EDITORIAL

It is seven years since the last number of the Fauna Journal was issued, and I am glad the time has come when the Society can be said to have fully resumed its activity. One evidence of this is the issue of this number of the Journal.

In common with so many others, we have suffered many losses in the war—notably that of our dear friend and comrade, Frank Selous, to whose memory a worthy monument has been erected in the Natural History Museum.

There have been two meetings of the Society this year, and a small Executive Committee has been appointed. I am glad to say that Dr Chalmers Mitchell has consented to be Vice-Chairman of the Society, and Mr Dent has accepted the post of Honorary Secretary.

Much attention has been drawn to the question of the preservation of the race of elephants in Africa. Before the war an international commission of all the European Powers was summoned to consider this question, and finally arrived at an agreement, the most important clauses of which were that the export of tusks, of less than ten kilos in weight, should be forbidden, and that settlers, and natives might be protected against the ravages of elephants by the respective Powers. The war supervening, this protocol was never ratified. We have called the attention of the Colonial Office to the need of some sort of agreement between the present African Powers, without which it would seem that the extermination of the elephants is only a matter of time. Articles on this subject from various points of view appear in this number of the Journal. It will be seen that the official view is represented, as well as that of those who think chiefly of the preservation of the species.

We have received several very interesting reports from the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund of America, sent by Mr Hornaday, who also contributes an article to this Journal.

It has been suggested that there ought to be at least international communication on the important subject of fauna
protection. Possibly this matter may come before the League of Nations.

We have also received from Egypt a valuable report from Major Flower, dealing with the protection of egrets and buff-backed herons in that country, which show a very satisfactory increase under the protective measures now given.

The Plumage Bill is still before the House of Commons, and I fear that its passage this session is doubtful.

We understand that in the territory formerly known as German East Africa, and for which we now hold a mandate, the reserves established by the Germans are being retained unaltered for the present, and reports indicate that the game is recovering satisfactorily from the ravages of the war.

The need for arousing public opinion about the preservation of the fauna of Africa is very clearly shown by the reports we have received of the recent game drive in the Umfolosi Reserve in Zululand. Some 3000 head of game, particularly zebras, were destroyed, and, apparently, at least two of the remaining ten white rhinoceros were shot. The excuse for this massacre was the prevalence of nagana among the cattle of the settlers in the neighbourhood of the Reserve. As the case against big game, as the carriers of the disease, is not yet proven, and as the opinion of experts is inclined to the view that the destruction of the game will not have the desired effect of exterminating the disease, it seems to us that this course cannot be too strongly condemned.

As a result of the meeting held on 21st October 1920, Dr Chalmers Mitchell and I had a further interview with Sir Herbert Read on 5th November, of which a report is appended.

E. N. Buxton.

REPORT OF INTERVIEW WITH COLONIAL OFFICE

On 5th November last, Sir H. J. Read, K.C.M.G., C.B., kindly saw the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Fauna Society at the Colonial Office, and discussed with them three points raised at the last Meeting of the Society.

LAKE CHAD ELEPHANT RESERVE. The Governor had informed
the Colonial Office of a proposal to increase the local food supply by planting the shores of Lake Chad. This would involve the driving away or destruction of elephants, and other large game in what is regarded by the Society as an important reserve. No final decision had, however, been arrived at, and the matter was being carefully considered by the Secretary of State in consultation with the local authorities. Sir Herbert Read promised that if on general grounds it should seem necessary to sanction measures that would affect the game, such sanction would not be given until the Fauna Society had been acquainted with the facts, and given the opportunity of making representations.

ZULULAND GAME DRIVE. Sir Herbert pointed out that this was a matter entirely for the Government of the Union of South Africa. He suggested that any representations with regard to game questions in the Union would best be addressed direct by the Society to the Union Government.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION WITH REGARD TO IVORY. Sir Herbert said that active steps were being taken by the Foreign and Colonial Offices to proceed with the International Convention on the sale of ivory, agreed to before the war, but not signed when the war broke out. The first stage was to secure agreement to the protocol from the various British Imperial authorities in Africa. It is gathered that the Union Government do not desire to be included in the Convention. In their view elephant and rhinoceros are already amply protected in the Union and S.W. Africa by the existing legislation. All the other British African areas would be included, subject to the wording of a clause protecting the existing rights over elephant, conferred by treaty on certain native chiefs, as, for instance, in Barotseland. The Foreign Office was consulting the Government of the Sudan, which had special experience on the matter. Sir Herbert anticipated that the Convention would soon be ready for submission to the Foreign Powers concerned.