

EARLY FEBRUARY

Feb 19 1907

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912

March

LION HUNTING IN SOUTHERN GAME RESERVE

Gives actual facts of Mr Rainey's expedition.

Previous Paper.

507

Sir J. Fisher

Send a copy of this  
copy to Mr Greenwood, through  
Mr. Earle?

Mr. Earle

No. 222

Sir,  
I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th January respecting an account of lion hunting in the Southern Game Reserve which appeared in the Daily Telegraph.

2. I have the more pleasure in replying to this attack as it is an eminently characteristic example of the kind of intemperate and unintelligent criticism which is directed against all Governments and from which this Administration has perhaps suffered more than most.

3. The description given in the Daily Telegraph is a highly coloured and vivid piece of writing which does much credit to the imaginative powers of the author. Mr. Rainey is depicted as pursuing and slaughtering in a single day as many as twenty six lions through the sole agency of a pack of dogs resembling mastiffs. The actual facts are slightly inconsistent with the <sup>above</sup> account. They are as follows:

Numerous complaints had been made to Government <sup>on</sup> the lion's behalf and the Secretary

ostrich farmers, living along the borders of the Southern Game Reserve in respect of the depredations committed by lions. Messrs. Lambert and Wilson lost 51 birds in one night, Captain Slater lost 31, and others suffered similarly. As £10 is a comparatively low value for an ostrich you will understand that the matter was serious and the owners, though keen sportsmen themselves, were very anxious that the marauders should be killed off. This Administration entirely sympathised with them and was anxious to assist.

5. The use of poison, such as strychnine, for the purpose was considered very rightly to be open to grave objections as it would have involved the slaughter of many smaller carnivorous animals and raptorial birds. Mr. Iney's expedition was thought to provide an excellent solution of the problem. He would otherwise have hunted in more remote districts and no doubt killed many lions which, so far from doing any harm constitute a valuable inducement and attraction to sportsmen. He was therefore on the advice of the Game Warden asked if he would attempt the destruction of the animals which have been doing so much damage along the borders of the Reserve.

I may say at once that in ordinary circumstances nobody would be allowed to enter this sanctuary for such a purpose, but permission would be given on exceptional circumstances.

than eight miles from the boundary of the Reserve, which has an area of 10,696 square miles, his expedition cannot have effected any serious diminution in the total number of lions and it would in any case have been necessary sooner or later to deal with the situation caused by their presence in the neighbourhood of a settled area.

7. The Game Warden had carefully located those which it was intended to destroy and by following out his directions Mr. Rainey and his party succeeded in disposing of 26 as well as one cub which was captured alive. The expedition extended over 12 days, not one, as stated in the Daily Telegraph.

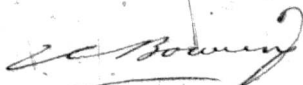
8. The dogs used were a small lightly made breed of American Fox-hound. They were set on to the trail of the lions and the latter when found were shot in the usual way at no small risk both to the hunters and the dogs themselves, which would of course have not had the slightest chance in an actual encounter. There was nothing in the really sportsmanlike or cruel about the method adopted, as you will perceive was not exactly the same as that described in the paper. It is indeed somewhat surprising that the Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who in virtue of his office presumably takes a considerable interest in Natural History, should be so gullible as to believe such a thing. The dog has yet to be discovered to have any special qualities.

9. I may say in conclusion that the successful issue of Mr. Rainey's efforts caused the greatest satisfaction to the ostrich owners and I have no doubt that Mr. David Davies, M.P., who was staying with Messrs. Lambert and Wilson at the time when they lost so many birds, would be glad to endorse the views I have expressed as to the necessity of taking strong measures to exterminate these marauding lions.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,



ACTING GOVERNOR.