

# Privatisation claim denied

Parliamentary Reporter.

No land will be transferred to the Land Corporation except by order-in-council, parliamentary conservation under-secretary, Mr P. Woollaston, said yesterday.

Mr Woollaston was responding to claims from conservationists that some of the country's outstanding natural areas are being secretly privatised.

He said he believes the claims were made in response to "what is essentially a rumour as to the views expressed and recommendations made by regional officers of Landcorp and the Conservation Department."

The Royal Forest and Bird Society has claimed that 250,000 hectares of public land is being divided between Landcorp and the Conservation Department, in private and in haste, to meet the April 1 deadline for the establishment of the State-owned enterprises.

Once the lands go to Landcorp they will effectively be privatised and can be sold, the society said.

Mr Woollaston said it seems the society has heard there was agreement by regional officials about what land will go to Landcorp and what will go to the department.

"No transfer of land has been effected and none will be until such time as an order-in-council is signed by the Governor-General," he said.

He has asked the Conservation Department "as a matter of urgency" to look into the areas under special leases and brief him on them.

Mr Woollaston said that, for instance, the Arawata riverbed will not go to Landcorp. The recommendation is that it go to the Conservation Department.

In the case of Walter Peak, the recommendation is that the lease would go to Landcorp, but that the title should stay with the Crown.

The transfers will not all happen on April 1, he said. "There has to be an ability to discuss some matters beyond that date," he said. "There will be some contentious areas that ministers will want to have a look at themselves."

# Gov't Allocations Of Land Made Public

(PA)

The Government has made public lists of Crown land it proposes to transfer to the new State-owned enterprises or have administered by the Department of Conservation.

WELLINGTON

Most of the allocations of land would not be controversial, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer, said on Thursday.

"However, some areas of Crown land and State forest contain a mixture of production and conservation values which make allocation more difficult."

The schedules of land, which Mr Palmer said were "vast," set out the category for each piece of land, as agreed by the corporations and the Department of Conservation (DOC).

Mr Palmer is chairman of the Cabinet committee overseeing the establishment of the new State enterprises.

Actual transfers of land have yet to take place, pending the outcome of the Court of Appeal hearing on Maori Council claims to be heard shortly.

"Subject to that, agreements for sale and purchase between the Government and the corporations could be signed in a few weeks time," Mr Palmer said.

The Court of Appeal is due to hear the case, which has halted the transfer of State assets to the new corporations, early next month.

## Claims

The legal argument is over whether Crown land which might be subject to claims to the Waitangi

tribunal should be transferred to the corporations.

Mr Palmer said Ministers would look at individual parcels of land that it was suggested had been placed in the wrong category. They would be considered before the sale and purchase agreements were drawn up.

The DOC has been given responsibility for all protected lands, including national parks, reserves, rivers and lakebeds. It has stewardship over areas for which no final use (either production or protection) has been determined, including non-productive native forest and large areas of high country Crown land.

Landcorp has responsibility for Crown-owned productive farmland and the Forestry Corporation responsibility for State production forests.

Copies of the schedules will be held in the district offices of the Department of Survey and Land Information.

Mr Palmer said the Cabinet had considered the 2.7 million hectares of pastoral lease high country land last year.

Because of the value of those lands for both conservation and pastoral farming, the Government had decided those lands would remain in Crown ownership.

Landcorp will manage the leases as the Crown's agent and will be required to operate under the environmental policies of the former Land Settlement Board in consultation with DOC.

Mr Palmer also provided details covering specific areas:

- The 182,000-hectare Moleworth Station, as previously announced, will remain in Crown ownership.

- Areas agreed for sustained yield of indigenous timber on the West Coast have been allocated to the Forestry Corporation, subject to protective covenants.

- Of second-growth management Kauri on State forest lands in Northland, only the 2000 hectare Punuruku-Papakawli block — one sixth of the Russell State Forest — has been allocated to the Forestry Corporation. The balance will be administered by the Department of Conservation.

- Timber supply commitments until 1988 from Western Southland Beech forests will be met by the Forestry Corporation. However a case has been advanced by DOC to protect the remaining virgin forests as a stronghold for the threatened Yellowhead, Kaka and Yellow-Crowned Parakeet.

- Extensive State forest areas in Westland south of the Cook

River are at present under moratorium and are being considered by a committee chaired by the secretary for the environment, Dr Roger Blakely. These forests are to become Crown land under the control of the Minister of Lands with DOC appointed as interim manager pending a Government decision on the ultimate allocation to production or protection.

- The 34,000 hectare Eyre Creek-Cairnard Crown lands in Northern Southland are to be split between Landcorp and DOC with the farmed portion going to the corporation.

- A 700-hectare portion of the important wetland at Kaimaumau in Northland will be allocated to DOC as a buffer around the scientific reserve and a link to the Rangaunu harbour.

- Native forest and shrubland on the Mangaone block next to the Urewera National Park is to be protected. One part is recommended for addition to the Urewera National Park and another will be allocated to Landcorp with a covenant protecting native vegetation.

- Okiwi Station on Great Barrier Island is to be split between Landcorp and DOC. Native forest, shrubland and wetland areas will go to DOC with pasture areas going to Landcorp.

# Land transfer statement 'inconsistent'

Details released by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt Hon G. W. R. Palmer, on the allocation of two Crown land blocks in the southern region are inconsistent with records in the Dunedin office of the Department of Conservation.

The president of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and the professor of botany at Otago University, Professor A. F. Mark, has written to Mr Palmer asking for his urgent attention to the issue.

In a statement published in the *Otago Daily Times* on April 18, Mr Palmer said the 34,000 hectare Eyre Creek-Cainard Crown lands in northern Southland are to be split between Landcorp and DOC with the farmed portion going to the corporation.

Mr Palmer chairs the Cabinet committee on the allocation of Crown lands and Mr Mark said he would be happy if Mr Palmer's statement was correct.

But the certified plans showing areas for transfer, available in the Dunedin office of the DOC, show that the total area of both of these Crown land blocks is to be transferred to Landcorp.

This was confirmed by a member of the DOC office in Dunedin yesterday.

"Clearly the map is at variance with your statement," Professor Mark said. "Because of the extremely high natural values in large portions of both blocks, plus the very serious water and soil conservation issues there, I would appreciate urgent attention being given to this issue before final decisions are taken."

## CONTENTION

Knowing the land allocation of the area is contentious, Professor Mark arranged for a detailed scientific study of the natural values of the land in January.

Thirteen Government biologists and three from the University prepared a report on the land.

Professor Mark said DOC staff later proposed that about 23,500 hectares of the land should go to the DOC. Most of the land is described in the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory as either unable to sustain grazing or of very severely limited use because of erosion hazards.

Professor Mark detailed these matters in a letter which Mr Palmer's office received late on Tuesday. A private secretary from Mr Palmer's office

yesterday afternoon said Mr Palmer has not yet had time to study the letter.

Professor Mark also said he has been unable to confirm from any source the presence of formal covenants on the stands of native forest on both Crown land blocks.

But according to a discussion paper released publicly by Land and Survey's Invercargill office in November 1982, "several areas of beech forest have been protected by Conservation Covenants under Section 77 of the Reserves Act."

Professor Mark said he was surprised to hear from senior Landcorp staff that the DOC proposal on the two blocks was rejected.

## MARKET PRICES

"I am also concerned by a recent press statement by Mr George McMillan, as chief executive of Landcorp to the effect that once land transfers have been completed, the land required by the Department of Conservation for conservation purposes would have to be purchased at market prices."

Professor Mark raises a second worry with Mr Palmer — the Walter Peak

special lease of 25,758 hectares going to Landcorp.

He thinks much of the area should be retired in line with the Government's retirement and surrender policy for class 8 and severely eroded class 7e pastoral leasehold land.

And he thinks there are very high nature conservation values which should be detailed before any land is permanently alienated.

Professor Mark is also an ex-member of the recently disestablished Land Settlement Board.

He was appointed by the Hon K. T. Wetere to represent scientific and conservation interests.

He said he is aware Landcorp is to be bound by the board's policy on pastoral lands and that he would expect the Government to require that Landcorp be bound by this policy on any comparable lands to which it may receive title.

"I would strongly recommend, however, that all such land remain with the Crown."

Mr Mark told Mr Palmer he was releasing a copy of the letter to the media because of the public interest in the issues.

# Alarm at Land Plans

**NZPA Wellington**

Hundreds of thousands of hectares of public land, including parts of national parks, are scheduled for transfer to the land and forestry corporations, a coalition of recreation and conservation groups says.

The coalition — the Acclimatisations Societies, Federated Mountain Clubs, and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society — has analysed a sample of schedules and maps of public lands to be transferred to the corporations.

The schedules were made public by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer,

on April 16 and can be seen in 12 district land offices throughout New Zealand.

While some of the allocations appear to be the result of drafting errors, the coalition said thousands of small parcels of land — mostly covered by special leases, licences to graze or recreation permits — are part of a nightmare carve-up.

A Coalition researcher, Mr Bruce Mason, analysed four of the 12 regions and found many thousands of hectares of important conservation land held in small parcels had gone to the corporations.

The forest and bird

society conservation director, Dr Gerry McSweeney, said: "Whole mountain ranges, riverbeds, lakeshores, native protection forests and even parts of national parks are scheduled for transfer."

The issue was vital because once asset sale and purchase agreements were signed between the Crown and corporations, the land would be freeholded effectively and available for sale, he said.

The coalition says the only delays to the allocation are the Maori Council's present legal challenge to the Crown's right to transfer to a state-owned enterprise

any land or waters that are or could be subject to a Waitangi Tribunal claim and the asset valuation negotiations between the Treasury and corporations.

The outcome of the Maori Council's case will not affect all the land about which the coalition is concerned but large areas of it include South Island high country covered by the Ngai Tahu claim.

Mr Palmer wrote to the coalition yesterday saying he had asked for investigations into allocations that had been questioned and others that might be drawn to the Government's attention.

# Transfer of Forests Angers Environmental Groups

The transfer of Western Southland native forests and Walter Peak station to Government corporations has angered environmental groups.

The coalition of Federated Mountain Clubs acclimatization societies, and the Forest and Bird

Protection Society has analysed a sample of schedules and maps of hundreds and thousands of public lands to be transferred.

Included in these are the 25,000 hectares of Walter Peak station, the Dean and Rowallen State forests and parts of the Mataura riverbed.

The schedules were made public by the deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer, on April 16.

While some of the allocations appeared to be the result of draughting errors, the coalition said thousands of small parcels of land, mostly covered by special leases, licences to graze or recreation permits

were part of a nightmare carve-up.

The conservator director of Forest and Bird, Dr Gerry McSweeney, said from Wellington yesterday the plan to transfer Western Southland forests to Forestrycorp was contrary to an earlier Government decision to allocate protection areas only on an interim basis so the corporation could meet legal commitments.

## "Protected"

"Much of Dean and Rowallen is protected forest and there should be no question of it going to Forestrycorp," he said.

The lowland forests were

important habitats for the yellowhead and kaka birds.

The issue was vital because once asset sale and purchase agreements were signed between the Crown and corporations, the land would be effectively freehold and available for sale, Dr McSweeney said.

Walter Peak station, a special lease, was to originally go to the Department of Conservation and be managed by Landcorp, but the environmentally-sensitive area would now be transferred to Landcorp.

"Why Landcorp wants Walter Peak is utterly beyond us," Dr McSweeney said. "Landcorp may have pulled a swiftie on the Government, thinking it could charge high rent to commercial tourist ventures."

The Eyre Creek and Cainard land blocks were to be divided between the corporation and the department but now both blocks, 44,000 hectares, would become freehold titles.

The society believes the transfer of 72 hectares of the Mataura riverbed to Landcorp is illegal.

Mr Palmer has asked for investigations into allocations that have been questioned and has allowed three more weeks for submissions.

Southland Times 6 May 1987

# Crown land allocations 'bungled'

CIVIL servants in Wellington have bungled allocations of Crown land to the new government corporations, says the chairman of the Kaimai Native Forests Action Council, Mr Basil Graeme of Tauranga.

"They have parcelled out the land without any apparent reference to its real use," he said today.

Mr Graeme was speaking after an initial study of the allocation maps he obtained from Hamilton.

"I would advise all territorial authorities to get hold of these maps urgently and study them with great care," he said.

"Some of the allocations are frightening and apparently the result of poorly informed civil servants working in haste.

"There is a deadline of May 22 for objections to be lodged, and if the mistakes are not pointed out the allocations will be confirmed on that day."

Mr Graeme said one of the more glaring mistakes in the Western Bay of Plenty involved allocation of the foreshore reserve along Marine Parade at Mount Maunganui to Landcorp.

"Landcorp is the body charged with future management of productive agricultural Crown land," he said. "It is supposed to take over what were Lands and Survey Department farm development blocks, and leased Crown farmland.

"Here it is getting a public reserve that is vital to foreshore protection.

"If that foreshore land is to be controlled by any of the new bodies it should be the Department of Conservation (DOC).

"But really it ought to be vested in the Mountborough as a local reserve."

Mr Graeme said he had not been able to check the allocation of every piece of Crown reserve in the district. But there were hundreds of small lots scattered about in Tauranga and elsewhere.

He said it was a denial of public rights that the maps were not freely available for inspection throughout New Zealand.

"What chance do people have to discover errors if the maps are restricted to those willing to pay \$55 for them?" he asked.

The foreshore reserve at Mount Maunganui is not the only glaring error in the Western Bay of Plenty.

Mr Graeme says a sandbar at the western end of Tauranga Harbour, only exposed at spring low tide, has been allocated to Landcorp.

Landcorp has also been allocated a large number of residential-sized properties in the Karangahake Gorge.

"If anything those should go to the Government Properties Corporation. They are certainly not farmland," he said.

"Another major blunder is the allocation of two catchment protection planta-

tions on the western side of the Kaimais near Thompsons Track to Forestcorp.

"That body is in charge of commercial forestry, but those plantations were actually planted by the old Forest Service to stop erosion problems that were contributing to flooding in the Waihou River.

"They were never intended to be milled and should certainly be controlled by the DOC.

"The DOC should also have a native bush reserve in the middle of Rotoehu Forest designated for protection of Kokako. Yet that has also gone to Forestcorp in direct contradiction of the Forest Service's own recommendations."

Mr Graeme said people with any knowledge of local Crown lands in the district, and local authorities administering Crown lands, should make a real effort to check the maps urgently.

"Once they are transferred it will be too late," he said.

# 'Media Failed to Probe Land Transfer'

(PA)

WELLINGTON

**The news media is partly to blame for a lack of public involvement in the transfer of millions of hectares of public land to State-owned corporations, a member of the National Parks Centennial Commission says.**

The commissioner, Dr Les Molloy, said at an environmental news seminar in Wellington he found it incredible that the media had largely failed to probe decisions to abolish a Crown Estate Commission before it ever had a meeting.

Dr Molloy criticized journalists for missing the axing of the commission, set up last year to oversee allocation of land to State corporations.

"This had been going on for months. The Treasury was driving the show, wanting all its allocations done by April 1, so it could value its assets," he said.

"It was a ludicrous expectation that something as complex as thousands of parcels of land of all descriptions could be allocated to the Department of Conservation without dispute.

"What a story if someone had blown it apart."

Dr Molloy said it should have been the conservation story of the decade but was ignored until the Maori people took their concerns to the Court of Appeal, where they are being argued this week.

A coalition of recreation and conservation groups claimed earlier this week hundreds of thousands of hectares of public land including parts of national

parks — are scheduled for transfer to the Land and Forestry Corporations

The transfer of riverbeds, lakeshores, native protection forests and parts of national parks will be re-considered in three weeks after the Government has received reports and considers the allocations.

The coalition — the Acclimatization Societies, Federated Mountain Clubs, and Forest and Bird Protection Society analysed a

sample of schedules and maps of public lands to be transferred to the corporations.

The conservation director of Forest and Bird Society Dr Gerry McSweeney said some of the schedules were made public by Mr Palmer on April 16, but in reality a lot of the schedules were not released to the public until May 24.

He said for many areas that meant only six days were given for the public to

consider the schedules.

Caltex Oil NZ Ltd announced at the seminar it was sponsoring two environmental journalism awards worth \$4000 each to mark the centennial of national parks.

The awards will be for the best article published about New Zealand's heritage and the environment and for the best radio story broadcast during the National Parks centennial year.

# Problems in transfer of Crown land alleged

By OLIVER RIDDELL  
in Wellington

The Government has promised to investigate problems identified by the Public Lands Coalition in the allocation of Crown land to the new Forestry and Land corporations.

This undertaking was given by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer, and a report is expected by the end of May, to go to a committee of Ministers.

The Public Lands Coalition has been formed by Federated Mountain Clubs, Acclimatisation Societies, and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

It was formed to oppose the transfer of public lands that have important conservation and recreation values to the new corporations.

In welcoming the Government's commitment, a spokesman for the coalition, Dr Gerry McSweeney, said there was still a procedural problem to be overcome. There were hundreds of thousands of

hectares involved in thousands of small parcels.

It was simply unfair to all the parties involved to consider these areas in haste, he said.

The best solution would be to allocate this portion of the Crown estate to the Survey and Land Information Department as a holding action. Through a public process the conservation and development merits of each area could then be assessed and a final allocation made.

Dr McSweeney said this might take several years but would avoid the otherwise inevitable conflict.

The discovery of the array of public lands of high conservation value that had been allocated to the corporations came after the coalition had analysed a sample of the schedules and maps of public lands to be transferred.

These schedules were made public just before Easter and are available at the 12 land district offices in New Zealand.

Dr McSweeney said that in the first two weeks only four of the 12 regions had been surveyed, and hastily, but the land carve-up discovered was a nightmare. Whole mountain ranges, riverbeds, lakeshores, native protection forests and even parts of national parks were scheduled for transfer to the Forestry and Land corporations.

The issue was vital because once agreements were signed for sale and purchase between the Crown and corporations, effectively all this land would be freehold and available for sale by the corporations.

The debate on allocation of Crown land had focused in public on Maori land claims, he said.

But other concerns over the recreation and conservation values of the land allocation had been conspicuously silent because, under Ministerial instruction, the carve-up had been done by the officials in secret.

Public groups had believed the carve-up would stick to the principles announced by the Government in September, 1985, in launching its environmental restructuring. Dr McSweeney said.

At that time the Government had said that only Crown lands "primarily" used for farming or forestry purposes would go to the corporations. But the maps made public last month revealed a very different story.

There had been an immense power struggle within the bureaucracy; the corporations had seized many lands with predominantly natural and conservation values, and with only minor commercial uses.

The mistakes fell into three categories:—

Allocations that seemed to be drafting errors, such as the 250,000ha of Canterbury pastoral lease mountain ranges (including Craigieburn, Two Thumb and Ben Ohau ranges, and the Tasman and Jollie riverbeds).

Allocations that were contrary to earlier Government decisions, including the 25,000ha Walter Peak station (mostly eroded mountainland retired from grazing).

Allocations of contentious areas where deals struck by officials were contrary to the public interest, including parts of Kaitorete Spit, Lake Ellesmere, the largest natural sand dune complex in the country.

Mr Palmer said he had given instructions for investigations to be made into the proposed allocations that had been questioned, and of any others that might be drawn to the Government's attention.

He would then convene a meeting of himself, the Minister of Conservation, Mr Marshall, and the Minister responsible for the Land and Forestry corporations, Mr Wetere, to consider the allocations.

If the coalition wanted to make further submissions it could do so, Mr Palmer said.



# Land Carve-up Row Deepens

The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer, is at the centre of a dispute over the transfer of millions of hectares of crown land to the new state corporations — a process conservationists say is a "nightmare" carve-up.

A coalition of environmental groups has claimed thousands of hectares of important conservation land held in small parcels will be allocated to the corporations.

A member of the National Parks Centennial Commission, Dr Les Molloy, also claimed yesterday that the axing of an organisation intended to oversee the allocation of land to state corporations had been largely overlooked.

But Mr Palmer retorted last night that claims of a land carve-up were "a whole lot of nonsense."

## Resources

Mr Palmer added that the Crown Estates Commission, originally intended to oversee the transfer, had been abandoned before its first meeting because it would have insufficient work to do.

## Wellington Staff

"I do not feel there was a need to set up another quango to settle these problems — we have got plenty of resources in the Government to deal with it," he said.

"I did not see there was enough work for it to do and I still do not think there is."

Dr Molloy, speaking at an environmental news seminar in Wellington, said the land transfer had been rushed because of a desire by the Treasury to have the process completed by April 1.

"The Treasury was driving the show, wanting all

the allocations done by April 1 so it could value the assets," he said.

But Dr Molloy said it was "a ludicrous expectation" that something so complex could be settled without dispute.

He added that the abandonment of the commission should have been "the conservation story of the decade" but was ignored until the Maori people voiced their concern to the Court of Appeal, where they were being argued this week.

The news services had largely failed to investigate the decision to abolish the commission before it ever had a meeting.

A coalition of acclimatisation societies, including federated mountain clubs and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, claimed some of the intended allocations were defective because of map drafting errors.

But thousands of small parcels — mostly covered by special leases, licences to graze or recreation permits — were to be transferred to the corporations.

The conservation director of the Forest and Bird

Protection Society, Dr Gerry McSweeney, said the issue was vital, as public property such as rivers and mountain peaks could have been sold.

"They would have been on a schedule of assets that would have been signed on May 1," he said.

However, Mr Palmer said he had had a full list of intended land transfers widely distributed so they could be discussed and any protests heard.

● Disquiet at the Barrier — back page.

# Corporations Accused Of Staging Land-grab

Landcorp and Forestrycorp are staging the biggest land-grab New Zealand has ever seen but few people seemed to realize, Mr R. R. Sutton warned at the Southland Catchment Board's meeting yesterday.

Land which was earmarked for corporate control included sections of riverbed, high country land prone to severe erosion, and riverbanks needed for flood control and river protection work.

Mr Sutton produced maps at yesterday's meeting which showed three miles of riverbed on the Oreti river in the Strathallan block would be owned by Forestrycorp.

"The board may be faced with having to buy the riverbed back," he warned.

Crown land in the Eyre creek, and Cainard blocks in the upper Mataura catchment, was marked down for transfer to Landcorp, but would be better under the Department of Conservation, the board felt.

If it were transferred to DOC subsequently, DOC would have to pay Landcorp for it, Mr Sutton said.

## "Ridiculous"

"It's ridiculous. We are looking at public land being grabbed by a commercial organization."

Mr Sutton was also concerned that if the corporations owned riverbeds,

they could restrict public access which had traditionally been unrestricted.

The board adopted his motion to write to the deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer, voicing its extreme concern at the allocation of public land to Landcorp and Forestrycorp and asking him to rescind or stall any decision pending detailed consideration of soil and water values in consultation with the board.

The board will make submissions to the Government based on four sets of maps showing the land going to Landcorp, Forestrycorp, DOC and the land with disputed ownership.

It will also seek a meeting with like-minded groups to unite the opposition to the land transfers.

The chief soil conservator, Mr W. J. Tuckey, said germs near water courses had hundreds of thousands of dollars of fencing to protect them, and could pass from public to corporate ownership.

Coastal sand-dunes — which the board and the Department of Lands and Survey had worked to protect — were also liable to be transferred.

And eroding land, including Mid Dome, would be allocated to Landcorp instead of protected by DOC.

Mr Tuckey said the board had to go through all the

maps showing Southland land which could be transferred to the commercially-orientated corporations, and make submissions to protect them.

Mr D. T. J. Cairns said portions of the maps were "so obviously wrong that it's not going to be as difficult to correct as you think."

# Groups urge riverbed clarification

**THE PUBLIC Lands Coalition has asked the Government to clarify urgently the status of riverbeds allocated to the Land Corporation.**

Coalition researcher Bruce Mason has found thousands of hectares of riverbeds have been allocated to the corporation.

The land, covered by special grazing leases or recreational permits for activities like white-water rafting, is mostly in small parcels but the total for Otago alone is 1500 hectares, Mr Mason says.

The coalition accepts that some of the allocations have been accidental because of a combination of pressure of time and a manual land records system.

It wants the Government to reserve river and lake beds from possible future sale, even if it means amending the Conservation and State Owned Enterprises Acts.

Acclimatisation Societies executive director Bryce Johnson said corporations could sell land and even if riverbanks stayed publicly-owned access to river beds could be restricted.

"It does not just affect the organised recreation groups — the wider public is not represented by any pressure groups and plenty of people use riverbeds for picnicking and swimming," he said yesterday.

Areas allocated for transfer include the Rangitikei rivermouth and 2 kilo-

**By MURRAY WILLIAMS**

metres of riverbed behind it, 70 hectares of the Pohangina near Ashhurst, parts of the Mohaka and upper Ahuriri in Hawke's Bay, 111 hectares of the Wairau and about 100 hectares of the Clarence in Marlborough, 800 hectares of the Grey on the West Coast and 600 hectares of the lower Waitaki.

Last week the Coalition of Acclimatisation Societies, the Federated Mountain Clubs and the Forest and Bird Protection Society made public claims that large areas of crown land including the riverbeds not in national and forest parks or otherwise reserved were to be transferred.

They said much of the land had high conservation and recreation values and its transfer would be contrary to government undertakings that only areas mainly used for farming or forestry would go to corporations.

Deputy Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer, who chairs the ministerial committee on state-owned enterprises, said disputed allocations would be investigated and a report would be sent to him by May 22 when he would convene a meeting of ministers.

# Final Maps Not Yet Completed

## Wellington Staff

Final maps showing the transfer of crown lands to new state corporations are still not all ready, little more than a week before submissions on the transfer are due with the Government.

About five million hectares of crown land is due to be handed over to the new Land and Forestry Corporations.

Cabinet ministers are due to meet to complete the allocation of land on May 27, and have asked interested groups for submissions on the transfer by Friday next week, May 22.

But by yesterday, the head office of the new Department of Survey and Land Information, which is drawing up the maps, had still not received final maps from either the Auckland or Westland land districts.

## Uneconomic

Meanwhile, environmental groups which have studied the maps for the other 10 land districts have found what they believe are mistaken allocations of land totalling as much as 1 million hectares.

Mr Bruce Mason, a researcher for the Public Lands Coalition based with the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, said many of the areas assigned to Landcorp were in remote, isolated places which could not possibly be economic for farming.

"One part of the Whanganui National Park has been added by error to Landcorp," he said.

## Unaware

"Rather than through deliberate conspiracy, I think it has happened because of the rush with which the allocations have taken place.

"There has not been time for officials to properly check these plans, and a lot of the officials in the Conservation Department are probably not aware of what has actually been allocated."

Mr Mason said there were "literally hundreds of misallocations," and the Conservation Department had inevitably had to concentrate only on the more important ones. Yet once land was allocated to the new corporations, they would have the power to sell any land they did not want for a profit.

Mr Mason said the coalition had had to pay more

than \$4000 to buy copies of all the maps showing the land allocations.

However, the acting chief draughtsman in the Auckland land district of Survey and Land Information, Mr Peter Kerrigan, said interim maps of the land transfers in Auckland had been available for some weeks.

He conceded that the department was only half-way through drawing up more than 110 final maps of the allocations, which were unlikely to be finished until late next week.

A spokesman for Mr Palmer said the May 22 deadline for submissions on the transfers was not final.

## Land deals too hasty

**I**N the Government's transferral of crown land to the new state corporations, the performance of Deputy Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer has fallen well short of his own, oft-proclaimed, high standards of open government.

Maori grievances related to the land transfers are now before the Court of Appeal. But tens of thousands of hectares of crown land not involved in the Maori Council's case are also being transferred to the corporations under less than satisfactory conditions.

About 50 per cent of New Zealand is crown owned, and nearly 18 per cent of that is to be transferred to the corporations. Most of it is commercial forest and farm land, but a good proportion is predominantly controlled by the Crown because of its recreational, environmental or water and soil conservation values. This land will be included among the assets the corporations are required to make a profit on.

The decisions over which land would be transferred to the corporations were initially negotiated in secrecy and haste to meet a May 1 deadline. On April 16, Mr Palmer belatedly announced that details of the land to be transferred would be made public. A public lands coalition of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Federated Mountain Clubs and the acclimatisation societies spent hours studying the maps. They highlighted major problems. In response, Mr Palmer extended the deadline for completing negotiations to May 22.

It is clear the wider interests of the public have not been accounted for. The public lands coalition has exposed obvious drafting errors. Areas of national parks are to go to Landcorp and the Forestry Corporation and riverbeds, banks and coastal shorelines are included against the provisions of the state-owned enterprises and conservation legislation. Huge areas of eroded high country are to be transferred, contrary to policy implemented by Labour in 1985 to destock and protect such land under full government control. Native forests, wetlands, tussock grasslands, estuaries, and seacoast are to be included in the corporation's commercial assets.

Perhaps some errors are understandable. But the Government has bungled through hasty action and lack of accountability. It has only one chance at the exercise so it is important to get it right. What, then, is to be done about this appalling mess?

First, the May 22 deadline for finalising transfers should be set aside. A moratorium must be placed over all transfers of land till they have been thoroughly scrutinised. Second, land under dispute should not be transferred to any corporation till an official body has heard the points at issue and made a recommendation under set guidelines.

It was originally intended that a crown estates commission would oversee the land transfers but the Government dismissed the commission before it began. The commission should be reconstituted and set to work.

Thousands of hectares of land of little commercial value but vital for environmental, water and soil conservation, recreation and tourism purposes are at stake. The wider public interest is seriously at risk unless the Government recognises the importance of putting matters to right.

# Commission takes over land issue

THE parliamentary commissioner for the environment, Helen Hughes, has offered to help resolve the argument over allocation of crown land to the land and forestry corporations.

A coalition of conservation and recreation organisations has been campaigning for greater public involvement in the allocation process.

And last night Deputy Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer said he had accepted the offer.

The Public Lands Coalition — the Acclimatisation Societies, Federated Mountain Clubs and Forest and Bird Protection Society — says large areas of land have been misallocated.

Schedules and maps of land to be transferred were made public on April 16.

On May 5 the coalition said that despite earlier assurances that only public land primarily used for forestry or farming would go to the corporations, large areas from coastal to mountain lands with high conservation and recreation values have been scheduled for transfer.

Much of the land was covered by special short-term leases or recreation permits.

Mrs Hughes said last night her inquiries showed all parties accepted there had been drafting errors, in many cases resulting in misallocation of land.

She said concerns expressed to her office by various people and organisations focussed on land allocation and exclusion of the public from the process.

The speed with which it was being carried out and the lack of

public knowledge of the criteria used were other worries.

"Clearly there must be time to correct all demonstrable errors. Given the goodwill of the parties this process should be able to be completed without delay."

However, where allocations had been contested there might not be a ready solution, Mrs Hughes said.

Any solution, which should be reached as soon as possible and not to the detriment of the environment, should address five issues, she said. They were

□ The time to correct drafting errors and review contested allocations. The wish of the government and corporations to complete asset transfers should not lead to the imposition of unreasonable time constraints.

□ Public identification and notification of credible and more precise allocation criteria. Broad categories previously established by the Government appeared inadequate to deal with contested areas.

□ The need for a public evaluation process or procedure.

□ Technical help for the government to establish more precise criteria and to apply them to specific cases.

□ The need for contested areas to be held by the residual Lands Department in the meantime.

Mr Palmer said last night: "I fully agree with Mrs Hughes that this issue is one of considerable environmental significance. It is therefore a matter which is contemplated by the Environment Act as being appropriate for her to review."

# The transfer of Crown land

Dominion 25 May 1987

Sir, — Your editorial of May 19 on the transfer of Crown land fails to explain that the policy of what is to be transferred is clear and was announced well over a year ago. The policy is that land for production forestry should go to Forestry Corporation, land used principally for commercial farming should go to Land Corporation and land with significant conservation or recreation values should go to the new Department of Conservation — which, of course, means that the land remains Crown land.

The only issue is on the application of that policy. I have heard no argument against the policy itself. When the process of allocation had been settled in a preliminary way I announced the proposed allocation and pointed out where the schedules and maps could be inspected all over New Zealand. Contrary to what you say there was no May 1 deadline imposed and indeed no deadline has been imposed yet for the date of transfer. The statement I issued on April 15 said: "There have been suggestions that some parcels of land have been placed in the wrong category by the officials who compiled these schedules. If that is so those particular cases will be looked at by ministers before the agreements for sale and purchase are drawn up." That is hardly an exercise in secrecy.

For the vast bulk of the land there are no problems. In less than 5 per cent of cases do any problems arise. Those problems will be carefully examined. If there are particular pieces of land that require long and detailed study they will remain in the hands of the Department of Lands until that is complete.

Certainly I will not adhere to any deadline which may cause the matters not to be gone into thoroughly. That has already been made clear publicly. Mr Woollaston said so in an interview, the transcript of which was supplied to you. But it is important for the groups interested in the process to get their views in.

I do not share your faith in quangos. I do not see why the Government should have a quango look into the questions of allocation when in the end it will have to be ministers who make the decisions.

GEOFFREY PALMER  
Deputy Prime Minister

There was a May 1 deadline, and it was extended till May 22. If it was a flexible deadline, and we are glad to hear

from Mr Palmer that it is, then the Public Lands Coalition was certainly not informed of that. The coalition, made up of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Acclimatisation societies, and the Federated Mountain Clubs, was the primary objecting group. It is all very well to say the maps were available, but they did not become available till April 16; they trickled out from that date, and at least one set of maps, for the entire area north of Auckland, had not been made available to meet the May 22 deadline which the coalition was told was firm.

Inspecting those maps to identify which land has been misallocated is a huge task which has cost the coalition many thousands of dollars and a great deal of time. It is a job which should properly have been done by the Government before this began. Mr Palmer says that less than five per cent of the land is involved but the fact is that many thousands of hectares may have been misallocated. If this land is not picked up in time the public's chance to preserve some very important areas will be gone.

Editor

# Mr Palmer Praises Land Coalition

(PA)

WELLINGTON

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer, has praised the Public Land Coalitions contribution to resolving arguments over conservation and corporation land allocations.**

Mr Palmer, who chairs the Cabinet committee on State-owned enterprises, was yesterday given a copy of the coalition's Crown Land Catalogue which, it says, lists 3000 misallocations of public land with high conser-

vation and recreation values to the Land and Forestry Corporations.

The submissions were so detailed they would be attached to the official summary of the areas in question to be made public today, Mr Palmer said.

"I am told this is the most comprehensive, thorough and best researched submission of all," he said.

Representatives of the Forest and Bird Society, Federated Mountain Clubs, acclimatization societies and the Native Forest Action Council have been working since mid-April to identify areas of land, totalling about 600,000ha, which they say had been incorrectly earmarked for the corporations.

Their presentation to Mr Palmer marks the end of stage one — the identification of the areas. Stage two — rectification — will be the work of a technical advisory group on which the coalition is seeking representation.

On May 28, the Government agreed to the two-stage process giving departmental and corporation officials until today to sort out drafting errors or decisions contrary to Government policy and until December 15 to resolve contest allocations of land with conservation and recreation value, as well some productive use of potential.

Mr Palmer said yesterday the timetable would be flexible.

"I am not going to allow it to be hurried for the sake of hurrying. It will take as long as it takes to do properly."

Most would be finished by December and a lot would be cleared in about two months but he said he had learned to be cautious in anticipating dates.

While mistakes would be righted relatively quickly, there were a number of contested allocations which would take longer to resolve, Mr Palmer said.

In the meantime, the land in question would remain in Crown ownership with the Department of Land.

Careful and well-reasoned submissions had helped persuade the committee that more time and work would be required on the allocation issue, he said.

The coalition had done a tremendous amount of work and had provided the Government with cheap advice.

"I know how fearsomely complex this stuff is and it's not surprising mistakes were made."

Souhland Times 16 June 1987



## Land fiasco averted

**T**HE Government has been forced to recognise the sad state of the proposed land carve-up that accompanied corporatisation. Inadequate procedures meant that vast areas of land with water and soil, environmental and recreational value were scheduled for transfer to the corporations. Thanks almost entirely to a public lands coalition of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Federated Mountain Clubs and the acclimatisation societies, that error has been averted. Now the Government has quite rightly decided to keep disputed allocations of land under Crown ownership till the issues have been resolved.

A technical advisory group of officials and representatives from the coalition, the Maori community and Federated Farmers has drawn up criteria for solving disputed allocations. Officials have also compared scheduled allocations with Government policy. They discovered areas of pastoral leasehold land, over which recreational permits were held, were scheduled for transfer, contrary to the State Owned Enterprises Act. Now that land will remain under Crown ownership. Likewise, large river beds and a number of other areas will remain with the Crown.

The chairman of the Cabinet committee on state owned enterprises, Geoffrey Palmer, has been generous in his praise of the coalition in presenting "the most comprehensive, thorough and best-researched submission of all". So he should be. The coalition checked every scheduled land transfer against topographical maps and presented it to the Government. This should have been done by the new Department of Conservation, which failed in its task.

The coalition spent about \$15,000 on maps, technical equipment, extra research staff, travelling and printing costs. In addition, six to seven people worked well into the night, seven days a week for six weeks to complete the task. Mr Palmer should demonstrate the sincerity of his praise and ensure the Government reimburses the coalition in full for its time and expenditure.

The coalition has done the job which the Government should have ensured was properly completed by the Department of Conservation. It has saved the Government the embarrassment of the inevitable results of its own inadequate efforts.

It has also saved taxpayers vast amounts of money. Had the scheduled land transfers gone through, taxpayers would have had to pay millions of dollars to buy land back from the corporations. These efforts should be recognised.

The coalition identified 3000 misallocations of land totalling about 600,000 hectares. Much of this land is still under dispute. Officials from the technical advisory group met yesterday for the first time to oversee the resolution of disputed allocations. But the three public representatives from the coalition, the Maori Community and Federated Farmers have been shut out of the meetings.

Why? Are we to see a continuation of the deals behind closed doors that led to the shambles in the first place? This must not happen. The officials have not demonstrated any success in acknowledging the wider interests of the public in this issue so far. If the Government wants to extract any credibility from this affair it must ensure the three representatives are put back on the committee immediately.

# Distribution of public land

Sir, — Your editorial of June 17 correctly quotes my praise for the efforts of the public lands coalition in preparing their very thorough and comprehensive submission on land allocations. They did so in response to my invitation in April this year.

You are also correct in noting that a technical advisory group of officials and representatives from public interest groups — the coalition, the Maori community and Federated Farmers have developed criteria to be applied to the allocation of land in dispute. The Government has now approved those criteria and they will be made available publicly at regional offices of the Ministry for the Environment and Department of Survey and Land Information. Also available at those offices for public inspection will be a schedule of land allocations in dispute and a summary of public submissions.

However, you are incorrect in claiming that officials of the technical advisory group met on June 16 but public interest group representatives were excluded. I made clear in my press statement of May 28 that the technical advisory group was to report to the ministerial subcommittee on land allocation by June 15 with recommended criteria. This it has done.

We are now into the next phase of the exercise which is application of those criteria to the areas in dispute. My statement of May 28 made it clear that this was to be done by the Department of Conservation and the state-owned enterprises under the chairmanship of the Ministry for the Environment. At no time was it envisaged or suggested that the criteria developed by the technical advisory group would be applied in any other way.

I have already written to the public interest groups involved and invited their future participation by, first, input through agencies represented on the interagency task group; second, an opportunity to provide independent advice to ministers based on the recommendations of the task group and before decisions are made; and third, participation through the technical advisory group to design the process that will be followed to resolve those allocations which cannot be determined in the present study.

The Government welcomes the positive contribution of public interest groups in this process.

**GEOFFREY PALMER**  
Deputy Prime Minister

Dominion x June 1987

□ The Dominion's claim, disputed by Mr Palmer, is correct. The meeting was held at 1pm that day and it was substantially the same membership as the technical advisory group, minus the three public interest members. The letter Mr Palmer refers to was not sent out to the representatives until after that meeting. The effect is that the very people who identified the problem and helped develop the criteria to solve it have been excluded from the negotiating table while those who were responsible for the mess in the first place have been trusted with resolving it. That this was intended, as Mr Palmer says, merely compounds the problem. What we are now left with is an extraordinarily complex and cumbersome procedure of the variety that Mr Palmer has so often railed against. Why not adopt the more simple approach of including those who have the detailed knowledge at all phases of the process? — Editor.

## Allocating state lands

Sir, — Your June 17 editorial on the important issue of public lands allocated was well argued and I welcome the prominence you have given to the public lands coalition. It does, however, leave the impression that the Department of Conservation has been inactive. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I can think of no issue which has been more consistently pursued by the department since its inception. Indeed, although the department was only formally inaugurated on April 1, the small establishment unit worked with members of the public lands coalition last year (before the coalition was formally set up). The environmental and recreation groups were a natural ally for the department in identifying and arguing the conservation values which were at stake. Dr McSweeney was retained by us as a consultant for this very purpose in July 1986.

At a time when the department and the individuals

within it were dealing with the immediate pressures of restructuring, the land allocation issue has at no stage been given other than top priority. Many of my colleagues have, like the coalition, put in an extraordinary amount of time to complete proper identification of the conservation interests of all public groups (and these interests go wider than those of the coalition, for example in the area of Maori or historic values).

The record will also show that our approach has been based on a clear and consistent ethic about the importance of land. It is not just a commodity, it defines each person's relationship to the nation's heritage and enriches our sense of identity. The commonality between conservation values and Maori values is here apparent. I have regarded it as essential for the department to demonstrate this philosophical commitment from the outset. I therefore made sure that the task was given as many resources as we could spare.

In the most recent phase, our constructive partnership with the coalition has been maintained. Their input was essential for the identification of values over a wide range of public lands. As in the past, the department will share the costs incurred by them in making this key contribution. The main theme of your editorial, therefore, is one I can readily endorse.

**KEN PIDDINGTON**  
Director-General of Conservation

## Crown land allotment

Sir, — Your editorial of June 17 entitled Land Fiasco Averted stated representatives of public interest groups have been shut out of a technical advisory group which is making recommendations on crown land allocations. There is also a claim that deals are continuing to be made behind closed doors. I would like to reassure you and your readers

that I have the responsibility to ensure that land deals detrimental to the environment are not being made behind closed doors.

The position of Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has been established to act in part as the public watchdog on environmental matters. It was my office that recommended technical criteria be used to resolve disputed land allocations and my office that has been involved in identifying criteria and in monitoring how these criteria are applied.

I am extremely pleased that agreement was reached by a representative committee on criteria and on a process for determining land allocations. The next step of applying the criteria to the disputed land areas can best be done by a small group of officials. My office is represented by Dr Bruce Miller. He is there to monitor that the criteria are rigorously applied. There must be an objective way of making recommendations. No agency should feel they have failed their public interest groups if criteria indicate land should be allocated in a different way.

I understand public interest groups will have another opportunity to view recommendations. The process is an open one and I trust all groups will also apply the criteria rigorously when they comment on recommendations.

I hope this helps to clarify the process being followed and to reassure you that I will continue to independently monitor its credibility.

**HELEN R. HUGHES**  
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

# Tidying up land misallocations

Parliamentary Reporter

WELLINGTON. — A group of officials is wading its way through mistakes made in the allocation of Crown land to the new Lands Corporation, months after the transfer was first attempted.

A technical advisory group has been given the job of deciding which lands should go to Landcorp and which to the Department of Conservation.

It is expected to report to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt Hon G. W. R. Palmer, next June or July, over a year after the lands were supposed to be allocated.

Misallocations have been claimed in about 3,000 separate cases, covering about 600,000 hectares of land.

The Public Lands Coalition, made up of various environmental groups, has produced a comprehensive Crown land catalogue detailing the mistakes.

It lists all the natural lands, water and areas of recreational importance which, in the coalition's opinion, should be kept in Crown ownership or protected permanently.

## MAJOR TASK

The coalition said that tidying up the public estate of New Zealand which had been built up over more than a century was a major task.

"Ninety percent of the task has been completed successfully and if this final 10 percent can be acceptably resolved, the end result should be successful corporations owning commercial farming, production forest and urban land while the Department of Conservation administers

our important natural and recreational lands," the preamble to the catalogue said.

Mr Palmer, who is chairman of the ministerial sub-committee that will decide the final allocations of land, invited public submissions on the land allocations on April 12 this year.

Once the lands are allocated to the corporations they can be sold, and would therefore be out of public control.

"Preliminary work in just three of New Zealand's 12 land districts found that thousands of hectares of native protection forest, severely eroded mountain land, wetland, estuaries and riverbeds were included in lands scheduled for transfer to the corporations," the catalogue said.

"The initial problem we encountered was that despite Mr Palmer's April 12 announcement, few of the allocation maps were publicly available.

## 'UNREALISTIC'

"In fact, maps were to trickle out of regional offices of the Department of Survey and Land Information over the next six weeks with the last maps of Northland not being available until May 26. Consequently the deadlines for public comment (June 12) set by the Government were shown to be completely unrealistic."

Mr Palmer said officials had reported to him on drafting errors and instances of misallocations. Amendments would be made to maps and schedules to fix them, and the changes would be notified publicly.

"The exercise has confirmed that most of the remaining problems relate to land which has significant conservation or recreation values in addition to some productive use or potential," he said.

Resolution of disputed areas would be done using the criteria developed by the Technical Advisory Group.

He said that when the criteria was applied in a rigorous and consistent way solutions might be found for many of the current problems.

Mr Palmer, who is chairman of the ministerial sub-committee that will decide the final allocations of land, invited public submissions on the land allocations on April 12 this year.

If disputes could not be solved by the current process the technical advisory group would recommend a solution to the Government by December this year.

Land still in dispute would be administered by the residual Department of Lands under management agreement with the DOC and the relevant state-owned enterprises.

# Submissions on land allocation can be inspected by public

Two reports related to the allocation of lands to Landcorp, Forestry Corporation and the Department of Conservation, have been released by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt Hon G. W. R. Palmer.

They are the Technical Advisory Group's report on criteria for the allocation of lands outstanding after government restructuring and a report on public submissions received on the land allocations.

Interested groups and individuals can see the reports through regional offices of the Department

of Survey and Land Information and the Ministry for the Environment.

Ministry for the Environment investigating officer for the southern regions, Mr D. Brash, said it was a chance for the public to see what submissions have been made and whether anything had been left out of the summary of submission compiled by the Ministry for the Environment.

Mr Palmer initiated the Technical Advisory Group to produce the report three weeks ago. The development of guidelines for the allocation of lands in the report has led to substantial progress in completing the land allocations, Mr Palmer said.

## DECISION

He is chairman of the Cabinet Co-ordinating Committee on State-Owned Enterprises and chairman of the Ministerial sub-committee that will decide on the final allocations of land.

"Officials from DOC, the corporations and the Department of Land and Survey Information have reported to me on drafting errors and instances of misallocations. Amendments will now be made to

maps and schedules to remedy these, and the changes will be publically notified," Mr Palmer said.

Most remaining problems relate to land with significant conservation or recreation values in addition to some productive use or potential, he said.

Over 200 submissions were received by the government on the land allocations issue, with a comprehensive document from the Public Lands Coalition. The public's concerns were recognised by the report on the submissions, he said.

## LOOKED INTO

Concerns raised by the public would be fully addressed in the next stage of the allocation process, Mr Palmer said.

Criteria developed by the Technical Advisory Group, convened by the Ministry for the Environment, would be used to resolve land allocations in dispute.

Mr Palmer said membership of the group represented a wide range of interests and the criteria itself is comprehensive.

"They cover factors such as tenure and current use, cultural and community concerns, environmental aspects, recreational and access values, commercial

and economic factors, and management issues."

The criteria would be applied by a Ministerial sub-committee of DOC, Landcorp and Forestry Corporation under the chairmanship of the Ministry for the Environment to all disputed areas, Mr Palmer said.

There would also be provision for further involvement by the public, he said.

## OUTCOME

The outcome of the Ministerial sub-committee would be reported at the end of June.

Disputes which could not reasonably be resolved in the current process would be detailed by the Ministry for the Environment and with the Technical Advisory Group, a process for resolving their allocation would be recommended by December 15, 1987.

Land still in dispute would be administered by the Residual Department of Lands.

Areas in Otago and Southland most commonly held in dispute by the public submissions (other than those of the Public Lands Coalition) were identified in the Ministry for the Environment's report as:

East Otago Uplands (particularly the Nardoo catchment) for protection of tussock grassland (should go to DOC).

Ohau State Forest particularly river flats and forests in the Maitland/South Temple valley/ (to DOC).

Seacliff Forest remnants in North Otago has important remaining coastal forest (to DOC).

Ahuriri valley as an ecologically important river valley (to DOC).

Western lowland forest (beech forest within Longwood, Dean, Rowallen State Forests) as remaining areas of lowland beech (to DOC).

Matzara, Waikaia and Uretī riverbeds as land within or adjacent to rivers with recreational and ecological values (to DOC).

Kepler Mire wetland, as an ecologically important area (to DOC); West Dome State Forest Ecological Area as an ecologically important area (to DOC).

Eyre Creek and Cainard Farm Settlement, erosion prone and ecologically important area (to DOC).

Walter Peak special lease land, for protection of environmentally sensitive high country (to DOC).

Parcels of rural unalienated Crown land as ecologically sensitive land that should be under Crown ownership.

Areas providing adequate representative ecological reserves; pockets of lakeshore and riverside land with recreational and ecological importance (to DOC).

## PROTECTION

A summary of the report on the public's submissions said most concerns related to the need for greater protection of the conservation and recreation values of specific areas. Public access was of particular concern. Most submissions sought retention of such areas in Crown ownership.

Many groups and individuals were concerned that the original allocations had been too hasty, with insufficient public involvement.

The summary said future allocation should include clear public notification of decisions about allocation and opportunities for public submission; provision for relevant values to be taken into account; adequate levels of accessibility to relevant information and adequate time for complex issues to be resolved

# Land Disputes Almost Resolved: Palmer

(PA) WELLINGTON  
Most disputes over land allocation to the Department of Conservation and state-owned enterprises were almost resolved, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Palmer, announced yesterday.

"Good progress has been made," he said in a statement. "Relatively few areas are likely to remain in question after the current review."

Mr Palmer this year initiated a review of Crown

land allocated to the Department of Conservation and the SOEs.

The review was based on criteria developed by a technical advisory group convened by Ministry of the Environment. The group included representatives from the Public Lands Coalition, Federated Farmers and Maori interests, as well as officials.

Early last month officials completed their review and passed their draft recommendations to public

interest groups for comment.

"The response from public interest groups has been timely and helpful," Mr Palmer said. "More than 80 per cent of disputed allocations have been resolved.

"Queries remain on some 100,000ha, much of which is land with multiple conservation and production values where officials have recommended interim allocation to Department of Lands.

"More detailed investi-

gations and consultation can then take place."

Mr Palmer had asked officials to examine the comments from public interest representatives, and to identify any new information or possible inconsistencies in application of allocation criteria.

"Questions raised about public access to and across corporation lands will also be reviewed. This is an issue which is still of some concern to outdoor recreation groups," he said.

# Pleasing progress on land disputes

WELLINGTON (PA). — Fewer than 50 cases remain of 2,200 disputed allocations of Crown land to new State-owned corporations, the Minister assisting the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Woollaston, said yesterday.

Mr Woollaston chaired an ad hoc ministerial committee which supervised the allocation process.

"The criteria established by the Technical Advisory Group . . . resulted in fewer cases than anticipated being left in the too hard basket," he said in a statement.

Of more than 2,200 disputed allocations covering about 150,000 hectares, less than 50 were being held

by the Department of Lands.

The allocation of Canterbury river beds also still had to be resolved and West Coast allocations were not included in the process.

Further submissions from the public would help make the final allocations, Mr Woollaston said.

## CRITERIA

The criteria used to "sieve" allocations included questions of predomi-

nant use, cultural values, environmental and landscape issues and commercial and management issues.

Schedules of revised land allocations would be available from the Department of Survey and Land Information and Department of Conservation from January 5, 1988. Copies had also been sent to all united councils and catchment boards.

Public Lands Coalition spokesman, Dr G. McSweeney, of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, said the progress announced by Government yesterday was a tribute to hard work by the public in submissions. It was also a responsive and co-operative approach by government corporations and Department of Conservation officials.

"We would like to congratulate both Mr Palmer and Mr Woollaston on the way in which public concerns about the Crown land carve-up have been listened to and patiently addressed," Dr McSweeney said yesterday in a statement.

Lands allocated to the Department of Conservation include native forests, shrubland and tussock in the Canterbury, Marlborough, Nelson and Wanganui foothills, Golden Bay shrublands, Ahuriri estuary in Napier, lowland forest at Rotoehu in the Bay of Plenty, dunelands on Muriwai beach and South Kaipara Head, north of Auckland.

Areas to be held in the interim by the Department of Lands include the Western Southland beech forests, Crown-owned high country at Eyre-Cainard, Southland, and Glazebrook, Marlborough, Canterbury river-beds, shrublands at Aotubia-Poarangi in Taranaki, wetlands on Okiwi Station on Great Barrier Island and kauri forest at Punuruku in the Bay of Islands.

"A review of these lands early next year . . . will provide further chance to make sure these important natural areas are not lost from the public estate through sale to the corporations," Dr McSweeney said.

**Public Notice**



**Dept of  
LANDS  
and  
SURVEY**

**INVERCARGILL  
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS  
UNALLOCATED LANDS**

Public submissions are invited on the allocation to the Department of Conservation and State Owned Enterprises of previously unallocated Crown lands and former State forest land.

Schedules detailing the unallocated land within each land district are available for perusal through the District Manager of the department located in Department of Survey and Land Information.

For the Southland Land District please apply to: The District Manager, Department of Lands, 5th Floor, Menzies Building, Esk Street, Invercargill. Postal address, PO Box 826, Invercargill.

These schedules incorporate the provisional recommendations of the local representatives of Department of Conservation, Land Corporation Limited and New Zealand Forestry Corporation Limited.

A standard submission sheet is held by the District Manager.

Submissions close with the undersigned on April 1, 1988.

I. D. Campbell  
Acting Director-General of Lands  
PO Box 12-162  
Thorndon  
WELLINGTON

# Corporations under fire from conservation group

WELLINGTON (PA). — A conservation group has accused four State-owned corporations of trying to force the Government to finalise asset transfers at a conservation cost, including loss of publicly owned hydro-electric lakes.

The Public Lands Coalition, a conservation and recreation grouping of the acclimatisation societies, Federated Mountain Clubs, Forest and Bird Protection Society and the Native Forests Action Council, claimed if the corporations are successful there will be major effects on wildlife, the landscape and the rights of the public to use the outdoors.

Spokesman, Mr G. McSweeney said one example of the coalition's concerns is Electricorp, which has revealed it wants to own many publicly-owned lakes and river beds, particularly in the Waitaki Valley and Mackenzie Basin.

If that happens, the corporation will own much of the rare black stilt's breeding habitat and control access to some of the best fishing and watersport areas in New Zealand, he said.

"We have no objection to them owning dams and other related power generation structures. However, it is a fundamental principle in New Zealand that most lakes and rivers are public assets which should stay in Crown control."

Dr McSweeney said the Government wants the transfer of assets finalised by the end of the month to balance its books.

The Minister for the Environment, Mr Palmer, and Associate Minister, Mr Woollaston, had set up a public process to review land allocations to the corporations and identify and protect conservation and recreation values before that deadline.

However, while the public groups have welcomed the process and cooperated with it, the corporations have not, he said.

The corporations are being inflexible and their aim seems to be to stall a resolution so the Govern-

ment eventually will be overwhelmed by so many unresolved issues that hasty decisions will be taken to meet budget deadlines.

"In such a situation public recreation and conservation values will be certain losers."

Other examples cited by the coalition include a continuing claim by Landcorp to control thousands of hectares of South Island high country, as well as erosion-prone kiwi habitat shrublands in the Gisborne-Wanganui areas.

Landcorp is also challenging a Government requirement to set aside riverside strips — the Queen's chain — on properties to be transferred to it.

The Forestry Corporation has generally cooperated in land allocation negotiations, but is continuing its campaign for control of the Dean, Rowallan and Longwood beech forests near Fiordland National Park, despite their recreation and wildlife importance.

Coalcorp also wants to own extensive publicly-owned natural areas of Buller and north Westland where it has been granted mining licences, Dr McSweeney said.

This will make it hard to reserve areas not needed for mining, and could severely restrict public access to the coal plateau, an area actively promoted by West Coast tourist interests.

Electricorp corporate relations manager, Judith Aitken, said she did not know where the coalition had come across its revelation.

The corporation only wants enough land to efficiently operate its existing plant and easements to operate hydro lakes.

It would be quite happy for areas like camping grounds to be transferred to the Crown for recreational use.

"We're very open and favourably disposed towards maximum possible public use."

The question of ownership has not been established, but there is nothing new or different about the access and recreational use policies, she said.

The only times the public could be kept out would be for safety reasons when river or lake levels were being raised or if the efficient operation of electricity generation would be jeopardised.



# Land allocations announced

WELLINGTON (PA). — Land allocations between State-owned enterprises and the Department of Conservation (DOC), which were decided upon by the ministerial committee on land allocation, were announced yesterday.

The determinations cover Land Corporation land on the West Coast and complete allocations for the Coal Corporation, Telecom and the Airways Corporation, the committee chairman, Mr P. T. E. Woollaston, said.

Some areas within the allocations had had special covenants placed on them for conservation, recreation or historic reasons.

Land allocations for the West Coast region recognised conservation, recreation and historical values, as well as the potential for farming and other commercial opportunities, Mr Woollaston said.

Some land which needed further evaluation to determine its relative commercial and conservation values has not been allocated to either agency, but held by the Department of Land in the interim, he said.

Riverbeds, including pasture on unconsolidated land along river margins, would remain in Crown ownership and had been allocated to the DOC.

The future management of State Forest land in South Westland south of the Cook River, was not included in the schedules released yesterday.

That would be decided upon when the land use committee, chaired by the Secretary for the Environment, Dr R. Blakeley, reported to the Government.

He noted that much of the land under consideration was subject to claims before the Waitangi Tribunal from the Ngai Tahu Trust Board.

Coalcorp has been allocated the 2,200 hec-

tares Stockton coalfield, Mr Woollaston said.

When mining licences expired the land covered by them would revert to Crown ownership.

Coalcorp and the DOC would negotiate details of agreements for public access to Coalcorp land and arrangements for protected national area surveys.

The Minister of Energy must consider the environmental values when issuing mining and prospecting licences to Coalcorp and when setting conditions on work practices.

Most land being transferred to the Airways Corporation has little conservation or public access value, Mr Woollaston said.

Telecom allocations were similar, with five covenants placed, mostly on satellite and radio stations around the country.

Copies of the schedules will be available from the Department of Survey and Land Information regional offices from next week.

# SOE Land Claims Settled

(PA)

WELLINGTON

**Decisions have been made on most disputed areas of land to be allocated to State-owned enterprises, chairman of the Ministerial Land Allocation Committee, Mr Woollaston, said yesterday.**

When land was originally allocated to Landcorp and the Department of Conservation after the passing of the State Owned Enterprises Act last year, environmental groups and others disputed some allocations.

A 51.9ha ridge paddock area of Oklwi Station on Great Barrier Island would be administered by the Department of Conservation, Mr Woollaston said.

The area is a habitat for the endangered brown teal and is of archaeological importance.

At Glazebrook Run in Marlborough, the balance of disputed land would be allocated to Landcorp, which would work to implement the Waiotopal Catchment Protection Scheme.

The high altitude and severely eroded land subsequently retired would revert to the Crown.

A 480ha block at Mossburn, containing the Oreti fishery, would be allocated to the Conservation Department. A long-term grazing lease would be negotiated between the department and Landcorp.

The Eyre Creek and Cainard high country station land in Eyre Mountains, Southland, had been split between the department and Landcorp.

In Taranaki, parts of disputed Aotuhia and Poarangi allocations unsuitable for farming would be transferred to the department.

No sale of land would take place until the department and Landcorp had reached agreement on protection, or until the department had exercised first right of purchase.

Meanwhile, the Eyre Mountain allocation means nearly 20,000 hectares will be designated as reserve, the national president of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Dr Alan Mark, said yesterday.

The area was one the Society's surveys had found to be rich in rare mountain daisies, a giant buttercup and uncommon speargrass.

Dr Mark welcomed the news that most of the remaining disputed Crown allocations had been resolved.

There remained only 40,000ha of Crown land in dispute — 33,000ha of Western Southland beech forest, the Kaumau wetlands in Northland, Wharekauri wetlands in the Chatham Islands and the Ohuka shrublands in Hawkes Bay.

Dr Mark hoped those matters could be sorted out with the same co-operation that achieved yesterday's result.