

THE CONGO

On the 28th July, 1960, Dr. V. Van Straelen, President of the Institute of the National Parks of the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, and a Vice-President of the Fauna Preservation Society, sent a moving appeal for the preservation of the national parks of the Congo to the Secretary-General, United Nations. It was supported by a similar appeal from the President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

The British Foreign Office also, at the request of the Nature Conservancy and of the Fauna Preservation Society, asked the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations in New York to lend support, and early in August the Mission took an opportunity of doing so.

The Hon. R. L. E. Dreschfield, C.M.G., Q.C., Chairman of Trustees, Uganda National Parks, has now sent the following letter to the Society :

ENTEBBE, UGANDA.
27th September, 1960.

DEAR SIR,

I am writing to let you know the present position of the Parc National du Kivu, formerly the Parc National Albert.

In the early days of independence in the Congo there was some disorder in the Park and both fish and animal poaching broke out in certain areas of the Park. I am glad, however, to let you know that the Provincial Government of the Kivu Province under the leadership of its President, Monsieur J. Miruho, is to the best of its ability putting matters right. To a large extent illegal fishing and large-scale poaching have been brought to an end, although it appears that the Watutsi are, by pasturing their cattle high up in the volcanoes, threatening the gorilla habitat in that area. Monsieur Miruho himself has written to me and informed me that his Government sincerely wish to keep the Park intact and fully realizes its touristic, economic, and scientific interest.

In carrying out its policy in regard to the Park, the Kivu Government has appointed Monsieur Mburanumve Anicet as "Conservateur" of the Park. Monsieur Anicet is a young African agronomist who is exceptionally keen to keep the Park in good heart and to develop it in a proper manner, and he appears to be doing his difficult task very well. The Park is

now open again to visitors and a new manager has been appointed to Rwindi Camp.

We, of the Uganda National Parks, have been in touch with Monsieur Anicet ever since his appointment, and last week he visited the Queen Elizabeth Park in order to meet Sir Julian Huxley who was in that Park at that time. Monsieur Anicet came with Monsieur Verschuren, the biologist of the National Parc du Kivu, and Mr. George Schaller, who has been studying gorillas in the Park. The meetings with Sir Julian were of the most cordial nature and Monsieur Anicet asked Sir Julian to try to obtain for him permanent advisers to help him not only on scientific matters relating to all problems of wild life management, conservation and long-term policy, but also on administrative and financial matters.

I am sure the Fauna Preservation Society would wish to join with me in congratulating Monsieur Miruho and his Government on the wise action they have taken in regard to the Parc National du Kivu, and to wish Monsieur Anicet and his staff all the very best in their difficult and arduous task, and to thank them for undertaking it.

Finally, Sir, our gratitude must go to Monsieur Verschuren and Mr. Schaller for their selfless service on behalf of wild life displayed by their remaining in the Congo during the troublesome times through which it has passed; their tact, common-sense and bravery must indeed have been of the greatest assistance to the new "Conservateur".

Yours faithfully,

R. L. E. DRESCHFIELD,

Chairman, Uganda National Parks Trustees.