

Annual General Meeting

The FPS was greatly honoured by the presence of Lord Garnsworthy, Government environment spokesman in the House of Lords, as the speaker at our AGM in July, and it was with deep regret that we learned of his death only a few weeks later. Lord Garnsworthy was deputising for the Rt Hon. Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for the Environment, who was prevented from coming by an important debate in the House.

The Annual General Meeting on July 3rd marked the end of an era with the stepping down of our President for the last 23 years, the Marquess of Willingdon. The Chairman, Sir Peter Scott, recorded the Society's warm appreciation of Lord Willingdon's considerable services to the Society and the conservation cause during his years in office. A proposal that he be elected President Emeritus was carried unanimously. The new President, Professor Lord Zuckerman, OM, KCB, DSc, FRS, a Vice-President of the Society for eleven years, and Secretary of the Zoological Society of London for 19 years, was unanimously elected and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting. The other officers were re-elected, and four new Council members elected: Dr G. C. L. Bertram, Dr G. B. Corbet, Dr David Harrison, and Dr E. Barton Worthington, in place of the retiring members G. T. Corley Smith, Tam Dalyell MP and the Hon. Ivor Montagu, all of whom the President thanked warmly for their services. Sir Peter Scott expressed the Society's thanks to the Zoological Society for generous provision of accommodation and other facilities. The Annual Report and Accounts were approved.

The Hon. Secretary, Richard Fitter, gave a brief resumé of the present state of whale conservation following the International Whaling Commission Meeting in London in June.

Lord Garnsworthy pointed to the Government's practical support for wildlife conservation with the proposed allocation of up to £500,000 this year for the acquisition of new national nature reserves. The Secretary of State, he said, had not decided whether the best way forward in protective legislation for wildlife was by 'a comprehensive attack or more judicious infilling and tidying up', but he hoped for a co-operative approach between the government and the voluntary movement. On the question of British ratification of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species he said the Convention posed 'a number of awkward practical difficulties', but added that these were no reason for doing nothing. 'Unless we come up against unforeseen problems', he said, 'we fully intend to ratify and to implement the controls.' He felt that this, combined with the aid supplied by the Overseas Development Administration, the active part Britain played in the Council of Europe's environment programme, and our support of the international Wetlands Convention (the UK is so far the only country to submit a wetlands list) entitled the government to claim that we were 'meeting our international obligations and playing our part in world wildlife conservation'.