

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT A DEPUTATION FROM
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE
WILD FAUNA OF THE EMPIRE TO THE RIGHT
HON. THE EARL OF ELGIN, HIS MAJESTY'S
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Colonial Office, Whitehall, S.W. : Friday, June 15, 1906.

PRESENT :

The DUCHESS OF BEDFORD.
Lord CURZON OF KEDLESTON.
Mr. E. N. BUXTON.
Mr. S. H. WHITBREAD.
Mr. W. SCORESBY ROUTLEDGE,
Mr. F. C. SELOUS.
Mr. FREDERICK GILLETT.
Col. J. H. PATTERSON, D.S.O.
Lord MONK BRETTON.
Sir WILLIAM LEE WARNER.

Dr. P. CHALMERS MITCHELL, F.R.S.
(Secretary of the Zoological
Society).
Mr. EDWARD P. TENNANT.
Mr. E. E. AUSTEN.
Mr. MERVYN WILLIAMS.
Sir HENRY SETON-KARR.
The Hon. WILFRID ASHLEY.
Mr. RHYS WILLIAMS, *Hon. Sec.*

Mr. E. N. BUXTON : My Lord, I beg to introduce this Deputation from the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire. We had the privilege of waiting on your predecessor a year ago, and we felt that matters had marched since then : a great many settlers have come into your dominions, which rather alters the aspect of the case ; and, besides that, we did not get all that we hoped to have got last year, although we had a most sympathetic answer from Mr. Lyttelton. One of the most important things which the Society emphasised was the necessity of spending more money upon the preservation of the species. We think that we have now a stronger case for asking that, more especially in British East Africa.

You were kind enough to send to the Society a number of despatches of great interest, from your Commissioners, dealing with this subject, and we find, what some of us knew before, that the actual revenue in East Africa from licences and fines from game-hunters amounts to something like £10,000 a year, to say nothing of the very large indirect expenditure, such as freight on railways, which is expended in the country ; and we think that on the lowest ground we can ask you to require a larger expenditure on watching and supervision than has hitherto been the case. The Sub-Commissioner, in the report which you sent to us, deals with this

letter from a very old servant of the Crown, with regard to whom there is no one who can be said to have had equal experience in the matter (I refer to Sir John Kirk). He says: 'But I am certain that nothing but well-chosen and strictly preserved reserves will save the game from extermination.' That, I think, is an opinion which will carry weight with everybody who knows Africa.

I will ask Lord Curzon of Kedleston to say a few words.

LORD CURZON: Lord Elgin, although I was invited to do so, I did not like to assume the responsibility of introducing this influential Deputation to you this morning, because I do not myself possess the familiarity with the conditions and state of the reserves in Africa which would enable me to address you with anything like the authority that Mr. Buxton has; still, I am very glad indeed to say a few words on the general question of principle which was raised by Mr. Buxton in the concluding part of his remarks, and about which he read that exceedingly weighty pronouncement from Sir John Kirk. I think, perhaps, I have some little right to do so, because the question of game, which I think did not come very prominently to the front in India during your time, did attract the notice of the Government of India in mine. We found that in India the same conditions existed to a large extent which Mr. Buxton has described as existing in South Africa.

We find in India a progressive diminution of many interesting and valuable types of animal life, which is due to a number of causes, the improvement of firearms, the increasing depredations of the natives, sometimes to protect their crops—which, of course, is a very worthy reason—sometimes to obtain food for themselves—again a very proper reason—sometimes, alas, for the money to be derived from the sale of skins and hides. Well, looking at the question in India, we came to the conclusion that there were two ways of dealing with that diminution of those types of animal life: one is by more stringent Game Laws, and the other is by reserves. Now, in regard to India, your familiarity with that country, my Lord, will remind you that we have existing in India, owing to natural causes, perhaps, the greatest extent of reserves in the world. In the first place we have our forest reserves, which, no doubt, were created in the first place for the growth and preservation of timber, but which constitute indirectly a sort of reserve for game; then the Native States in India, particularly when you have a sporting Rajah at the head, are in themselves a sort of reserve; and, finally, all along the north of India you have under the mountains the long strip of Nepaul, which, as at present administered, is perhaps the finest natural game preserve in the world. Therefore in India we have not to look at the question from the same point of view as in Africa; we have not got to create reserves, because they exist; and in India we were devoting ourselves, when I left the country, to an alteration and a strengthening of the Game Laws.

Now we turn to Africa, about which Mr. Buxton has been

speaking. There, as I understand, the conditions are absolutely the inverse: we have the Game Laws which have been devised in all the different Protectorates, many of which I have seen, which seem to me to be most skilfully and properly adapted to the varying conditions, differing, as they do, in different parts, and which, as Mr. Buxton has just said, are administered by high-minded and intelligent officers. Therefore we do not come to you now to ask you for any strengthening of the Game Laws, but we turn to the other branch of the subject, namely the reserves, and we come to you and ask you to use your great influence to supply those conditions which will make the reserves effective. Do not let us, who are enthusiasts upon this matter, for a moment conceal the fact that a case is made out, I do not say a strong case, but that an argument is made out against this policy of reserves. Let us admit that, and let us be prepared to contest it. I have read the correspondence in the papers to which Mr. Buxton alluded, and I am well aware that there are people who protest against these reserves on agricultural grounds, on economical grounds, on the grounds of protection for the natives, and on the grounds of the depredations alleged to be committed by the wild game which tend to collect inside these reserves. In my view all those arguments are important, and it will be the greatest mistake in the world to brush them on one side as worthless, because they are held by serious people, and people whose opinions carry weight, and what we have to do rather is to balance the case and to see what is to be said on the other side, and to inform our minds as to whether we are justified in asking you to decide on the whole in favour of reserves rather than against them.

I should be disposed myself to put the argument rather on different grounds from those which were adopted by Mr. Buxton. Although I hope I may regard myself as a keen sportsman, I will not look at the matter from the hunter's point of view; I do not think you ought to simply defend these reserves in order to provide shooting for young officials, be they officials of the Government or be they globe-trotters. Nor, again, do I think one ought to defend them mainly from what I may call the naturalist's point of view, I mean the point of view of the man who says 'You have your great museums in London, you have your Zoological Gardens: now let us provide live specimens for the one, and let us provide dead specimens for the other.' I believe myself that zoos and museums have a great educative influence in the lives of people, but at the same time I should not maintain that a special system of game preservation should be instituted in Africa or anywhere else simply in order to fill our museums or zoos.

There is another argument which Mr. Buxton mentioned which again makes me a little careful not to exaggerate, and that is as to the financial side of the question. He comes to you and he says: 'Now so popular is this sport, and so large are the sums of money which are derived from it, that it is really from the financial point of view rather a good thing for the Government.'

I think it is a potent argument, in so far as if large sums are received by the Government we can legitimately ask the Government to utilise those sums for the extension of the policy which we are advocating; but I would not like to lay too much stress upon that point of view, either; and the argument which I should like to submit to your point of view, my Lord, is this, that we owe the preservation of these interesting and valuable, and sometimes disappearing, types of animal life as a duty to nature and to the world. I have seen enough of the world in travelling to know not merely that many of these types have irretrievably gone, but that owing to the scandalous neglect of our predecessors there are others which are tending to dwindle and disappear now. We are the owners of the greatest Empire in the universe; we are continually using language which implies that we are the trustees for posterity of the Empire, but we are also the trustees for posterity of the natural contents of that Empire, and among them I do undoubtedly place these rare and interesting types of animal life to which I have referred.

I hope I have said enough, without boring you, to indicate that there really is a strong case to be made out for the policy of reserves which we are putting before you to-day. I am willing at once to say, as regards reserves, be as careful as you can as to where you allocate them: put them in places suitable for their purpose, and not inconvenient or unsuitable to the needs of others; then, when you have got them, have an efficient body of watchmen, sufficiently large in order to make the reserves effective, and also do not, in the interests of sport or for any other reason, allow the carnivora, dangerous wild animals, inside the reserves to multiply at the expense of the innocuous and beautiful specimens of animal life which we really desire to preserve. In a word, I think we may say that reserves which I am advocating to you ought to exist not for the gratification of the sportsman, but for the preservation of interesting types of animal life. If we can ground ourselves upon that principle, Lord Elgin, I think we shall stand well both with the public and with the officials of the Government, and I hope we may on those grounds, if on no other, commend our case to your sympathy this morning.

Mr. E. N. BUXTON: I have asked Mr. Austen to say a few words on the important point of disease-carrying by animals, and the tsetse fly.

Mr. E. E. AUSTEN: My Lord, with regard to this point which has been brought up recently in the daily Press by people who, perhaps, were not altogether quite qualified to write about it, there are one or two things to be said which I venture to think are of extreme importance. As, of course, you are aware, a great deal of attention is being attracted at the present time to the question of the sleeping sickness. Before that, attention was attracted for a certain time by the investigation into malaria, to a very common disease in domestic animals, commonly known as tsetse fly, or nagana. Both these diseases, the tsetse-fly disease, or nagana,