

lent work, and they are deserving of every reasonable encouragement in their laudable enterprise.

For many reasons Kangaroo Island is particularly suitable for a national reserve. Its isolation from the mainland is distinctly in its favor for such a purpose. At much less expense than on the continent such a preserve for the native fauna and flora can be kept in a state of efficiency. The area asked for appears to be of little worth for the purposes of cultivation, and the revenue of £28 a year now derived from it is not worth considering in such a connection. Of course the rights of lessees must not be infringed, but in so far as these can be respected, and at the same time the request of the deputation be acceded to, there appears to be no valid reason why the area asked for should not be granted. Australia has not yet reached a stage in her development when a niggardly policy in respect to grants of land for public purposes need be adopted. Something is being done in other States. New South Wales has set aside an area near the mouth of the Hawkesbury, and in Victoria a reserve exists at Wilson's Promontory. Mr. Dixon, the chairman of the Fauna and Flora Committee, reminded the Commissioner of Crown Lands that in the United States the national forest embraces 36,000,000 acres, and at Kicking Horse Pass, in Canada, there exists a reserve 500 square miles in extent. Mr. Vaughan, who sympathised with the object of the deputation, mentioned that it will be necessary to introduce a Bill into Parliament to define the powers of the trustees. This will obviously be one of the most important aspects of the whole matter, for the success of the undertaking will depend to a greater extent on the policy adopted and followed by those who have the control of the reserve than on its acreage. Sufficient land for their purpose is essential to a comprehensive scheme, but proper organisation and management will also count in the final result. It may be doubted whether all that is desired can be accomplished on Kangaroo Island. Tropical conditions will probably be required in respect to many species of animal and vegetable life, and the present is an opportune moment for the Federal Government to take action in the Northern Territory. Possibly it would be well if reserves to be placed under Federal direction were established in different latitudes by arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States. In that event it would be much easier to resist any pressure which might from time to time be brought to bear with the object of having the land diverted from its original purpose than would be the case if the State Governments retained control.

## FAUNA AND FLORA.

### RESERVE ON KANGAROO ISLAND.

#### DEPUTATION TO THE MINISTER.

##### A FAVORABLE REPLY.

The deputation-room of the Government offices was filled on Tuesday morning by a deputation representing 27 Australian societies and 12 corporations and district councils in the State, which made a request to the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. C. Vaughan) that 300 miles of Kangaroo Island, known as Flinders Chase, should be set aside as a fauna and flora reserve. Mr. T. H. Smeaton, M.P., who introduced the deputation, explained that already about 140 miles of the area had been reserved by previous Governments. Those present represented every scientific society in Australia. Far beyond the boundaries of South Australia people were taking a deep interest in the matter. (Cheers.)

The Hon. T. Bruce accentuated the remarks made by Mr. Smeaton. One of the principal charms of the older countries of the world was the ancient lore and antiquities that could be secured. There could be nothing so valuable in Australia as the natural animals. It was impossible to find a kangaroo, wallaby, or like animal within 100 miles of the city. They were, in fact, nearly extinct in the States. The deputation did not ask for a large amount of money, but simply for the reservation of an area of land that brought into the State coffers only £28 per annum, and would probably never be used for cereal producing or sheep grazing, and was to a great extent waste. It would be an educational reserve for a generation yet unborn. (Cheers.)

##### American Examples.

Mr. S. Dixon (chairman of the fauna and flora committee) said it had been objected that the area asked for was too large. In view of that he desired to draw attention to the fact that in the United States there was a national forest covering an area of 36 million acres, patrolled by troops. In Canada, at Kicking Horse Pass there was a reserve of 500 square miles. The Canadian Government had found that they had no bison there, but there was a small herd in one of the states of North America, however, and they had paid for the beasts £60 a head, and the cost of transport. He mentioned that to show the endeavors that were being made in other parts of the world to preserve native animals. (Cheers.) There were a few blocks in this area on the island, which had been granted on perpetual lease, and it was essential, if they were to make a success of the reserve that those leases should be resumed. If they left those leases there was always the danger that the natural animals would be attracted away from the reserve. On the island there were a few specimens of the original kangaroo, which were supposed to have been protected for the last 20 years or so. They had been remorselessly shot down, however, and the skins smuggled into Adelaide. (Cheers.) There were now only about 30 there. There was a particularly good spot for the platypus on one of the perpetual leases in the area. Few men in the room had seen that rare animal alive. If they could preserve the platypus on Kangaroo Island they would have a priceless connection between birds and animals. (Cheers.) He proposed that in the Act there should be a clause which would provide for the resumption of the several perpetual leases on the basis of past profits. The leases could be resumed, he thought, on the ground of public utility. He suggested that the board to govern the fauna and flora reserve should be constituted on the lines of the Wilson's Promontory Trust, the members being appointed for life. Science should be fully represented. There should be four trustees nominated by the Government from the University, four from the Royal Society to represent the different branches of natural history, and the popular side could be represented by one nominee of the City Council, and two of the suburban corporations. Firearms, traps, and so on found on anyone in that area should be forfeited, all dogs destroyed, and penalties imposed for lighting fires in unauthorised places. (Cheers.)

##### Valuable Fauna and Flora.

Mr. E. Ashby (vice-president of the Ornithological Association) briefly traced the history of the movement. He might supplement Mr. Dixon's remarks by stating that the Yellowstone National Park in the United States contained 15 times the area asked for, while the New Zealand Government had reserved more

island than any other place in Australia. The proposed reserve would be the means of attracting visitors from all parts of the State. (Cheers.)

Dr. R. H. Pulleine, president of the Field Naturalists' Society, and representing the Royal Societies of Victoria and Tasmania, and the Linnean Society of New South Wales, cordially supported the request of the deputation. He thought before the present century was ended the public would ask why, when the opportunity presented itself, the whole of the island was not reserved. (Cheers.)

Dr. Rennie (representing the Royal Society of New South Wales) said such a reserve as that proposed would be a breeding area and an experimental ground for planting trees and so on, which might prove of importance industrially as well as scientifically. (Cheers.) He emphasised the necessity of having scientific men on the board.

Mr. G. A. J. Webb (Arts Society) said it was always well to keep in view the artistic side of natural flora and to preserve indigenous trees.

Mr. H. Solomon (chief president of the A.N.A.) said from a patriotic point of view he agreed with the men of science.

Councillor E. A. Anstey, M.P., said the Burnside District Council had decided to support the request. Councillor Frith said the St. Peters Corporation also viewed the proposal with favor, but thought the area asked for was too small.

Captain S. A. White (Royal Ornithologists' Union) said the body he represented were anxiously awaiting the Minister's decision in this matter.

##### The Minister Agrees.

Mr. Vaughan, in reply, said no one could contend that the gathering was not representative. He was glad there was not only a local but also an Australian interest in the reserve. The matter had been before various Ministries, of whom, like Oliver Twist, they had been asking for more, and unlike Oliver Twist, had been getting it. He could not say that the area they were asking for was too big, and believed it would have been desirable to reserve the whole island if it had not been populated. The South Australian public would endorse the views expressed that day. The Government, too, had every sympathy with the request. (Cheers.) They realised what other countries were doing in order to preserve their fauna and flora, and in the other States, where the area was smaller, they found provision being made for large reserves. The Government must do something more than they had been doing. They had, in a small way, done what they could to preserve the fauna and flora, and when it had been reported that Pearson's Island supported a number of wallaby of a rare kind they had preserved that island inviolate from the foot of man. (Cheers.) Anyone who landed there would be required to spend a portion of his life in one of his Majesty's hotels. (Cheers.) It was also his intention to preserve the lower Coorong as a sanctuary for birds. (Cheers.) In reference to the proposal about the resumption of blocks already granted under pastoral lease, he could only say that that course was impracticable. The Government could not resume leases like that.

Mr. H. Jackson, M.P.—You can buy the holders out.

Mr. Vaughan said anything could be done with money, but if the Government bought out the leaseholders they would have to do so on ordinary terms, and could not compensate the holders on the basis of past profits as had been suggested.

Mr. Jackson—You have compulsory repurchase.

Mr. Vaughan said the Compulsory Repurchase Act was for other purposes. The question of the leases would have to be reserved for further consideration. He believed the deputation would be satisfied if the area were reserved. (Cheers.) He could bear out what had been said about the disappearance of the native animals. A few years ago he had seen in the Flinders Range thousands of wallaby; a year ago when he revisited the place he could not see one. Recently he had motored for nearly 1,000 miles on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula and saw only one mob of kangaroos.

Mr. Dixon—There used to be thousands there.

Mr. Vaughan said emus were being fast exterminated by eating the rabbit poison. He noted that although previously the deputation asked for the whole of the hundred of Ritchie; it now only wanted portion of the hundred reserved.

Mr. Dixon—That is so as to get a good line for the fence; there is only one bad spot—a deep watercourse.

Mr. Vaughan said their moderation should be advertised. He wanted to make a personal inspection of the area before anything was done, but he would recom-

Zealand Government had reserved more than 10 times the area asked for on Kangaroo Island for a similar purpose. (Cheers.) He suggested that the land be granted subject to existing leases, which could be dealt with afterwards. There were birds on Kangaroo Island not found in the Adelaide hills. So far as he knew, the island was the last resting-place of Leech's black cockatoo, which had red feathers in its tail, and of certain wrens and honeybirds. In its flora, as well as its bird life, Australia possessed a priceless asset. (Cheers.)

Professor E. C. Stirling, representing the Adelaide University, strongly supported the request. The people of the old world had nothing so ancient and interesting to preserve as the fauna and flora of Australia. One saw in them the efforts of nature to improve things. They saw the platypus trying to get out of the reptilian class and become a mammal. There were no animals in the world so interesting as the marsupials of Australia. (Cheers.) It was almost impossible to see a kangaroo, an opossum, or a wallaby in South Australia unless in captivity. He had travelled from north to south and did not see 100 kangaroos. He had been director of the Museum for 20 years, and knew from the specimens which came to the institution how rare were the forms which once abounded. They were clearing out the marsupials and leaving the country to the rabbit, the fox, the starling, and the sparrow. (Laughter.) Surely that was not a good record to be handed down to posterity as their handiwork. He was confident that the proposal would have the hearty approval of the Royal Society of England. The council of the Adelaide University had been in communication with the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney on the question. The letter from the Sydney University expressed entire concurrence with the proposal. The Chancellor of the Melbourne University (Sir John Madden) wrote as follows:—

Your proposal is a most important one, not only from the standpoint of patriotism, but because most of the Australian fauna are unique in illustrating the great theory of evolution so vital to modern science, as well as being deeply interesting in themselves. Not a day should be lost in securing their lasting preservation, because everyone's hand seems against even the most harmless of them, and some have already almost disappeared from Victoria.

Professor Stirling said that in Victoria, which was small in area in proportion to South Australia, the Government had set aside 264 square miles for the purpose, so it was not an exorbitant request to ask for 300 square miles. The area in question was surrounded by water on three sides, so only one side would require to be fenced. The land was free from foxes and rabbits. If the Government desired a memorial by which they would be remembered with gratitude for all time by all men of science and lovers of nature, they could not do better than grant the request. (Cheers.)

#### Ideal Health Resort.

Dr. J. C. Verco (president of the Royal Society) remarked that as a health resort Kangaroo Island was an ideal place. He had paid more holiday visits to the

mend to the Government that a large area should be reserved. (Cheers.) The size would have to be considered. Possibly the whole of the hundred of Ritchie would be excluded and a portion farther north added. That would exclude the lease of Messrs. Ayliffe and Rankine. He would recommend the placing of a sum on the Estimates with which to fence the reserve and protect property near it. It would be necessary to introduce to Parliament a Bill to define the exact powers of the trustees and to retain for the Government certain rights such, for instance, as the right of utilising portion for afforestation purposes. The Conservator of Forests, he believed, had not a high opinion of the land for tree-growing purposes. The matter would have early consideration. (Cheers.)

#### MALLEE HENS FOR THE ISLAND.

Mr. J. W. Mellor, of Fulham, honorary secretary of the South Australian Ornithological Association, was a passenger by the steamer Rupara on Tuesday for Eyre Peninsula, where he is going in search of some mallee fowl for placing on the National Reserve at Cape Borda, Kangaroo Island. The Association, aided by the Government, secured several pairs of these birds from the Murray district at the beginning of the year, and Mr. Mellor landed them on the reserve, but it is thought that birds from the dry inland districts of Eyre Peninsula will become sooner acclimatised to Kangaroo Island.

argument to show how invaluable to the world of scientific research will be the preservation of as many as possible of these plants. But with the occupation and use of the land they must share the same fate here as has befallen them in other homes, unless some care is bestowed on their preservation. **The Fauna and Flora Protec-**