

THE KING'S NEPAL ANIMALS.

ARRIVAL AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

The British India Company's Afghanistan, in which the collection of Indian animals presented to the King by the Government of Nepal was shipped from Calcutta, arrived in the Thames on Sunday, but missed the tide that morning, and was not berthed in the Royal Albert Docks until yesterday afternoon. A veterinary inspector representing the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the Secretary of the Zoological Society, boarded the ship before it entered the docks, and after careful examination of the animals, it was possible to give them a clean bill of health, and to obtain from the Board by telegraph the necessary landing permit.

Mr. Basu, the Superintendent of the Calcutta Zoological Gardens, who came home in charge of the animals, reported that the voyage had been fortunately uneventful. There had been a few relatively unimportant deaths, including one Indian antelope, three flying squirrels, four pheasants, a peacock, a partridge, and several small reptiles, but the accommodation provided had been very good, the large animals had borne the journey well, and there had been no signs of any contagious sickness.

The unloading was watched by a small crowd of reporters with cameras, but the animals took the proceedings calmly, and no exciting incident occurred. The heaviest case was that containing the rhinoceros, but the steam crane swung it on a lorry with ease. The pair of water buffaloes had been tethered in a hay-shed under the bridge, and were unwilling to enter the horse boxes provided for their transport, and their struggles with the two native keepers in the picturesque uniform of the Calcutta "Zoo" made a curiously exotic picture. Before long they, too, were safely put ashore.

Messrs. Pickford had horse trollies in waiting, and before 8 p.m. the vanloads left for Regent's Park, where they arrived about midnight. The animals were fed and watered and covered up or put under shelter for the night. They will be taken out of their travelling cases and placed in the enclosures provided for them early this morning.

The rhinoceros is a fine young animal, apparently four or five years old. The water buffaloes are a splendid pair, with a fine spread of wrinkled, angular horns. They come from Chittagong, and, although bred in captivity, are of partly wild ancestry, as the natives there tether their cows in the forest and leave them to mate with wild bulls. Among the eleven deer there is a very beautiful albino barking deer, a pair of Swamp deer, and an axis deer. The sheep and goats include a fighting ram and two examples of the "one-horned" sheep. There is a well-grown kyang, but it was impossible to see much of it in its packing case. With the three leopards belonging to the collection Mr. David Ezra has sent a fine black leopard. The smaller carnivores include three wolves, a fox, and a jackal, and there are four half-grown Himalayan bears with extremely good coats.

The smaller mammals include Malabar squirrels, civets, mongooses, and porcupines. The birds are rather disappointing, but there is at least one very rare pheasant and several valuable pigeons. There are a number of reptiles, but until these have been unpacked not much can be said about them. Several very large lizards, and two gharials, the sharp-nosed crocodiles which are usually called "gavials" as the result of a persistent mistake in transliteration, will be specially welcome. It is not easy to estimate the money value of a collection of this kind, as there is not a free market in living animals, but the larger animals alone must be worth more than £800. The expenses of the voyage home are being defrayed by the Duke of Bedford, President of the Society.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

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