

NATURE PROTECTION IN THE SUDAN
A TRIBUTE
TO THE WORK OF MAJOR W. R. BARKER, O.B.E.

BY Lieut.-Col. ARTHUR FORBES, Game Warden

Major Barker spent nearly twenty years of his life in the Game Preservation Department of the Sudan. During the last fifteen years he worked single-handed with only a clerk to help him. The Sudan is nearly a million square miles in area, and in Major Barker's days the methods of communication were road, rail, and river only. Yet he managed during his service to create two national parks and ten game reserves, to bring the game laws up to date in such a form that they could be easily enforced, and to leave game preservation throughout most of the country in an excellent state.

Game wardens in the Sudan have of necessity to depend on the co-operation of the administration to see that the game laws are observed, and they have always been very fortunate in the whole-hearted support they have received. During his twenty years, Major Barker kept in the closest touch with the administration of game districts, and so convinced them of the importance of the survival of wild life that in spite of frequent changes and the difficulties of war years, a high standard of game preservation has become traditional throughout the Sudan. That was perhaps his greatest achievement.

To Major Barker's credit are the creation of the two national parks, a short description of which follows:—

The Dinder Park is the last real stronghold of game in the Northern Sudan within close reach of its capital. It has an area of 2,500 square miles and lies on either side of the Dinder River for its last fifty miles before entering Abyssinia. Before the 1914–18 war it was a favourite hunting ground of the world and was visited by thirty to forty hunting parties a year. It suffered badly from poachers at end of the war, but Major Barker's foresight in securing it as a national park ensured that this menace would be overcome. Now it is simply teeming with wild life and on a car journey through it one is really never out of sight of game. It contains twenty species of big game animals, Roan, Kudu, and Buffalo being especially numerous. An air strip is to be put down this year, and it is hoped that more people will be able to enjoy the fruits of Major Barker's work.

The Southern Park has an area of 7,800 square miles and is

situated in an uninhabited area between the two districts of Tonj and Yambio. It does not contain the same stocks of game as does the Dinder, but it in its turn will become most valuable as a last stronghold of game when civilization advances. The work done in selecting and mapping out this vast area must have been immense.

Besides the national parks Major Barker created ten game reserves, all of which fulfilled a useful purpose in protecting areas where game was in danger, or in protecting individual rare species.

Only those who have followed Major Barker in the work of game preservation can fully realize what he achieved single-handed with so few facilities, and we are anxious that the value of his work shall be fully realized.

RED DEER IN SCOTLAND

THE PROBLEM OF PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION

BY R. E. F.

The serious situation of the Red Deer in Scotland is at last becoming known to the public and, with legislation for the protection of the deer now being drafted, it is an opportune moment to consider what aspects such legislation should cover.

First there is the illegal poacher. There are now widespread gangs of commercial poachers in the Highlands who, from lorries and cars, shoot deer when they come down close to the roads between the end of October and the end of May. Since the maximum fine for poaching a stag in Scotland is only £2, approximately one-fifth of the value of a stag to the poacher, increased penalties are obviously necessary to stop this practice which involves considerable cruelty to wounded beasts as well as law-breaking on a wide scale. The new legislation should provide for penalties similar to those which are now in force for salmon poaching, including forfeiture of vehicles, weapons, etc., and heavy fines. These penalties should effectively stamp out this type of deer killer.

Secondly there is the commercial deer killer. With stags at present selling for anything up to £12 each to butchers and restaurants, there has grown up on a considerable scale commercial exploitation of deer by those who are not interested