could look at it and prepare a comprehensive document.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - That could be done with the assistance of the secretariat.

MR ROW - In Queensland we do district surveys every 3 months or so. They are quite regular. We have not found any species in danger of being lost as yet. True it is that their habitat has changed but the information from my officers is that our surveys indicate that no species has been lost to Queensland, nor is any in immediate danger of being lost. We are of the opinion that this work can be done at comparatively low cost but perhaps I should not make such a statement here. It is done as a secondary effort to the regular district surveys.

MR STORY - I go along generally with the idea that this work is very necessary. We have a few problems. For instance, there is the Flinders Island wallaby. It ~~has~~ a fairly extensive habitat and its numbers are down. The activities of fishermen and feral cat have greatly reduced the numbers. Our efforts to do something about this are pretty extensive. The hairy nosed wombat of the Murray variety is down to very low numbers. We have been doing something about creating an area in which they can breed under protection. The Mallee fowl is causing us a certain amount of worry also. We believe that we need more research but we do need funds in order to protect these species. They are fairly unique and once their numbers get low I think we will lose them completely.

MR NIXON - In the Northern Territory the Wildlife Advisory Council has established a list of fauna which it believes is threatened. This is a fairly emotional subject. It receives a great deal of publicity, particularly in Victoria where there is concern exhibited, rightly or wrongly, and I think there is a great deal of research that could be done. As Sir Arthur Rylah said, it is a matter of money.

MR LEWIS - What is being done in Papua and New Guinea?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I do not know.

MR LEWIS - But that area comes under the Commonwealth's control.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - It comes under the control of the Department of External Territories. Activities in

Papua and New Guinea are developed quite separately from Commonwealth activities. In the Territory development is related to their needs. The Administration generally keeps separate from organisations and groups and meetings in the Commonwealth because their needs and circumstances are different. Apart from anything else, it is not desired that they develop along the same lines.

MR LEWIS - From what we hear, very little is being done. The Commonwealth has a unique opportunity to do something.

MR NIXON - Papua and New Guinea has a wildlife service. A lot of research work has been done in respect of crocodiles. There are restrictions on exportation. A detailed paper could be obtained.

MR LEWIS - The question was only academic. I am surprised that Papua and New Guinea was not represented. Here is a unique opportunity to do something. We do not know what is being done.

MR MALCOM FRASER - The circumstances in Papua and New Guinea are separate from those of mainland Australia and the future of that Territory will be different from ours. I ask that attention be drawn to the point made by Sir Arthur Rylah that if there is a Secretariat the projects that the States might regard as being desirable within their own areas could be examined so that comprehensive information could be obtained.

MR STORY - Once more, this wonderful book that has been made available comes in handy. It sets out the position with regard to conservation, trade, etc., in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. The book is a remarkable one. I commend it to everybody.

MR MALCOM FRASER - I agree with that.

Agenda Item 7 - GAME MANAGEMENT

MR LYONS - In Tasmania this has not been a real problem, but it is starting to become one - not so much because of local shooters but because of the interest that mainland shooters are showing in our game. We have to keep a closer watch on the seasons and on the restrictions that are sometimes imposed. A run down of the general position shows that in relation to waterfowl we are experimenting with nest boxes. This is in its infancy. The results are not known yet. Pheasants are closely controlled on King Island. There is a pheasant farm on the mainland of Tasmania, but those birds would not be classified as game birds; they would be more domesticated birds. The eggs are hatched in incubators, the birds are reared and are let out of the cages only an hour before the hunter comes along. I do not think we have much to worry about in that regard. There have been recent discussions about the length of the deer season. Here again, the mainland interest is forcing us to have another look at this. White deer are protected at all times. Consequently we are getting an increasing number of them throughout those parts of Tasmania where deer are found. The bag limits and penalties are constantly under review. At the moment the position is good. With regard to quail, we are working on artificial breeding, incubating and rearing techniques. The position is reasonably good. We are not allowing any further releases of mallard ducks; we are trying to get rid of them. In recent years there has been a closed season on Cape Barren geese. There ~~are~~ numbers are well

up. We will have to look at the position again. By and large, the position in Tasmania is good. It needs much closer supervision now than it did a few years ago. That is the position.

MR LEWIS - We do not have any comment to offer. We shoot quail.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - As with Item 5, I have something to say. I think there is a great problem in introducing new birds without considerable public relations work. I cannot suggest any field in which we can do this. We have to watch what fauna we introduce. Some kind of research project at King Island could be worthwhile. It could give us some idea as to how pheasants get on with the local population. I understand that the feeling goes far beyond Australia that there are great dangers in introducing species from other countries. This could lead to destruction of your own fauna.

MR ROW - We have done quite a lot of intensive work on duck harvesting. We found that in the 11 year period when shooting was allowed only about 10% of the ducks were taken. Our zoologists are not convinced that we are on the receiving end as far as ducks are concerned. I know from my own personal experience and from quite a number of years in the bush that ducks breed quite intensively, particularly in north Queensland. For the information of Ministers, we are not having an open season for ducks or quail this year. People in different parts of the State conduct surveys on the duck population and the availability of water. In drought years we have a complete closed season for ducks. This year I am under extreme

pressure to have an open season in north Queensland, which had a very good year, but I have refused all requests. We keep a very close eye on duck population and availability of water. That is all I have to say.

MR STORY - In recent times we have done quite a lot of research into game reserves. As a first step we raised the gun licence from \$2 , to \$4. . We put the money derived from the extra \$2 into development of game reserves. Local committees have been very helpful. They work in conjunction with our departmental officers. In the main these areas are forest reserves. We encourage the feeding of wild-life and the setting up of breeding boxes. In the main we site them reasonably close to a sanctuary area. We found ourselves in the position that very few areas were left in good shooting areas because when the Flora and Fauna Act was passed people availed themselves of the opportunity of acquiring sanctuaries willy-nilly. They were using the Act more or less as a trespassing provision. People who like to have a shot - and we were charging them \$2 - were very restricted indeed. We developed Bool Lagoon, Wooloonook Bend Dam on the Murray and Katarapko Island in this way to enable shooters to have an opportunity to get a shot. The first time I gave approval for controlled shooting in one of these game reserves I got into tremendous trouble. We started at 4 a.m. and we closed the shoot down at 10 p.m. Fortunately I was not at home, but my wife received all the complaints. One woman said that to get the birds up at 4 a.m. and to keep

them out of their beds till 10 p.m. was too much. Gradually, by some public relations on the part of the shooters, we have got people round to the way of thinking that we are only harvesting a surplus.

We make provision in the sanctuary areas, fairly close to these reserves, where a duck can go and rest. If it is injured in any way, there is a sanctuary to which it can go. I think that by a bit of public relations we can sell this idea. Once again, you can get into immense trouble if you declare a shoot in one of these reserves which has been set up with a certain amount of public money. We are finding that this idea is catching on. We are getting wonderful support from shooters and, what is more, from conservationists. They are beginning to come round to our way of thinking. By feeding these birds and by providing nesting boxes we are building up the population, not only of duck, but of other types of birds, such as quail. We will have our first legal mutton bird shoot this year.

MR MACKINNON - We agree in principle, firstly, that exotic species should not be introduced as game birds. It would be valuable to research the suitability of indigenous species. These would vary from State to State. We have a little quail shooting - very little. In 1967 Cabinet decided that no birds, other than ducks and quail, would be declared as game birds. Recently we have changed the opening of our duck season. Rather than have a fixed date, we have set it according to biological grounds.

Our main problem regarding ducks is not the shooting of them but the loss of their habitat or nursery areas. We now have legislative power which enables us to issue a duck shooters licence. The money will go straight into a conservation fund.

We are doing all the other things which Ministers have mentioned, such as providing nesting boxes. I should like to underline Sir Arthur Rylah's comments about the danger in the introduction of certain species. There is one question which I should like to ask. Are any States considering the possibility of introducing an open season for black swans?

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - We did have problems with swans in certain areas. We had an open season but it was not a great success. We cannot persuade people that swans are good to eat.

MR MACKINNON - The swans are breeding up a bit. Rather than let them die of starvation, sometimes I think it is better to shoot them.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Our problem was worse than that, in that the swans were taking crops in certain areas. After a lot of public relations work, we had an open season on swans. As I have said, it was not a great success. The swans are still taking the crops.

MR LYONS - In Tasmania we have had 6 open seasons in the last 7 years. Gradually the length of the season is being reduced. It is now down to 1 weekend and shooters are allowed to take a limited bag.

MR ROW - Is it on that big lake?

MR LYONS - Yes.

MR NIXON - In the Australian Capital Territory, most animals and birds are legally protected. In the Northern Territory we have the situation where the salt water crocodile industry, which was once a large and profitable industry, has

declined. As a result we find that the natural predators of the barramundi, which are boney bream and catfish, have multiplied. They are attacking the barramundi. We have completely protected the fresh water crocodile.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Since there seems to be reasonable unanimity on the point, could I suggest that resolution 9 of the fauna authorities conference be endorsed by the meeting? This refers to the introduction and release of non-indigenous fauna.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I agree with that suggestion.

MR ROW - I agree.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - The other point to which I should like to draw attention is that I am advised that if the fauna authorities were consulted during the planning stages of water conservation schemes, many of the structures could be adapted with comparatively little effort, and this would increase the water fowl populations rather than destroy them. I have been given a recommendation from my people that, therefore, when large developmental schemes are planned, the impact of these on wildlife should be taken into account in the planning stages. I do not know whether Ministers have any views or comments to offer on that proposal.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I think this is done in Victoria.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - I do not think it is done everywhere. I am not pointing the bone at anyone. For all I know, I might be pointing the bone at the Commonwealth.

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - We would go along with that.

MR ROW - We always declare them sanctuaries in Queensland.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - It is a question of the water level, not whether they are to be sanctuaries. It is a question of whether the water level will be suitable or not suitable for breeding.

MR ROW - These areas are not always suitable for breeding. Some of them are suitable for boat racing. However, we declare them all sanctuaries.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - The suggestion is that the authorities be consulted. Would it be useful to ask the fauna authorities to examine the position of non-water fowl game birds to see whether any proposals could be put forward?

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - I think that will only restrict them.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - They are already examining water fowl.

sir ARTHUR RYLAH - Do you mean to extend it? It was decided that there should be a separate committee. I think that this matter should be referred to the fauna authorities conference so that the committee can look at it.

MR MALCOLM FRASER - Include non-water fowl game birds?

SIR ARTHUR RYLAH - Yes.

Luncheon adjournment.