

DEPUTATION TO H.M. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

On 30th May, 1960, a deputation from the Fauna Preservation Society was received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and placed before him the Society's views on the preservation of wild life in Africa. The memorandum given below was sent to the Secretary of State in advance of the meeting.

A JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE WILD LIFE OF AFRICA, AND A SUGGESTION ON THE MEANS TO EFFECT IT

By THE FAUNA PRESERVATION SOCIETY

1. THE NEED TO PRESERVE WILD LIFE

The Fauna Preservation Society maintains that the preservation of the wild life of Africa is justified on at least three grounds.

(i) *The Preservation of the Land itself*

The future of the peoples of Africa depends on the amount of care given to the land of Africa. Most of it is poor, easily ruined land, but it displays an impressive variety of plants and animals, because of the great length of time in which these have been able to adapt themselves to difficult biological circumstances. Wild animals are factors of outstanding importance in sensitive biological communities. The remaining stocks of the larger animals, in Africa under British administration, are being rapidly destroyed.

It is our belief that one of the prime responsibilities of a trustee power should be the conservation of land, through the wise use of its natural resources of indigenous animals. In Africa there is neither a central co-ordinated policy, nor any firm directive towards that end; management in the field is at a low technical level and quite inadequate to the scale of the problem. To say that care of people is more important than care of animals is rhetorical, because in the set of ecological conditions presented in a large part of Africa, care of the animals and their habitat IS primarily care for the people.

The natural and potential wealth of a large part of Africa must be considered to lie in the existing biological communities. Human participation or controlled harvesting of this asset must rest in flexible management, sustaining the habitat through

understanding and acceptance of its limitations, rather than by the destructive intervention of rifle, axe or plough.

Africa demonstrates at once the paradox of the irreparable consequences of wrong land-use and the recreative power of the natural plant and animal communities. This latter phenomenon is of a more generous character than was thought even twenty years ago. Given a matching restraint on the part of Man, it gives solid hope for regeneration of spoiled wild lands.

The special urgency in Africa stems from the almost explosive rate of change in that Continent ; we have no time to be philosophical without action, nor will continued empirical gap-stopping actions, without a disciplined intellectual approach, carry Africa through this time of stress. We believe that the most immediate need, if the land of Africa is to be preserved for African posterity, is a concerted, active policy of prevention of the destruction of the larger animals and the prevention of wrong land-use.

(ii) *The Value of Wild Animals as a Source of Protein for Human Food*

In much of Africa where there is still wild life, domestic animals cannot live. In other places they can only just live ; and at the cost of the deterioration in the soil and vegetation. The wild animals in such places can often be made to yield a similar if not indeed a much greater amount of protein food.

(iii) *The Tourist Trade*

The value of wild animals to the ever-increasing tourist trade, and the importance of this trade in the economy of East Africa can hardly be disputed.

2. STEPS TO PRESERVE WILD LIFE

The Society urges the British Government to accept the value of wild life in the economy of East and Central Africa. It suggests that the following steps should immediately be taken, in order to bring in a scientific policy of nature conservation in territories within the influence of the British Government.

(a) A public statement should be made that the preservation of wild life is part of the Government's policy for East and Central Africa and that the Government regards this as a matter of great importance.

(b) That Colonial Governors should be instructed to carry out this policy.

(c) That steps should be taken to educate Africans in the importance of the preservation of wild life for their own benefit.

(d) That money should be provided to effect these policies.

3rd May, 1960.

NOTES OF THE MEETING

Present—

Mr. Iain Macleod, Secretary of State.

The Earl of Perth, Minister of State.

Mr. B. E. Rolfe, Colonial Office.

Dr. E. B. Worthington, Adviser on flora and fauna to the Secretary of State.

The Marquess of Willingdon, President, Fauna Preservation Society.

The Lord Hurcomb, Dr. F. F. Darling, Lieut.-Col. C. L. Boyle.

The deputation was introduced by Lord Willingdon, who spoke of the Society's anxiety about the survival of the wild animals of Africa. He and others thought that some definite action by Government was necessary, for it seemed that the directive on the preservation of wild life sent to British African territories in 1948 had not been fully carried out. The most important immediate step was to provide more game staff for the suppression of poaching. This, of course, meant money.

Lord Hurcomb then spoke of the arrangements under which Dr. Worthington acted as liaison officer between the Secretary of State and the Nature Conservancy. They all knew that Dr. Worthington had just returned from a visit to Africa on behalf of the Colonial Office and hoped to see his report in due course. He thought that great stress should be laid on the cultural aspect of the preservation of wild life, for an important human and moral interest was involved. He then referred to the forthcoming meeting in Poland of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and said that the President of the Union had written to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization suggesting that there should be a meeting in Africa to consider the future of wild life conservation. It was proposed as a first step to set up a small mission mainly consisting of Africans and led by Mr. G. G. Watterson of F.A.O. The main purpose of this mission would be to interest Africans themselves in the cultural and economic values of wild life. He hoped that it would be possible to ask the African Governments to assist the mission in its work. It would help greatly if these

Governments would meet the expenses of the mission in their own territories.

Dr. F. F. Darling then said that while he entirely supported Lord Hurcomb's plea on cultural grounds, the fact had to be faced that conservation must have some mundane quality and should be related to problems of existence and subsistence. Vast areas of land in Africa would not stand up to European methods of agriculture and although attempts were now being made to grow food by introduced methods, some of these, in his view, would not persist. They were completely divorced from the natural process of development of soil and vegetation. If wild life resources were properly controlled and developed, they could make a very important economic contribution. The results so far achieved with the one or two game management schemes which had been started were very promising. The problem was how to co-operate with nature rather than to fight it.

On the question of finance Dr. Fraser Darling said that the best way of securing funds for conservation was to convince Governments that wild life had an important economic contribution to make both as a source of food and as the basis of the tourist industry.

Dr. Worthington agreed that there had been too great an emphasis on agricultural methods and not enough on the development of "wild" resources in recent times in Africa. Work which had been undertaken in recent years had produced revealing results and in some cases, higher crops had been forthcoming under wild life management.

There was general agreement that it was essential that when Government passed into African hands the existing measures for wild life preservation and conservation should be maintained, otherwise grave consequences might ensue. It was important to interest Africans in conservation, and any activities of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and other international organizations which would open a way to influencing African opinion should be warmly supported. It was important to achieve, through a meeting of African leaders, a declaration of principle which would carry political weight throughout the Continent.

In thanking the deputation for their visit the Secretary of State said that H.M. Government was sympathetic to their views and believed in a policy of wild life conservation in Africa. Colonial Development and Welfare funds could be used for conservation measures but H.M. Government could not give

directions as to the use of territorial allocations of funds. Governments were expected to work out their own priorities and there were often other matters which came before wild life conservation. The Secretary of State said that he had it in mind to address Governments on the matters raised by the deputation after he had had an opportunity of studying Dr. Worthington's report on his recent visit to Africa. When this report had been received and considered they could, if necessary, have another meeting.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

The following is quoted from Parliamentary Debates (*Hansard*) for 2nd June, 1960. Mr. David James is a member of the Council of the Fauna Preservation Society.

COLONIAL TERRITORIES

NATURE CONSERVATION

Dr. A. THOMPSON asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies to what extent community development methods and techniques are used to popularize nature conservation projects in territories under United Kingdom administration.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. IAIN MACLEOD): The Governments of the territories concerned are giving closer attention to the education of Africans in the need to preserve wild life, by organized visits to National Parks, publicity at local shows and through the Press and radio, and by the establishment of local committees to advise on conservation and game management. If there are any other particular methods which the Hon. Member has in mind and he will send me details of them, I shall be glad to consider the matter further.

Mr. DAVID JAMES asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, having regard to the outstanding economic and cultural value of wild life to the East and Central African territories, what steps he is taking to secure the continual and improved conservation and development of these resources.

Mr. IAIN MACLEOD: I am glad of this opportunity to reaffirm Her Majesty's Government's concern for wild life in Africa. Wild life conservation measures are continuously under review in the East and Central African territories and in spite of financial difficulties much has been done in the last ten years to establish and consolidate National Parks and Reserves.

But more use can be made of technical knowledge in developing the wild life reserves, which contribute considerably to local food supplies as well as being of economic value to the tourist industry.

I recognize that the voluntary co-operation of the African populations is essential if conservation is to be lasting and effective, and have been glad to learn that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, in consultation with other international agencies, is exploring the possibility of a conference on conservation being convened in Africa next year.

Mr. JAMES: While thanking my right hon. Friend for that reply, may

I ask him if he is aware that this question is not prompted solely by sentimental considerations, but that any change in the wild life structure is inevitably followed by change in vegetation, and that large areas of Africa at present capable of supporting human life could easily be rendered incapable of so doing ?

Mr. MACLEOD : This is not by any means only an economic question. There are many aspects of it, and all of them point to the importance of this matter. That is why I was glad to have the opportunity of making a statement on it to-day, and I am glad to know that this meeting, to which I have referred, which is to be held in a week or two, has the idea of a conference in view.

Mr. G. M. THOMSON : Is the Minister aware that there will be a general welcome for his announcement on this subject ? Can he say what participation the Government are taking in this meeting ?

Mr. MACLEOD : Amongst the people who will be there are Dr. Worthington, who often advises me on these matters, and who has just returned from a visit to Africa. He has prepared a detailed report on his visit, and I will be able to study that, and the need for further help in a few weeks' time.

Sir GODFREY NICHOLSON : While also thanking my right hon. Friend, may I ask him if he is satisfied that it is generally recognized as a modern scientific truth that controlled game slaughter over a large part of Africa provides more protein to the square mile than any form of agriculture ? Will he realize that this is not just sentimental and colourful, but has remarkable economic significance ?

Mr. MACLEOD : I agree with that. I was most impressed when a deputation which I met recently on this subject proved the extraordinary contribution from the point of view of protein that this sort of scheme can make.