

Friday, 28th April 2000.

(10.30 am).

THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning everyone, and welcome to this seminar on drag and bloodhound hunting. This is another seminar in this stage of the Inquiry. To a degree we have been developing the process as we go along, although I think the format has generally worked well. We are very grateful for the draft report from the Royal Agricultural College Enterprise. In our agenda note, we suggested that the opening speakers should take maybe 20 minutes. We would then have an opportunity for questions on a point of fact or a clarification. Then I would like to invite other members of the seminar to make the points that they wish to make. And then hopefully, out of that, we should identify the main topics for further discussion.

It is my plan for the morning session to go through until about 12 30, depending on how the discussion goes, without a break. We will then break for lunch. Then, in the afternoon, we will hopefully deal with the topics that we have identified in the morning session as being those that are of most interest.

So I would like to ask Mr Manley if you would introduce your paper.

MR MANLEY: Thank you very much.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Will Manley from the Royal Agricultural College, and I am here together with my colleagues Julia Hallett and Graham Cox from the University of Bath.

To try and get through the 20 minutes, what we will do is I will introduce the study; what we were asked to do; what we did and how we did it. I will do that by myself, but obviously there are critical areas within this study which are the domain more of my colleagues; and obviously we will pick up the relevant bits in the following discussions.

Now, we were asked not all that long ago of course, following basic objectives, to review the existing evidence relating to the practice of drag and bloodhound hunting. We were asked to survey key aspects in which we included the following: To profile and also to explore the attitudes to drag and bloodhound hunting participants; the involvement of participants with hunting with dogs; comparative attitudes and resource allocations of hunting participants -- and I use this in the broadest sense. Here, we are talking about hunting participants involving both live animals and drag and bloodhounds, unless specifically stated to the contrary -- we looked at farm attitudes to allowing hunting activities; and drag and bloodhound hunting impacts on wildlife landscape and habitats; we were also asked to explore the possible scope for making drag or bloodhound hunting more attractive; and, lastly, to summarise the findings.

I am working on the basis that certainly the people around the table here perhaps have a full copy of the report, but most, if not many of you, have at least the executive summary.

What I will be following through here --

which obviously has been available in the public domain for the last two weeks -- is really picking up the points within that executive summary.

Our approach to this was obviously within the parameters that we were operating within. We know some of the limitations of that. Obviously, we are very happy to carry those forward. But we had to go through this fairly swiftly and speedily.

First of all, a literature review of drag and bloodhound hunting; what it actually entailed, and what was going on; and indeed looking at some of the literature, some of the survey work and research work which looked at this issue of drag and bloodhound hunting specifically as a substitution driving this whole agenda here.

Secondly, we looked at the survey of the drag and bloodhound Masters themselves, i.e. they were part of the providers, secondary to the farmers. We looked again at drag and bloodhound participants, , and also a survey of foxhound and harrier participants. We did not look at staghounds, or any other hunting with wild animals participants, and that will become clear when I talk about that later; a survey also of farmers, a key component there of the providers.

I will not dwell too much on this because I really want to explain exactly how we went about doing this because it really is quite important to grasp the approach we took, and obviously the limitations that are inevitably thrown up.

This slide is to give a little highlight to the actual drag and bloodhound hunt countries, i.e. the

territories in which they operate. We selected three drag and/or bloodhound countries with which to target our survey. This next slide is purely diagrammatic, to represent how we went about doing it.

What we did is selected two draghound packs and one bloodhound pack, and we used those as the parameters at which to operate our survey. They were the North Cheshire Draghounds, the Isle of Wedmore Draghounds and East Anglian Bloodhounds.

What we wanted to do is to pick up a bloodhound as well as a draghound pack. We also wanted to get a cross-section of the different landscape farming types. So, inevitably, the East Anglian Bloodhounds picking up essentially arable areas, North Cheshire draghounds covering moorland and the more pasture areas and Isle of Wedmore more mixed farming.

It is not perfect, but it was essentially what we were trying to do. We did it on that basis. We also deliberately picked those that had been very recently formed, the Isle of Wedmore, and those that have been long established, North Cheshire.

Within those boundaries, within those parameters of those set countries, we looked to target some mounted participants of foxhounds and/or harriers. We picked two hunts within that overlapped those respective countries. As you can see, we picked here the Holcombe

and Cheshire Forest in the North Cheshire area, (inaudible) Mendip farmers and Taunton Vale with the Isle of Wedmore and the Easton Harriers and East Sussex harriers with the

East Anglian

Bloodhounds. They are certainly not all mounted

participants. From the mounted hunts that overlap those countries we selected a manageable number from which we could get the required number of respondents to our interviews.

Now, the third component of this was the farmers themselves. How we went about selecting those, again we wanted them to overlap, and we wanted to try and pick up the farmers who were operating within the core of the survey areas.

So, for instance, the Isle of Wight, we picked up the farmers within the areas and we did that by picking up the relevant postal districts, and picking up names from the electronic Yellow Pages, and using a randomly selected process, which is reasonably well established.

That is how we went about doing that, within the time constraints that we had. So it is an overlapping sort of methodology.

What do we actually get, what do we actually draw from our work on this in the survey, and indeed from the literature review element of this, which preceded the survey element of the report? We were fairly confident in coming to these broad two sentences, really that pick out, I suppose, the relevant aspects and the relevant conclusions from it. It is often this whole business about looking at seeing whether blood and dog hunting can be a substitute, the work that has been done, which has not been a great deal, although there has been some more recently in the last few years, in most places not much in evidence when one looks behind it, and looks behind how this has been arrived

at.

They have not been based on empirical evidence.

The familiarity with the subject is a little bit suspect.

Looking at some of the results that we have from our own surveys, let us put this in context, first of all, the current provision of drag and bloodhound hunting in mainland England and Wales -- bearing in mind there is nothing in Scotland, we were looking at England and Wales.

We did not actually pick up on this survey -- one of the study areas did not come from Wales, but was because that did not meet our criteria. There is no particular slur on Wales !. There are 12 active draghounds hunts, 13 bloodhound hunts. Generally, they have large countries than mounted animal hunts, keep fewer hounds, hunt fewer days, do not collect fallen stock, and provide little direct employment generally.

I really must emphasise -- this is one of the things I think we will reiterate throughout this -- there is a lot more disparity than we imagined when we went into this,- there is a lot more variation.

Now, the actual participants. Again, we are looking at the survey results from asking fox and harrier participants, and we are asking drag and bloodhound participants.

I did not mention in the methodology, and I must do so. This was all done -- because of the speed of this research -- on the telephone. In some respects, it is not necessarily always ideal, but please appreciate some of the limitations. . We are

doing this in a fairly swift period, over a telephone interview, sometimes with quite a complex subject areas; some are not quite so complex.

Average age of participants was greater in foxhounds, harriers and bloodhounds than for draghounds. Occupation: Obvious things that came out - occupations amongst both drag and bloodhound hunts; relatively large numbers of people who work professionally with horses; fewer farmers, that is one of the things did come out; professionals with horses amongst the drag and bloodhounds and far fewer farmers.

Days hunted, average of 23 days per season, but the two newer drag and bloodhound hunts, that would be the Wedmore and the East Anglian Bloodhounds, went out almost as much with the foxhounds and the harriers; there was a lot more overlap between the participants than we originally anticipated. Very few respondents had no experience of hunting wild animals.

Expenditure: Drag and bloodhound participant households tended to have fewer dedicated hunting horses than the foxhound harriers households. Overall, the bloodhound participant households spent least on hunting with higher expenditure being associated with foxhound harriers, and with the North-East Cheshire draghounds.

Farmers. The survey of farmers was again done by telephone survey. We asked -- we are looking to see obviously some background information on the farmers themselves and so on and so forth, but, critically, the critical aspect was obviously whether or not they

allowed access, or would allow access, on to their farms for drag hunts, and indeed whether they currently allow, or would allow, access to foxhounds and harriers.

A large number of farmers had never been asked for access by a drag and bloodhound pack. Of those that had been, 20 per cent allowed access to the drag and bloodhounds, but not many, that is from a relatively small sample size. 64 per cent of those did allow foxhound harriers. So there is that obvious disparity nonetheless.

What we had to do here was to ask farmers for their opinions about drag hunting, allowing access to drag hunting, looking at attitudes and so on, but many, many, many of those have never been asked. So we really had no alternative but to go into the sort of realms of hypothetical situations saying, "Look, if you were asked, what would you do?"

In the processes of amalgamating figures into something a little bit more useful, we have in most cases amalgamated the real answers given to real situations with the hypothetical situations given to the question, "If you were asked by the draghounds for access, would you give it?", and the answer would be, "Yes, we would", or, "We would not".

So, please, bear that in mind.

Drag and bloodhounds would be allowed on 55 per cent of the grass farms and 40 per cent of the arable farms. Foxhound harriers, a comparable figure there would be 68 per cent on grass farms and 83 per cent on arable farms. One of the reasons for allowing access given by

farmers -- not all of them actually answered this question; for reasons I will come to later.

Please bear in mind not all of the people necessarily answered specific questions on this. Some of the sample sizes are relatively and inevitably smaller but where they are big enough to make some reasonable statements and judgements we have included those.

Reasons for allowing Drag and bloodhounds - First of all, traditional country sports and, secondly, there was this attitude of live and let live; if they want to do it, that is okay, that type of category, with quite a few remarks or comments into that category.

Foxhound harriers. Those farmers who allow Foxhound and harriers who were asked, "Why do you allow Foxhound and harriers?" Firstly, traditions, support of country sports and, secondly, pest control.

Now the issue of payment. We did explore this. It was actually something myself and Julia in a previous project down in the West Country tentatively explored in a small sample size. We really felt we ought to address this, even though inevitably there are the hypothetical elements surrounding it.

We asked those farmers who said, "No, we would not allow access", or if they were asked they would still say no, "Would you reconsider? Would you permit access if there was a payment involved?" As you see from the slide, 37 per cent of farmers would permit access if it offered a direct payment.

The other thing we looked at here is the knowledge of draghound and bloodhound hunting of farmers

themselves. The majority of farmers had experience of foxhound and/or harriers, either directly participating themselves or a member of their household or close family. This was not true of the drag and bloodhounds. Indeed, one of the things that I think you must bear in mind with the farmers survey, which inevitably was within a fairly small framework, is that there was actually a degree of disinterest -- I think that is probably the best way of putting it -- in the farmers generally about answering this question at all in many cases.

In fact, we were also a little bit suspect; in many cases there was a degree of confusion creeping in between the difference between some of the hunting types and time did not allow us to explore this further.

But we cannot really go any further than that, other than to just state the fact that was certainly the case that we felt.

Factors bearing on substitution. Again, what we were doing here is essentially following the main factors within the main report, and that heading suitably describes the material we then had. The most important factors in enjoying a day's hunting, what it is that people enjoy about hunting. Riding across country and watching hounds work figure amongst the top two for foxhounds, for harriers, for bloodhounds; it did not for the draghounds.

In fact, the draghounds essentially swap the watching hounds work with the challenging jumps So watching hounds work is not so important for the draghounds.

Unpredictability of the day and meeting friends was also an important aspect, particularly amongst the harriers and the foxhounds participants respectively. Again, the hypothetical question that had to be asked, it was an obvious one to ask: "Would you participate in drag and bloodhound hunting if there was a ban on hunting wild animals with dogs?" This question was asked of the foxhounds and harrier participants. 72 per cent of foxhound harrier participants would not substitute with draghounds and bloodhounds.

Scent and simulation. This was a chapter in its own right within the report. It is not based upon the empirical survey material. It is the main element, main core of the report which deals with that. It was specifically reviewing and exploring this issue about scents, scent and simulation. Really, the key element that can wrap that up to a certain extent is best summarised in those two sentences there. Drag/bloodhound hunting is an exercise in simulation. If scent was given the priority it warrants, then drag and bloodhound hunting must be seen as having serious limitations from a dog work point of view. There we are. We are back to the beginning on that one.

What I have done is just highlight some of the critical elements of what we think are important, or certainly in most cases raise particular aspects of further discussion. There is no doubt that we all feel that we have actually uncovered a lot more complex picture than I think was probably imagined by most people in this particular area of study. The whole thing

is not quite so simple as it might at first glance appear.

Consequently, of course, please, bearing in mind that because of the relatively small dip into the water here with this primary research, and the surveys that went with it, we obviously have opened up areas which, as researchers, we would like to take further. So it has opened up a lot of possibilities and options in that direction.

I, equally, think it has opened up some areas for further clarification and also discussion about these various aspects that we have raised.

I think I will leave it there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Thank you also for staying close to the timetable.

The next step is that I would like to give other members of the seminar an opportunity to ask questions of detail. This is not to give your own views on the subject, or to expand more generally on the report. But, first of all, just to identify whether there are things about the report you do not understand; whether you would like to receive some further information, or whether there are any of the particular pieces of data that you wish to challenge.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. Good morning, Members of the Committee.

The first point of clarification which I would like to raise involves the North-East Cheshire hunt. One of the things that occurs to me in reading your report in detail is that North Cheshire is quite different in many respects from other drag hunts. You made in your

opening statements the point that generally drag hunts do not have flesh houses, which this one does. You make the point they have fewer hounds. This one has 52, which is a respectable number. There are many other points -- you bring these out in your report -- that this hunt duplicates a fox hunt in many respects in terms of the number of followers and number of days of meets.

In presenting the data, you said you had chosen areas where there was an overlap of drag and fox hunting. The North Cheshire area is one that I have a lot of person knowledge of, and believe there is virtually no overlap between the fox hunts and the North Cheshire hunt.

The North Cheshire hunt is based in Charlesworth, which is some 30 miles distant from where the Holcombe hunt is based. On speaking to the huntsman from the North-east Cheshire hunt, he says that they do not overlap territories at all. In respect of the West Cheshire hunt, he believes that overlap is so rare as to be almost a non-event. So that was the information given by the North-East Cheshire drag hunt. One of the reasons why the North-East Cheshire hunt has been so successful is a point that I would like you to clarify as well maybe, but could it well be that this is an area where there traditionally has not been fox hunting, and the drag hunt has evolved on territories where it has developed in this particularly unusual way. Perhaps if I could ask you to clarify that point first, please.

MR MANLEY: Yes. Obviously we had to go from not having the

personal experience that you have. On this basis, we went on the information available to us to arrive at this. So that was on that basis, that we had that overlap that we were looking for.

On the second point, you raise this issue about whether or not there might be a lot more hunting and drag hunting because there is no fox hunting. Is that correct?

MR SWANN: Chairman, I have made the point that the statistics for the North-East Cheshire hunt in your report indicate its similarity to a fox hunt in terms of its popularity and in the other parameters which I mentioned.

MR MANLEY: That is one thing that certainly arose from this. I think I made that point; that a lot of questions have been raised by this, and maybe that is one that would need to be explored.

The other one may be the length, the very factor and one of the reasons why we picked it also is because of the length of establishment. That might well be a key factor as well. There could be a whole range of factors. Quite honestly, this is only skirting the surface in some respects. I think it would be foolish for me to try going any further than that.

MR SWANN: Chairman, could I just come back briefly on that point, and say then that you do accept that this lack of overlap occurs in this respect; that the Holcombe hunt and the West Cheshire hunt do not overlap to a considerable degree with the drag hunting territory.

MR MANLEY: Only from what you have said.

MR COX: Can I add to that. You are raising a question really about typicality. We found out that in certain key respects that the Cheshire was rather distinctive. I think there are all kinds of reasons to suppose that, amongst what is a small group of hunts anyway, namely 12, because of the circumstances of the formation, the influence of personalities and the histories and so forth, I suspect that, whichever one we picked we might have come up with quite a distinctive picture. It was very much driven by the need to find hunts in different agricultural areas, with distinct agriculture characteristics, and make sure we got a coverage in that respect too. So I think those points ought to be borne in mind.

MR SWANN: Chairman, sorry, could I just ask for a further point of clarification on this issue, just to come back to Mr Manley's point. It is not just my own opinion; this was based on questions that I asked the huntsman at the North-East Cheshire. I would like to record that point, which of course you are at liberty to do yourselves.

I also asked him what his views would be on why the North-East Cheshire hunt was so successful, and why it did so successfully duplicate the parameters that would apply to a fox hunt. His views were the one you made, the length of establishment, but he also made the point that there is no fox hunting in that area.

It is why I am labouring the point. You have implied in the report that these areas are hunted by fox hunts, live quarry hunts as well as drag hunts. I am making the point that this is not the case. This has a

very important bearing on why the North-East Cheshire hunt is such an important hunt.

MR MANLEY: Can I come back on that. I did not say that. This is one of the areas we could certainly investigate. We do not know -- the survey as such does not tell us so I did not say that.

MR SWANN: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The submission of the Masters of Draghounds and Bloodhounds Association under North-East Cheshire does say "that part of the country hunting the Cheshire Forest Hunt and the Holcombe Harriers". There obviously is an issue here about what "part" means, but I think this has to be something we need to follow up at the next stage.

MR MANLEY: To be honest, hopefully, like any good researchers, we talk about how we could have done things better, and within the time constraints. What we would have done is talk to the Master of Draghounds, and so on and so forth, well before we got the interviews and surveys going on to check the information within such things as (inaudible). We were not able to have the luxury of doing that. To be honest, I suppose, if we had found that there was not an overlap we presumably would not have picked North-East Cheshire, because it would not have fitted our criteria.

MR SWANN: Thank you.

Chairman, if I could just clarify that point that you made. The junction of territories is by mutual agreement with the Holcombe and the West Cheshire. It is now only the West Cheshire which borders, and by mutual

agreement we do have what is in effect an agreed boundary.

SIR RICHARD BODY: Thank you, Chairman.

I represent an International Association of Masters of Bloodhounds. We are not in the Countryside Alliance. The Association takes a neutral view on this, although individual members may have a point, but we are neutral because we have members in Germany and elsewhere.

I would like to take up, if I may, a very important point you did make; that one of the reasons why drag hunting -- using that as a general term -- was accepted by farmers was for tradition and general support of country sports.

I would like to endorse that; that has been our experience. All our Masters would agree wholeheartedly with that. The farmers who are most willing to allow us to go over their farms are those who are supporters of hunting. Almost always, more often than not, we have our meet at a farm where the farmer is an active foxhunter. We find that he is a good host, and does a great deal to arrange for other farmers to go over his land.

What we have detected in the last few months, especially following what Mr Swann has been saying, is that these farmers who have encouraged us and welcomed us are getting edgy towards us, because the more the RSPCA make the point that drag hunting is the alternative, and that it should take the place of fox hunting, and if fox hunting were then made illegal, I have no doubt there is going to be resentment and anger,

and that will rub off on us, I can see it, but it is quite certain in my mind, and the view is shared by members, that if fox hunting were abolished, one of the arguments advanced for the abolition is that drag hunting is the alternative, then we will not have the sympathetic reception that we are getting at the moment, and we will not have the invitation that we have now. I have no doubt that as a result -- and I say this with great regret -- drag hunting will be seriously disadvantaged if fox hunting is abolished for that reason.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this does not fall under my heading of clarification and fact. I think it falls more into the next part of the discussion.

The point is perfectly legitimate, but if I can just put that to one side for the moment and see if there are any other points. Then we will come back to it in the more general discussion.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns.

Could I ask your guidance please, Chairman. The researchers did not enter into discussion about those economic arguments which they presented in the paper. Do you wish that we make comments on that, or is this to be put off to the next seminar?

THE CHAIRMAN: This depends on scale, I think. We probably should have some discussion of that issue. But whether you wish to raise it now, or whether you want to deal with it in what I describe as the next stage of opinion and presentation of views, I leave to you.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. I take the point, and this is a point of clarification.

In the derivation of many of your economic opinions, you have used a concept where you have described Hunter equivalents. I am given to understand this might be referring to a similar analysis that was carried out by Professor Winter in his paper some years before.

I have deep concerns about extrapolation of that method to two different types of hunting. I wonder if you could clarify for me, therefore, why you have chosen to use that method, and how you justify its use where there are two different categories of horse used, because I personally do not believe it is applicable.

MS HALLETT: In the earlier work to which you refer we did in fact use a personal questionnaire which included a very detailed table, which asked respondents to fill in exactly how much time all their different horses spent on a number of different occupations, and from that we actually derived the weighting, both from the 1993 report and also for the later 1999, I think it was, on Exmoor.

Unfortunately, with the telephone questionnaire, that was going to be too detailed for us to do that much. It would have asked the respondent to hold too much in their brains at once. So we asked them for a category -- it is on page 39 in fact -- of the various categories of horse. They gave us those. We allocated the total number of horses into those categories. Indeed, we have then put in a hunter equivalent: Retired

young breeding stock at zero; point-to-pointers at zero; used solely or mainly for hunting at 1; used about equally for hunting and other purposes, a half; used only occasionally for hunting 0.1; other ridden horses never used for hunting, zero.

When we used that weighting and multiplied up, it was interesting that in fact the figure we got of about 53 per cent for the fox hunting and harrier participants agreed extremely well with the earlier figures we had from the Winter 1993 and the later 1999 studies. In fact, it was slightly lower than those. That did, I must say, give us some confidence.

Certainly, you can argue that it is, I suppose, slightly arbitrary, but then, on the other hand, you can say retired young and breeding stock to some extent possibly should be attributed to hunting, which we have not done; the same with the point-to-pointers, because I am not quite sure where they are going to stand; they are primarily race horses, and we have explained that we actually left those out, though, on the other hand, we did for those which were used solely or mainly for hunting (inaudible) we did count those as one. I am happy to discuss it further. We did it exactly like that.

MR SWANN: Chairman, if I may come back on that. I do not believe you have answered my point, with respect. The point was: attributing the significance of hunting to horses in the two categories?

I do not wish to make this too technical, but let us just say we have horse 1 and horse 2. Horse 1 drag hunts. Horse 2 fox hunts. Horse 1, the drag hunter, puts X amount of effort into hunting. Horse 2 puts in X amount of

contribution. The amount of contribution is identical. The cost in this arbitrary example is identical as well. The fox hunting horse, let us say, that is used more for hunting than other purposes, and let us say that the drag hunting horse does have more extensive use as well, although the input into hunting might be identical. You could compare within the two categories, you could compare a drag hunting horse with a drag hunting horse doing different levels of input, but I do not believe you can compare across the categories. I do not think it is a valid comparison. I am afraid to say it is one I would argue quite strongly.

MS HALLETT: If a horse is used solely or mainly for hunting, I suppose one could argue that because it is kept for hunting there is a greater chance of its use no longer being required were there to be a ban. I can see that could be one argument put forward.

Certainly, we have relied upon people who talked to us to tell us whether it was solely, or mainly, or if it was about equally in terms of their use; and that is the foundation of it.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Chairman.

If I could just make the point that I do believe this is an arbitrary comparison. As all the rest of the economic data are derived from it, I have considerable reservations about the accuracy of those data. Thank you.

MR COX: Could I ask what sort of scale of error you are presuming. Are we talking about something marginal here, or something which completely wrecks all of the data and

renders it unsatisfactory?

MR SWANN: Chairman, if I could respond to that and say I put all this data to the economic adviser, and I will answer that question when I have his opinion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Maybe we can come back to some of this later in the day. My experience of a lot of these things is that the way one uses these numbers very much depends upon the question that you are asking. Sometimes the way the numbers are constructed varies. Their relevance depends upon the question they are seeking to answer. Whether one is trying to answer what the current effect is, as opposed to what might happen in the event of a ban, could produce some quite different figures.

Are there any other points?

MR HART: Lord Burns, thank you.

Three questions for the contractors. The first, have you assessed the reason why the Islands of Anglesey and Man have large and vibrant equestrian populations, and no distraction in the form of quarry hunting, and yet drag hunting there struggles to survive at all?

Secondly, we have been surprised in certain bits of evidence to see a suggestion that payment to landowners may be the answer to the perceived problem with land access. Do you believe that there is a risk that this may generate, or possibly generate, some competition and possibly dispute between land holders; and asking them may possibly have the effect that it can crank up the prices that we are possibly talking about; and might lead -- might, I emphasise -- to the loss of the essential ingredient of all forms of hunting, which

is the relationship based upon goodwill?

Thirdly, your report on page 99 -- the Report acknowledges that "the human quarry or person laying the line, whether mounted or not, is unlikely to be able to mimic the movements of an animal which, for instance, might well pass through an impenetrable hedge and then double back" -- your quote.

Given that the report survey showed that the unpredictability of the day was much more important to the foxhound participants than any of the others, is it unrealistic to hope that the unpredictability of the day would ever be created in drag hunting if this is not an important element to drag and bloodhound hunters?

MR MANLEY: Julia, do you want to deal with the first issue, please?

MS HALLETT: As regards the choice of the hunts that we looked at, no, we chose the overlapping countries. Because there were no foxhounds or harriers in those islands, they were not chosen as part of the study. I think that is something, yes, that we did not address because our rationale was slightly different.

MR MANLEY: The issue of payment to farmers; it was something that we explored. I, equally, take on board some of the points that you raised. If you look in the issue of further work, which I have not highlighted in the presentation, that is a key area that would lead to further exploration.

There is no sensitivity analysis being done to see whether or not charging for access, what the repercussions that is going to have to subscriptions, to

caps, to participation rates, and so on and so forth. So it is an obvious area that would need further exploration.

Could you clarify for me, please, the other element of that question?

THE CHAIRMAN: The third part was getting quite near to opinion rather than --

MR COX: If he did indeed say what I took him to be saying I would just want to answer 'no'.

MR HART: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I ask a couple of questions about table 4.11, which is on--

MR MANLEY: Can I say, I have the tables which I can flick up on to the screen, which could be useful if it works.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, please, if you would. (Pause) Table 4.11.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have three questions. One was that the figures for stable building and repairs are very different between the two columns. I am wondering, how is that being calculated? Is that depreciation, or is there some element of capital cost? Because it looks to me a very big difference.

There is a similar difference in the opposite direction in terms of horse boxes and trailers, where we have 3,000 on one side and 1,328 on the other, which has already been quoted. And then the third is when I divide 16,014 by 5.3 I do not get 2,883. And if I divide 17,150 by 4.7 I do not get 4,033. Unless I am doing the wrong calculation. I do not want to make too much of it, but my concern is more about the first two points.

MS HALLETT: I will take that one, if I may. Yes, there is capital expenditure in that. We discovered, again this was building on earlier work that we had done, that people tended generally to underestimate. We found it necessary to actually get total expenditures from hunt participants, and in fact needed to look at capital expenditure.

Our assumption has been that although a small number of people will have capital expenditures in any one year, each year there will be some, and, therefore, that presents an average for the expenditure going into the local economy in that year. The numbers are, as they were asked on the questionnaires, which is in the appendix. Those are the answers given by the participants.

Yes, there was one person up in the north who did spend a lot, who happened to mention that he had set up a new yard and had spent a lot, and in some of the calculations he has been taken out because he had a particularly high expenditure.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it out of this one?

MS HALLETT: No, it is in --

THE CHAIRMAN: Once one starts having both capital figures and current figures, it becomes quite difficult to make sense, does it not? The numbers can be quite arbitrary, whether or not in one particular year or not one has this expenditure, and how it should be measured. Presumably, it is the same in the other direction with horse boxes.

MS HALLETT: And, of course, there is an element that

approximately --

THE CHAIRMAN: Most of the numbers turn out to be quite the same between the two columns. I am just looking at the numbers which look very different between the two.

MR MANLEY: This issue has been raised in the previous studies that we have done. Even if one or two of them might be particularly high, I think the point of the matter is okay, that is what is happening this year. The vast majority of them not having very big capital expenditures, but I think it would be a mistake not to raise one or two of them because the humps and bumps overall of expenditure is going to even out.

In fact, some of the previous studies -- Julia, would you like to comment? This is something that has been previously left out.

MS HALLETT: Going right back to 1993, we actually did a check because we were unsure how accurate the figures were given in the questionnaires we had been given. In fact, I had travelled and done face-to-face interviews with people, a stratified sample in terms of their expenditure, and actually prompted them through a more finely detailed list than we had been able to do on the postal questionnaire.

It was surprising the degree to which they had underestimated their spending, which is why the later studies have attempted to take that into account, and to prompt some of that forgotten expenditure which sometimes they would rather not acknowledge.

THE CHAIRMAN: My third question, it appears that 2,883 is supposed to be 16,014 divided by 5.3. Is it? As long as I have the

concept right.

MS HALLETT: That is what it says.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, I can help you with the horse boxes in this. The survey has shown that drag hunters travel further and take part in different events, and so need much better forms of transport. I cannot explain the stable difference, but I can explain the horse box one.

MR COX: Can I just underline the point made earlier, because I was involved in the 1993 study. It was so politically sensitive, what we were doing, that the presumption one had as a social scientist was that the participants in the activity that we were examining would round up and exaggerate their expenditure in order to accentuate the economic case for its continuation. What we found out, as has been explained, was precisely the opposite. There was routine neglect to mention key items, particularly of capital expenditure and all kind of other things too; and that is why we have been particularly careful about these subsequent studies.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I suppose there is another way of looking at it. We have had an intuitive reason as to why the horse box and trailers might be higher in one case than the other. Do these numbers make sense? That one should be double the other when it comes to stable building and repairs? Or is it possible that this is just something that comes out of the particular sampling error?

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, I think many fox hunters have to go on their horse for the meet -- they do where I

live because it is quite a compact area. We hunt, our own pack hunt, over eight foxhound countries. The meets for the foxhounds in the areas that I hunt are pretty near to where the horses are kept. The livery stables are near those particular hunting stables.

MR SWANN: Sorry, Lord Burns, could I also -- while the team are thinking about that one -- add a further point of clarification because one of the questions that we have down to ask on those tables is the actual numbers of horses kept as well, whether they should be seen as representative of your average foxhunter or drag hunter. The household expenditure in each section is roughly between 16 and 17,000 pounds. Is this just a feature of these particular hunts you looked at, or are you presenting these figures so that we should accept this is the average amount that a householder will expend on their hunting activities?

MR MANLEY: You must bear in mind the obvious limitations of doing that, not a national survey in this respect. It is indications and pointers, but I always caution about extrapolating up.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: I wonder if I might stick to the same table and ask for clarification of the lower part. We have had some discussion about the hunter equivalents. What I would like explanation on is the proportion of expenditure allocated to hunting, where that figure comes from, and then also the total expenditure on hunting horses, how that is calculated from the figures above it?

MS HALLETT: The proportion of expenditure allocated to

hunting is the hunter equivalent, as a proportion of the total horses.

MR MANLEY: Table 4.10.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is 37 and 53.

MS HALLETT: And the total expenditure on hunting horses is a proportion of the total using 37 per cent. So it would be 37 per cent of the total.

MR MANLEY: Essentially, I think one has to remind you that we are asking what they are spending on horses, and then working out what their hunter equivalents are, and then working out the horse expenditure, rather than asking the question, "How much money do you actually spend on hunting?", and go back or come back to it because it is a safer way of doing it.

MS HALLETT: Just to add to that, I think it is felt that it would be almost impossible for a respondent to have his store of hay for the winter, and say how much he could give to hunting and how much not, which is why that data is not available.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other points?

MR POLAND: Mr Chairman, I have one point. If I can refer to table 6.5 on page 71. Can the contractors give any explanation as to why, of the hypothetical farmers who allow draghounds on their land, only two participated in drag hunting, whereas a much higher percentage, 27 participants, part of 108, allowed the foxhounds? From the question of the farmers, did they get a reason as to why so few farmers who allowed draghounds on their land actually participated in it?

MR MANLEY: We did not specifically ask that question, no.

As I said, this is the sort of thing, if we were doing postal or face-to-face we would have explored further. We did quite well with a lot of the farmers to get what we did, to be honest, so no.

MR BROUGHTON: Do I detect you were unhappy with the results you got from the farmers survey then? Do you feel their answers were probably what they should have been?

MR MANLEY: No, not unhappy with the answers they gave, but I am just saying it is perhaps something worth bearing in mind; there was not this interest in this subject, talking to interviewers, and indeed we also did some of them ourselves.

MR BROUGHTON: Did you get a feeling as to why there was a disinterest?

MR MANLEY: No, I think what we could do is only speculate on that, to be honest.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, shall we move on to the next stage. I would like to give everybody the opportunity of making some general points about the subject and about the report.

I think Sir Richard has already made some general points. I would be inclined to start at this side of the table, if you are ready, Mr Broughton. You do not have to join in at this stage if you do not wish. But it is to give you the chance to make any points you wish.

MR BROUGHTON: You state that draghound hunting with clean boot is an exercise in simulation. I find that quite offensive, being a Master of Bloodhounds. We do not seek to simulate anything.

I wonder can I ask, first of all, have you

experienced of our sport? There seems to be a very severe lack of understanding.

MR COX: Well, the word "simulation" was used simply to indicate that you are working the dogs on a line which has been placed, which would be different from the police, let us say, using a bloodhound to try to resolve the whereabouts of a criminal.

I am only making a distinction between a situation which is entirely natural as against one which you have, to a degree, set up, even though what then happens obviously is entirely natural.

Nobody is -- I would hate to think you were offended by the term. That worries me slightly.

MR BROUGHTON: We are very serious about our sport. I would take exception to you drawing that distinction between those two. When we hunt, our hounds, most of us have no idea where we are going. We rely entirely on the hound. I think probably you missed that point.

MR COX: No, I just explained it. You have no idea where you are going. You are following the hounds, but the day and the hunt for that day has been set up. In that sense, it is similar. I am not implying any negative assessment of what you do when I use that term.

MR BROUGHTON: You have implied that you feel that from a dog work point of view our sport is nowhere near the sport of hunting a wild animal. I can boast over 1000 days fox hunting. I can boast 500 days hunting my own pack of bloodhounds. I see an awful lot of hunting with my pack. Again, I just wonder how you based that opinion?

MR COX: I should say, first of all, that anybody who claims to know very much about scent is probably not being very sensible. So a key element which was already brought out by the comment earlier about working a dog on scent, and crucially the relationship between the dog and the human beings working the dogs, the human being or human beings, is the essential unpredictability of the situation; and the requirement, therefore, that the person working with the dogs has to literally read the actions of the dog and try to discern what is going on, whether to intervene or not, or whether to let things take their natural course, and so on and so forth. So, again, I was simply stating what seemed to me -- on the basis of talking to various people, and my own experience of this matters -- what I thought was a relatively uncontentious statement; namely that, at the end of the day, the bottom line is that it is impossible to simulate, set up a situation with, however imaginative a line layer, a runner or whatever, the sorts of things that one routinely sees, and you no doubt have seen in the hunting field when you are dealing with a quarry animal, I think, which can go places that humans cannot go, et cetera, et cetera. I will not spell it all out in great detail. So, in that sense, I hoped you would find that sort of thing uncontentious, because, again, this is in no way detracting from the quality of the work which you do with your dogs. Far from it; that would be the last thing that I would want to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I ask for clarification? Are you

suggesting that with the bloodhounds the line is not set for the hunt, and you do not know where it is going? Because it comes out in the report, I think, that there is some difference between the bloodhound and the drag hunting in relation to this.

MR BROUGHTON: Yes, Lord Burns. More often than not the actual huntsman has no idea where he is going to go. We have what is known as a quarry Master; that is another man who does not ride, who actually organises the whole day.

Only in very difficult terrain, main roads and railway lines, does the huntsman normally know that the quarry is not going to go in that direction. We put great emphasis on hunting with live hounds, hunting the natural scent. We feel that it is one of the finest hunts of venery that we actually see. We put an awful lot into our sport.

I did find some of the remarks there quite disrespectful, but that is a personal opinion.

MR COX: I think you just made my point. You mentioned, you know, for instance, your line would not be able to cross a road. Foxes cross roads. That is all I was saying.

THE CHAIRMAN: Therein lies some of the problems!

MR COX: I should say, also, the degree of simulation, or I appreciate the bloodhounds tracking is not the same as -- and trialling.

But, for instance, in that sport, as I mentioned in the chapter, as I understand it, the person handling a dog knows that for the first 100 metres the line will be directly in the straight line ahead of the dog, and

the person working the dog also knows that the line will never take a right-angled turn.

MR DAVIES: Your experts are telling you know!

MR BROUGHTON: Surely that is irrelevant anyway. We are talking about hunting with dogs; we are not talking about using one single animal to track.

MR COX: No, but I am talking about scent and what one knows and the uncertainties and all the rest of it. I was given that on great authority at Crufts by someone who was manning the stand where this activity was being promoted--

A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: The information should have come from me; the person who organises the trials. That was incorrect. We will send you a proper description which would help you.

MR COX: I would love to get one, thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: If I can make a general point, I cannot actually deal with questions from the floor. I will be as tolerant as possible, but I would ask the discussion to be restricted, please, to the people around the table.

Do you have any other points, Mr Broughton?

MR BROUGHTON: I would agree; drag hunting and bloodhound hunting are two different sports; and that drag hunting is a contrived sport.

THE CHAIRMAN: You may find yourself being offensive to some other people!

MR BROUGHTON: And possibly can be used to mimic other forms of quarry hunting. One would ask themselves who would want to participate in that? Who would want to have a

blank day with a pack of draghounds? How would one emulate a blank day with a pack of bloodhounds? It would be absolutely ridiculous. So those are the points I would wish to make at this time.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I would like to go back, if I can, to the situation with the North-East Cheshire for two minutes, because a certain amount was made by Bill Swann with regard to the way this particular pack emulated the statistics of the certain live quarry packs; and then comments were made with regard to whether or not that was because there was an absence of live quarry hunting possibly in parts of the country where they participated in it.

I think what is important to get across here though is that, despite this, there is no evidence to indicate that the different practices of the different draghound packs impacts on the number of people who participate and follow that pack.

In South Wales where I operate, for example, we would have come across as a very distinct pack. The statistics that would have been churned out through a detailed inquiry through our pack, I think, would have quite clearly shown possibly equal similarities.

But it does not alter the fact that when we started, and we were getting fields of 100, for example, they have fallen away. They have fallen away primarily because of the distinct difference between both, with respect, draghound hunting and bloodhound hunting and with respect to live quarry hunting.

That distinct difference, fundamentally, whether you are drag hunting or bloodhound hunting, is that you are in essence following a predetermined route; and that impacts on the sports in a way that I think is wholly unappreciated.

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, I would agree with what has just been said. I have been hunting bloodhounds for about 25 seasons, and longer than that. Rule one is not to make sweeping generalisations. I do deplore people who make these generalisations on hunting with bloodhounds. I think a lot does depend on where you are hunting those hounds.

So far as we are concerned, we do have to, very largely, hunt a predetermined line. I think that Hugh would agree with me; farming has now become very intensive. There are areas where farmers just do not want bloodhounds or draghounds coming, and that would be known to the Master. If he is hunting the hounds as he normally is, then he will be avoiding that area of the countryside.

Again, we will be avoiding all sorts of places where foxhounds will be going, that is woodlands, because of shooting interests. We will be avoiding the roads, of course, and building development. So we do hunt, very largely, a predetermined line, although it is not our wish to do so. I think that applies too with the bloodhound trials.

It so happens this Sunday we have bloodhound trials on our own farm in Berkshire. I think it is going to be very largely predetermined because there are

certain places where we cannot go. So, again, even with trials, I think one has to be very careful. I am not sure about the right-handed turns. I have, as the quarry, done many right-handed turns.

THE CHAIRMAN: We can keep the politics out of this!

MR POLAND: Lord Burns, when I started my discussions and investigations into this subject, I was very impressed by the number of those who followed draghounds and bloodhounds. Perhaps for simplicity let us lump them both under the term "drag hunting" in expression.

I was very impressed by the number of drag hunters that told me that they were completely different sports, different activities. If you look at the table on page 79, which is table 72, which is all the priorities of those following the different activities, you will find that for the fox hunters two of the first three aspirations or attractions lie in the bottom three for those of drag hunters.

Both people love their own sports. They are totally different. We have heard several similarities. What I have heard is comparing power boating to sailing. You get people who are great addicts to power boating and great addicts to sailing, and yet they recognise that theirs are totally different sports to the others. I think if one wants to come to a ban, and one was to come to a transfer, despite whatever attractions that drag hunting will have for some or even many, for a large number of animal quarry hunters they will provide no attractions. I think that comes through from table 72.

MR HART: Lord Burns, just to add really one sentence to that. Obviously, the whole purpose of this Inquiry, to some greater extent this seminar, is to look at to what extent drag hunting could be a replacement.

But just to re-inject into this the fact that for a large proportion of the hunting community, even if there was a willingness, there is no practical possibility of drag hunting fulfilling that role. I am referring specifically to the people who follow hounds on foot; the people who operate in hostile parts of the country where the use of horses is frankly impossible; and those who perhaps follow on a bicycle or foot; or the elderly; and the large proportion of people who are unable to carry out the sort of sports that we have been talking about this morning.

At the end of the day, this is all about human attitude to some extent, and also, and most importantly, the attitude of the agricultural hosts upon which all of these activities are dependent.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Chairman.

I think the first point I wish to make referring to what Daryl said -- and I obviously agree with most of what you said, but I think I want to go back and look at the North Cheshire hunt again.

In the statistics, 19.3 days by participants were spent drag hunting as opposed to an average of 3.4 days spent fox hunting. The average fields. I interviewed the hunt yesterday. The average field is between 70 and 100, and on some days can approach 170, which is a fantastic field for a drag hunt. So I have to ask why so many

people there choose to drag hunt, and why so many people choose to spend so little of their time in fox hunting. We have made the point that fox hunting is not easily available on site, but there are some other pointers. The huntsman made the point about the way they conduct the drag hunting to add interest -- I know that Peter Davies will wish to speak on this as well -- in terms of adding interest such as doubling-back, cross-overs, and also having quite a number of stops in the hunt. They seem to have progressed a long way in adding interest to that hunt.

I know you are aware of this, and aware of it in other hunts as well. So I want to return to this point. I think there was an enormously lost opportunity here in that, looking at the performance statistics of the North-East Cheshire hunt compared to hunts where there is a greater degree of overlap, I think it is an enormous pity that the research team were not able to carry out a research study to look at a thriving, popular drag hunt, providing interesting sport.

To confirm, what Phil Broughton said does add an enormous amount of unpredictability, in that the huntsman or the hunt do not know where the field is going to go for the most part. I think it is an enormous pity this comparison was not done with the drag hunt with an area where there are also fox hunts.

What we are trying to do, we are not trying to make the point that a drag hunt is identical to a fox hunt. What we are saying is: This is an activity that people might choose to join if it was made perhaps more

interesting, or if it was perhaps made available to them, or if they had more experience of it. I think in many cases previous experience of it is a critical point.

Thank you, Chairman.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Could I respond to that. There are two things.

The first is that I think it may have been wiser in the circumstances to have sought an interview with the Master of the Hunt as opposed to the huntsman. I am not aware of any drag hunt this season who have 170. That is absolutely news to me. Is that including 100 foot followers?

MR SWANN: Chairman, if I could respond to that, that was one particular day where they had organised additional activities and shows and that was an exceptional day. I did make the point when I made the statement, Chairman, if I may repeat it, that the average field of the quote was between 70 and 100. Do you argue with that figure as a possibility.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Anything is possible. My telephone survey that I did with that pack about a month earlier where I spoke to the Master, that was not the figure returned to me. Quite seriously, when I get back I will get to the bottom of it and find out. I think you are more likely to get a very reasonable response and accurate response if you seek clarification from a Master as opposed to the huntsman. I cannot explain why, but I think you'll get to the bottom of it if you do that.

The other point that I would like to reiterate is I think the point which maybe I failed to get across

originally; that I totally accept that when you get a Master who is putting in 15 or 20,000 at the end of a season to make up a financial deficit, that that Master will necessarily impose on that pack his own personal views and his own preferences. That may be that he goes out on the top of a hill and watches hounds hunt without moving. When he is paying the bill, that is his right - to run the pack in the way he chooses.

The question though, is in what way does the different practices of drag hunting impact on the people who participate in it? I think that is the central issue. Because sooner or later if drag hunting, as you argue, were to try and somehow offset the detrimental economic effect, it has to be supporting itself. The truth is they are not supporting themselves. All drag hunt and bloodhounds packs - or the majority of them - certainly, are relying very, very heavily on the donations of the senior and associate Masters.

So while you can pick this pack out and say they are doing certain things that you liked the look of, the question is: is that advantaging them in any way? I do not think it is.

MR SWANN: May I respond just briefly?

THE CHAIRMAN: Before you do, could I say the submission we had from the Masters' Association gives a figure, an average field number of 60 for the North Cheshire. It is still pretty high by comparison to the others. But I am just, in point of fact--

MR SWANN: I accept that, Chairman. I spoke to the huntsman, and I also spoke to others involved with the hunt to try

and get some sort of a handle on the figures. 70 to 100 was a figure that was brought up more than once for recent hunts on this current season. I am aware that the figures are around about 60 were those submitted to the Inquiry. We will check those out. Daryl obviously will pass those figures as well. We will try and confirm those and tighten them up, but we accept that it is a high number.

MR DAVIES: Lord Burns, thank you very much. Sir Richard referred to the RSPCA at the beginning so perhaps I ought to state the RSPCA's policy, which is to oppose all live quarry hunting but also to accept totally that drag or bloodhound hunting is totally acceptable to us as an alternative.

For whatever reason, legislation based on morality or ethics, or for conservation reasons, or perhaps for other reasons such as endemic rabies, there has been a ban on hunting with horse and hounds of live quarry, non-live quarry hunting has replaced it either with drag or bloodhound; maybe not totally, but certainly in significant part.

A change from live to non-live quarry hunting brings with it difficulties. I do not ignore those. A change of land use, of being unable quite to replicate the thrill of the live quarry hunt, and the control of a natural tendency because of the lesser unpredictability to speed up the activity, but all these issues can be managed out. Where needs or the law dictate, solutions will and can be found.

It is our view that perceptions of morality

change, and so consequentially does legislation. Sport involving live quarry is increasingly unacceptable to the public, particularly amongst the younger generations. This is not new. This whole trend is not new.

Shooting of live pigeons in the last part of this century was banned and clay pigeon shooting was brought in. At the time, people said that is the end of shooting as we know it. Now, we have clay pigeon shooting as an Olympic sport.

But the RSPCA does not seek to deny people the pleasure of riding in the countryside, or working with hounds, or enjoying the social aspects. We see that all of this can be in part replaced by drag hunting.

Finally, and incidentally, my wife comes from the Isle of Man. It is a small island, very hilly. It is lived in by a lot of people of the older generation who have gone there for tax reasons. There are no foxes. In spite of that, a drag hunt has existed for many years and still exists today. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

MR COX: Mr Chairman, could I --

THE CHAIRMAN: I was going to say that I think the next stage is really to invite the panel to say whether they have any comments on any of the things that have been said?

MR COX: Could I just respond. Regarding one word used in that last statement, where it was stated that you cannot replicate the "thrill of the live quarry hunt". The use of the word "thrill" I think has all the wrong connotations of speed and so forth.

I am sure if Mr Broughton was to talk about these sorts of things one would say that the most exciting thing when you are watching dogs work is watching dogs that work in a controlled manner in a poor scenting situation, and where almost nothing is happening perhaps.

But for the purist, that is what is very hard to replicate; and that is what matters most because that is what we are talking about when we are talking about quality dog work. It has nothing to do with the thrill of the chase.

MR DAVIES: May I come back. Of course, all I am saying is that whilst all of those aspects which appeal now to live quarry hunters cannot totally be replaced, I accept that, but if there is a need by law to change, I believe by proper management and by thinking the thing through a lot of the current objections can be at least reduced significantly to provide a good, clean, and morally acceptable sport.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Could I just pick up on one point. First of all, I would like to say that I do not myself hunt the fox, or the hare, or anything live at all. I am a drag hunter.

But I am concerned when I hear things that are untrue. I would like to pick you up on what you said, when you said that drag hunting had replaced fox hunting in other parts of world.

In Germany, for example, which has the highest number of drag hunts, they still number fewer than the drag hunt/bloodhound combination that you have in this

country, and that is, for a country covering the size of England and Wales, a little larger anyway.

It is not true to say that since fox hunting was stopped in the thirties there has been any significant replacement of fox hunting with drag hunting. What dictates the sport in this country is the size, the country, the terrain, and is the approval of the farmers.

Certainly if you look at Germany carefully, I think you draw the conclusion that that probably supports the opposite argument.

MR DAVIES: May I reply?

THE CHAIRMAN: Of course.

MR DAVIES: I spent something like 25 years of my military life in Germany, and have many German friends. We have just come back from visiting a drag hunt in Germany and talking about that sort of subject. The men who were riding that day, and for whom it is a life-long passion, and of course who have had no alternative since about 1934, said that the whole culture of riding in Germany is totally different from Britain.

In Britain, every child's aspiration is to own a pony, or a female child anyway and quite a lot of the male children as well. They are encouraged from an early age in this country to be in stables, to muck out, to learn about saddlery, to be with their horses, take them to summer camps and do all those sort of things. None of that is true in Germany. It does not happen.

According to them, and from my own observations, the German children, if they want to go on a horse, turn

up in a car, get out of it, get on to a horse, ride it, get off it and disappear. There is no significant equivalent. So it is becoming, I accept this, that in Germany the drag hunting is a rather elitist sport; I agree with you.

But I do not believe in 1934 when it was banned there were hundreds of live hunts going on. I do not believe it. I do not know the facts, but I do not believe it. I believe those people who came from a tradition of riding with hounds wanted to keep that expertise going with hounds, and the law denied them the live quarry hunting.

All the Germans we spoke to earlier this week said, "Of course we would like to go after a live quarry." They were absolutely honest about it, but we have not been able to do it since 1934 and so we do this instead.

That seems to me that is the answer.

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, may I take up a point about Germany, because we have some of our members in Germany, as we have in Holland and Belgium. I can say for a certainty that there is a great deal of coming and going in packs of hounds there; that not all of them survive very long and some of them only survive for two or three years and pack up, and then perhaps another pack will start.

They do not have this continuity as we have been able to have over here in this country, but even packs of draghounds and bloodhounds are not all that secure over here. We have lost, I think, two packs of

draghounds. There is one of course which Mr Davies knows only too well, which registered in this country in last September and has not even had a meet yet because they have not been able to find anywhere to go.

So I would not say Germany is a very good example to take, Lord Burns.

MR DAVIES: Could I come back on that last one. I am sorry, the two of us had a conversation -- although we did not meet -- on the radio the other morning. I recorded mine at quarter to 6 in the morning and I think you did yours live.

This thing about the New Forest drag hunt came up. We have had every obstacle put in our path that could have been put in our paths to get that drag hunt going. We have had our problems, but by God we are going to do it.

SIR RICHARD BODY: You are taking our country from us.

MR SWANN: Could I make one point. I was just looking through the transcript with Simon to clarify this number on the North-East Cheshire, I have to say I may have misread my own writing. The exact reference on the transcript, Simon will confirm "we have between 50 and 100 followers in an average day. It averages about at 60 or 70". That fits in with your figure.

I do apologise for that. It was not an intention to mislead; I just misread my handwriting. I will point out that the person who gave me the information was the same person who gave the information to the Committee's researchers. So I believe what is sauce for the goose is...

Thank you.

MR POLAND: Mr Chairman, perhaps I might be able to enlighten you. In Germany, I believe in 1936 there were 50 packs of hounds. Now there are 29 listed of varying sizes, but also a feature that I believe your party saw on a visit earlier this week is that whenever they can a lot of the German drag hunters emigrate to Ireland, in particular, and to England to do their quarry hunting. That is still very important to them.

MR DAVIES: I absolutely accept that last bit. I did make the point they all said, "We would prefer to hunt a live quarry, it is more exciting." There is more -- I had better not use that word again. Anyway, they would rather do it, but the law in their country does not allow it so the majority of them do drag hunting. Some do go to Ireland and other places to do live quarry hunting; that is their privilege and right as individuals, but their country has banned it.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, you have heard from several individuals who seek to use our sport as a political pawn within the remit of your Inquiry. Whilst our sport may be the closest on offer, it certainly is not and must never ever be referred to as a substitute or an alternative for live quarry hunting. No more to put it in a different context than rugby would be a replacement for soccer if the latter were to be banned.

MR DAVIES: Not too much ethics in that!

MR OLIVER-BELLASIS: My Lord, Chairman, Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, representing the NFU. I think it appropriate at this moment, since we are talking about what land is used, to make three points.

Firstly, there is no doubt that landholders and farmers see a benefit from having hounds, if they wish to have them, quarry hounds across their land. They accept to an extent the damage that comes with that -- and with the weather we have been having, there is attendant damage -- which is a small price to pay for the service that they get.

The second point -- and the contractors have actually highlighted this -- is that there is an issue over payment which might or might not be made where another sport were to come, which was not perceived to have the same benefit that quarry hunting might have. I do not have a feel for the sensitivity of how much money would have to change hands, but I think that is an issue which needs addressing because it is certainly an issue over the ability to access that land. The third point to make is that I think it wrong to assume necessarily that there would be a switch on the basis of allowing country sports to continue if quarry hunting were banned; that it would be automatically a similar attitude of those individuals to allow drag hunting. Now, I cannot give you evidence to that; that is purely a personal judgment.

Thank you.

MR HART: Lord Burns, may I just take to task one thing that Peter Davis just said. He implied, "the majority" was his words of those in Germany who we talked to carried out drag hunting.

In fact, out of a horse population which is double that of the UK, a tiny proportion in fact do take part

in drag hunting. Given that there have been 63 years with which to perfect the techniques which we have been talking about this morning, that is actually a tiny take-up out of a very large population of horses.

MR DAVIES: I do not want to start a dialogue on this. I did try to suggest that the equine attitude in Germany is very different from ours. In Germany, from my experience, blood lines are hugely important; dressage is hugely important; indoor show jumping is hugely important. When you get down to something like three-day eventing, they do not come into it or very little. In fact, one of them said to us, "We just do not get anybody to go to badminton. If they do, they do not come anywhere. We just do not have that sort of culture. Ours is much more a controlled business." So I think this is a natural progression from that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Maybe we could group together issues to do with comparisons with other countries. Could I ask whether there are any other points that members of the seminar want to make about other countries; either about the experiences elsewhere; whether they do better elsewhere. Whether there is any evidence of what happens in other countries that would throw any more light on these issues.

I have a number of questions which we can work through during the course of the day, but this is one of the comparisons which comes up quite a lot. Maybe before lunch we could see whether we could exhaust the various points that people wish to make about that.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, I have some experience in other countries. There are some small differences. As regards

to the actual hunting, I believe there is very little difference, especially with drag hunting. There is very, very little difference indeed.

In fact, I believe that you went to see a pack the other day which was probably very fast and furious and a very experienced pack. One can find them in this country as well. I could take you to a pack abroad that is quite slow, but I could take you to several packs here that are quite slow. I should take you to packs that do not jump at all. I can take you to packs that probably jump 60 or 70 fences in a day. Abroad, exactly the same.

I think our sport really depends on the terrain that one is hunting. It depends on the requirements of the mounted field. Probably most of all it depends on the personal preference of the Master; and that is the same across the board. There is no difference wherever one goes.

The differences can be seen in formation of clubs abroad, in America and in Germany. Hunt clubs are very successful because of a different culture of the horse. One would wonder whether in this country that could be emulated at all. But that really is the only difference that I can see.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which country has been most successful in putting in place drag and bloodhound hunting outside of the UK?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I was going to say the UK!

MR BROUGHTON: Certainly the UK is leagues in front.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is leagues in front.

MR BROUGHTON: It is leagues in front, but possibly Germany

would come a close second and Holland.

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, I think New Zealand is quite an interesting example here, where attempts have been formed to have an alternative to hare hunting.

One of the problems is that if you have drag hunts you have to have quite a lot of jumps, they have to be pretty safe and they have to be constructed.

Now, if you have no live quarry hunting and no jumps there at all, you are on virtually land, as it were. You have to make perhaps 20, 30, or 40 jumps for a day's hunting. That requires a lot of physical help. If you only have volunteers, then it is a task that is virtually impossible. That was the experience in New Zealand, and it is an experience I think that we will find over here in our own country.

Because one of the advantages of having an overlap with foxhounds is that they too are putting up jumps. So far as most packs of draghounds, there is a ratio of about 1 to 8. So 1 pack of draghounds to 8 foxhounds. So you have a large number of people in your draghound country willing to help put up jumps which primarily of course is for the foxhounds but will also be used for the drag hunters.

Our members do feel that if fox hunting were to be abolished we would lose those jumps that were put up for the foxhounds. The task of putting up safe jumps for our followers is going to be virtually impossible after a period of years when those existing jumps have deteriorated or are no longer being maintained.

If one takes an average day, at a minimum one

needs 20 jumps and sometimes 30 to 40. You can only go over that country that has that meet twice in the year. It gets rather boring if you go more than that. So, if you have, say, 26 meets in the year, that means 13 lines you have to arrange, each one having at least 20 jumps, that runs into hundreds.

I do not think any -- I think Phil Broughton would agree with me -- that it would be impossible for us to get sufficient labour for us to build 200 or 300 jumps in the winter months when time is short. All our followers, with very few exceptions, have jobs, they are working Mondays to Fridays. They may hunt one day a week; that means they have only one short day to desert their families to help in constructing the country. That is why I think an overlap is so important.

If one takes the New Zealand case, that was proved to be so very much because of lots of barbed wire fences, obviously, which would have had to have had safe jumps.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Chairman. Could I just make a point on that. One thing that Daryl is probably not aware of -- and he will want to comment on this as well -- going back to the North Cheshire hunt again, part of the land they run over belongs to my family. The construction of fences is quite a common event for drag hunts as well because you have things like moorland fences, and you have areas where the access would otherwise be difficult, barbed wire fences. It is quite a common practice with a drag hunt to go out and build these fences. So I cannot, with respect, see the point that

you are making; that if there was a transfer -- if people did decide to take up drag hunting as an alternative then these practices would continue.

SIR RICHARD BODY: I am sorry, Lord Burns, I put my point very badly. If one has 250 jumps to create over a year, I do not think the number of people available to drag hunting would be able to construct them in the winter months.

Of course, all our packs make their contribution. We do not just live parasitically off the fox hunt. We are making a large number of jumps, but I do not think we can make that total number. I think it is quite impossible with the resources we have.

MR BROUGHTON: I think, Lord Burns, Sir Richard is basing his assumption that everyone who goes drag hunting or hunting with bloodhounds wants to jump a large number of fences. Possibly, that is not the case all over the country, but it may well be with him or one or two others. I do take his point; there would be an awful lot more work involved.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: I wonder if I might follow up on some similar point to that. It strikes me that a lot of the research that has been done has been looking specifically at the alternative of drag and bloodhound hunting with respect to live quarry hunting, and questioning those people involved in both, of the substitutability of it.

Has any work been done at all on latent demand, of people who have never been involve in either sport? Has there been any attempt on the part of the drag or

bloodhound to devise a new form of the sport that might suit people that are not used to hunting in any way?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I think, to answer that question, the answer is quite simply yes. Every one of the packs I think up and down the country, have put in considerable efforts when they pick up the bill at the end of the year, to try and think of ways that they could generate a bit more money - and that directly comes from getting more participants. With respect to the question regarding any research into people who have not been live quarry hunting, I do not think there has been any. The only thing that I have been able to say -- and I think it was included in the submission to the Board of Inquiry -- was that our own statistics indicated that there was not a too dissimilar take-up between people who were introduced to the sport who had not gone hunting live quarry before, as those who had gone out in live quarry. But we actually found that, from the point of our inception, we converted as many new people unfortunately -- fortunately or unfortunately depending on how you look at it -- to fox hunting.

We actually found of the 300 we surveyed who had visited and come out with us and not returned, i.e. they were not drag hunting on the third year. 31 I believe of them, were still with our pack, and 34 of them were distributed amongst the other foxhound packs locally. So they would come hunting out into the countryside with us, then they decided that possibly it was not so much they wanted our sport but possibly that it was too much for them. They tried something else and remained with the something else. So there was approximately equal sort of take up

there.

MR POLAND: If I can help, Lord Burns, and I can help Dr Edwards, in my discussions with both the Jersey and the Anglesey drag hunts where they are desperate -- Jersey are desperate for finance and in Anglesey they are desperate for members. There is a high equestrian element to both islands, largely involving showjumping and dressage and what have you. They have tried to encourage them to go out with the draghounds in whatever way, but when it came down to the bottom line they did not want the rigours of a day's drag hunting. That was the unsolicited view given to me by both Jersey and Anglesey.

THE CHAIRMAN: I realise the report does not get into the question of what happens in other countries, but it is an issue that comes up a lot. I wanted to make sure that we had explored whatever there was to be said about other countries.

The next point I wanted to move on to was an issue which has come up and which I think does come out quite clearly from the report, which is the issue of farmers. My reading of the report showed that this distinct group of people who had significantly different views between the two activities. And I think it also showed that people were more equestrian minded tended to be more associated with the drag and bloodhound hunting. Do you have any comments to make, for instance, on your results about this and particularly about the farmers? Because I think this obviously does become quite an important issue. Because not only do they participate but they also provide the

land, and to an extent they are also in receipt of some of the services from hunts generally, but are there any other points that you would like to draw out about that, as well as any suggestions as to what it is that they might wish to be paid in order to change their attitudes?

MR MANLEY: The issue of payment -I know it is a sensitive issue and we dealt with it in the survey. As you are aware, this is one aspect I raised at the end of the conclusions, this is obviously an area which does need and involve a thorough look at for its implications. With respect to the other elements, can I just clarify what exactly you meant please?

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, it seems to me that one of the results that kept coming out of the survey was that the attitudes and needs of farmers were more distinct than they were with the other groups of people in terms of their appreciation of drag and bloodhound hunting and the likelihood that they would take it up in the event of a ban.

MR MANLEY: The farmers themselves would take it up, or they would allow access?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, that they themselves.

MR MANLEY: They themselves. That is an interesting one, once again, not specifically explored actually. I think it always surprises people to know farmers are an incredibly diverse group of people. They are not all the same. It is not surprising one is going to get the disparity that we had, particularly in a subject area which in most cases, or for most of them -- a great

number of cases -- they did not really necessarily know or we could not say possibly they knew what they were talking about.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am raising it because my perception is that with quarry hunting farmers played an important part in this, both in respect of the fact they obviously hunt quite a lot themselves as well as the fact they are people who are providing the land. They are also the people who are receiving a lot of the services that the hunt has to offer. I observe they are a key figure in terms of normal quarry hunting. Therefore, their part in any replacement or any alternative could also be quite important.

MR MANLEY: Obviously one of the reasons we are trying to explore this, one has an understanding that one is going to perhaps be more inclined or interested in it and, again, I come back to this point of interest or disinterest . If you do not do it, do not know anyone else, or friend or colleague who does it, then perhaps it is a difficult starting point to actually start making a hypothetical judgment about what one would or would not do subsequent to any ban. We recognise there is a difficulty in trying to address this particular question, particularly in the sort of survey, particularly to farmers.

MR COX: It is probably worth reiterating points that were made in Will's introduction, because what one can squeeze out of evidence, it is important to be careful about it, and two very important points were made. One was for the most part disinterest was the word used on

the part of the farmers answering questions about this subject, and then the other observation.

THE CHAIRMAN: By that you mean they are not interested?

MR COX: Yes. I used the words carefully, in the sense that the farmers seemed both to have a low level of interest and a degree of indifference and then the

other point was the comment made by many of those conducting the interviews that they were becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that probably those who were speaking were confused in their own mind as to what they were talking about.

MR OLIVER-BELLASIS: Lord Burns, I think the confusion point is probably well made. My understanding is that many farmers would not necessarily understand drag hunting and bloodhound hunting and what it entails, and so on. The second point, perhaps, to try and help over this level of payment -- not to put a figure on it, but to compare it to an organisation called UK Chasers, who have been putting in or have been offering to farmers the opportunity to diversify by putting in a cross-country course which equates to a part of the three-day event cross-country discipline, and the scene is there that a number of jumps are constructed to a specific size and design and then payment is requested from individuals who wish to ride their horses around that course. The fact is that the setting up of that course is an expensive process and, therefore, the charge for those people to use that course is also an expensive, but the weather also comes into it, and in that although you could argue that you could do what Silverstone did not do and put in drainage into

their car parks, the fact is there are large periods of the year when that course would not be safe. I suggest with no disrespect to fox hunters they find that that risk or lack of safety is one of the attractions, and that from a public liability point of view for farmers I think that we would have to be very careful in any course that we put in. My point is UK Chasers have not achieved the levels of take up of farmers using this as a farm diversification as they originally thought and, therefore, I suspect that the same might apply if drag hunts or bloodhound hunts wanted to use farm land and wanted jumps for that same reason. I suspect also that the point that was made by Simon about there being some competition between farmers as to how much they would charge is well made, because I am afraid farmers as a group of people we are more interested in trying to take 50p from each other rather than a pound out of the market.

MR SWANN: I think if I could add a comment on this, Lord Burns, I think in assessing farmer's attitudes, I feel qualified to speak because I am related to a considerable number of them. One of the things that tends to be a feature is that farmers are often sympathetic to people who come and stand on the ground and discuss things in person and are not terribly enthusiastic about taking part in telephone calls or answering letters, or questionnaires and such like, and that is just the nature of the beast. I have seen some of my relatives over the years take on things, well, of course drag hunting was a long time ago in that area. Helicopter rides, clay pigeon shoots, quad bike

riding, these are all things that have come where there is a financial advantage, and very often it is a matter of somebody just coming along and saying, "Can we have a talk about this? We have an idea. Can we have land for it", and I think farmers are much more sympathetic to that sort of approach, and if it is not going to cause them any great hardship, and if there is a financial advantage then I think they will often go along with it with a live and let live attitude. But I think trying to assess farmers' attitudes is notoriously difficult unless you are in that position of being on the ground with a hard proposal.

MR HART: Lord Burns, I do not think anybody is going to deny, particularly the Alliance, that there is bound to be some cross-over if a ban on hunting was to take place. Nobody has ever suggested that there would be 100 per cent holdback from the hunting community from that. What we have attempted to say is that it has been sold slightly as a perfect transfer, a seamless transition from one to the other. I just re-emphasise the point I made earlier, which is even with a following wind there are an awful lot of reasons -- a lot of them topographical, some of them political -- why only a small proportion of what has been suggested could be actually possible in that event. One of them -- I have not touched on this -- whilst there would be individual farmers in places who would be willing, either for a payment as a matter of goodwill, one single farmer on his own or two single farmers on their own is not sufficient to run a day's drag hunting. You need

contiguous land, and to actually get that to any degree to run hunting for 1, 2, 3 days a week, or a fortnight, whatever it might be, for a whole season, is something that -- I hope I am not stepping out of line -- something which has actually proved to be extremely difficult to find. So of course we can find individual specific examples, but to actually get them all fitting together like a jigsaw set is something which nobody has quite yet achieved.

MR MANLEY: Could I come in. Just to clarify to those people who do not perhaps have the full report, it is a clear issue, this issue of contiguity actually, something we were looking at last year when we were looking at this separately and independently, and we knew that is something would have to be looked at. There is no point in trying to assess the end figures, X percentage of farmers going to say yes or would say yes, if they are not in the right place or not together, and so on and so forth, then it is not -- you are only getting very, very much half of the answer, and that is again highlighted within the further work element of the report.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, for fear of harping back to the payment of farmers business on behalf of my association, I would like to say our association would be horrified to think that the sport would have to go down that road. Personally, I can organise a day's hunting where I cross 25 different farmers' land. Some of them I would be on for 2 or 3 minutes; some of them I might be on for a whole line. I could just imagine the mayhem when it comes to coughing out at the end of the day. My farmers

expect to be respected, and they are respected in many different ways, and that is the form of payment that they get. They are all, without exception, supporters of all country sports, and I really do wish to make that point. Every farmer whose land I go on is a supporter of all country sports and they derive great satisfaction in seeing others enjoy their land. We do respect them. We cannot work without them.

THE CHAIRMAN: This actually raises a slightly tricky point which I am slightly hesitant about getting into it. But in the event that there was to be a ban on hunting, would this actually make it more difficult, or would it make it easier to get the general co-operation of the farming community in terms of trying to extend drag and bloodhound hunting?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I think, to answer that question, that the whole procedure would be fraught with some incredible problems, and the first problem I think, would be in agreeing a price with one group of farmers, and one farmer in the middle, for example, who is crucial to the line, figures in that he is worth 6 times as much. A follow-up problem would be where one farmer was - maybe his country, his farm was low lying. It gets wet and the other farmers want their money and you start getting involved in some serious contractual problems there. And the other problem of course is, and I think it has to date been misunderstood, because the only example where any money has ever changed hands that I am aware of of any significance is with the licence fees with the Forestry Commission. I think it is fair to say that my

local Forestry Commission are rather upset that they ever bothered taking the 50 pound a year licence fee, because what they have let themselves open to is putting in access. They are now involved in a contract in which money has changed hands, and I think in fact you will find that there is not, if you were to look at what you are getting out of the farmers to pay them, it would be an horrific sum of money. If you took what it was actually worth financially to them to have groups of people cross their ground and cut it up it would start to become a very, very frightening figure, and of course there would be problems of quantifying what would be fair to one farmer. One farmer might allow you to cross 10 acres of scrubland; another farmer might regard your passage through a number of fields of his as being crucial to him. You could find one wanting 10 pounds and another wanting 500 pounds sterling, or something. So I think it is a route down which no existing pack that I know would really want to go down.

SIR RICHARD BODY: We balanced our budget, only just. We had subscribers. We asked them for 30 pounds cash. I think we would have to ask them for 40 pounds to make this a realistic proposition. We already have quite a number who say, "We cannot really afford it"; something to that effect. I think if we jacked it up to 40 or 50 I think they would be walking away from us.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, you asked us to speculate on the possibility of the event of a ban, and experience has taught me that that is most unwise and often dangerous to pass an opinion or answer questions upon the

hypothetical. It is difficult for my association to place itself in the position which ultimately we do not want to see ever happen, and so I am sure you will appreciate to answer that question is very difficult for us.

THE CHAIRMAN: May I just say that I spent a good deal of the last 20 years trying to avoid answering hypothetical questions. Unfortunately, we have been given a remit here which actually contains quite a lot of hypothetical questions and there is little way out of it.

MR SWANN: Bearing in mind your comments and being suitably primed to them, farmers do permit an enormous number of country pursuits involving horses, and I do not think we want to get it out of perspective, the charging idea. I think the idea of farmers charging huge sums of money is probably unrealistic, and I think it is probably giving the farming population a bad name. I think a lot of assistance is given in kind; it is given with helping with fences and putting good damage if any damage is done, and I do not want to theorise, I do not want to become hypothetical, but I do not think that the likelihood of demands of huge payments is a realistic one.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Can I just answer that question directly. I think you are missing the point here. I think if you look at some packs; for example, the blood hounds and a number of other packs crossing of the order of about 20 or 25 farmers' land, if you go to a farmer who says, "No, I do not want you on my land", commonsense says that 10 pounds is not going to do the trick. A bottle of

whisky often will not, and if you start getting into payments of 50 pounds, for example, to a farmer to let you go across, and you have 25 farmers, then you are talking about not having to just pay 10 pounds on the day, you are talking about orders of magnitude increasing the cost to the participant.

MR SWANN: I would like to make another point on that, thank you, Chairman, but would you not accept a lot of assistance given to farmers by drag hunts is done in kind and helping with things like putting good fences, and perhaps you mention the word "respect" for farmers, and in the broadest sense and I understand exactly what you mean. Would you not accept that that is the case at present?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Yes, certainly, but I thought that in respect to the domain of this argument, that it was being argued on the basis of whether or not we could increase the land that was available - so yes, we have done our best with what there is and everybody who is willing. We have already got them. But to go any further one now has to convince the farmers who say no. They are the ones who know, quite frankly, the cup of coffee is not going to do the trick. I have farmers who will not shake my hands, for example, and 50 pounds will not do it, for example. I can assure you.

MR OLIVER-BELLASIS: Lord Burns, I am not sure that I can answer the hypothetical question, but I did raise in passing this business of public liability, and I do think that this is an issue which has to be taken into account with fox hunting, quarry hunting, that liability

is with the hunt and the followers, and so on, and the farmer across whose land they come has no liability at all. I am concerned -- and I am not a lawyer and I do not know the answer -- that we need to understand what the liabilities would be where fences have been constructed and where special tracks, if I can put it that way, or paths are being used to lay the line, because with a hunt, as I know from my own farm, there are times when they have been asked to keep off wheat, but if the fox goes across it one is in some difficulty.

MR POLAND: Lord Burns, you asked about the hypothetical situation in the event of an unlikely ban on fox hunting. I think if a fox hunt disappears farmers would show great goodwill to a pack of draghounds taking their place and I think fox hunters would like to see that, and if there was to be a ban I think still fox hunters would like to see farmers welcome the draghounds for a variety of reasons, but I think undeniably such is the love of hunting, quarry hunting, that farmers have that there could be an enormous backlash against not only new packs of draghounds, but also existing ones. That is pure conjecture. I do not know if any of the drag hunters would like to answer that question.

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, I most certainly can. We have had two farmers who have put it to us that they were not quite so keen on us coming because, as I said earlier on in putting that question -- perhaps I put it very badly -- the RSPCA and others are making such emphasis that this is the alternative and, therefore, we are as drag hunters, or hunting with blood hounds, contributing to

the possible abolition of fox hunting, and as our best hopes and those who work with us most of all are in fact those who enjoy seeing hounds over that land and are fox hunters it would be very, very serious.

MR DAVIES: Just to pick up the challenge, when fox hunting is banned there are only two alternatives: One is that nobody goes out on a horse with hounds any more, other than the existing drag hunts and bloodhound hunts and nothing else changes, or a proportion of those who currently go for live quarry will transfer. It is as plain as your nose on your face, so what I am saying is let us identify the problems to all that, and I do not underestimate -- you have all covered them -- actually I mentioned it when I made my opening rather political speech, but let us manage those out. It is possible when needs must they will be managed out.

MR COX: You cannot manage out the dog work aspect of it.

MR MANLEY: I was just going to chip in on this issue about the reluctance perhaps to allow the hunt, allow draghounds, blood hounds if there was a ban. We have actually got -- we did try to address this specific question to the farmers -- and perhaps this is an example of the disinterest element -- and the responses to these questions were actually very limited.

There is an element of a mixed messages there - a small proportion saying yes they would not allow them any more if in terms of a ban, but a smaller number also saying they perhaps they would reconsider if there was a ban. But that, again, mixes up with the survey of the providers with the masters, who were very

consistent with what has been put across to us now. So really I suppose I am saying we tried to address this, but we have not really got anything concrete.

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest that we break now for lunch and we will start again at 1.30. I would like to deal then with some of the issues that have been raised as to whether or not the sports can be made more varied. The issue about the speed of it, the issues about requirements for land and why indeed it takes so much land, and also I would like to just press a little bit more some of the differences between bloodhound hunting and drag hunting, and other people may have other things they wish to have, and with a bit of luck we might get away slightly earlier today than we have done from previous seminars. Thank you very much.

(Adjourned for lunch).

THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon. Thank you all very much for being back so promptly. I have a series of questions that I would like to drop in, which is to do with the practicalities of drag and bloodhound hunting.

I think, first is the question: Just what are the differences between the two? I think the report suggested maybe bloodhound hunting is closer to foxhound hunting. Is that the case? What are the things which take some people in the direction of bloodhounds and others in the direction of drag hunting?

Someone suggested on one occasion that the bloodhounds are not really pack hounds in the same way and they are more individual. I do not know if there is anything in that point that anyone would like to raise.

The issue of whether or not it is too fast seems to be something which crops up on a number of occasions, and, therefore, it does not appeal to all ages. Indeed, when we were in Germany it was said one of the challenges they had was to slow it down.

I suppose finally and maybe the most difficult - I do not want to be offensive - but in drag hunting are the hounds really needed at all? What are they adding to the experience? This, again, is something which has been raised with us. I am merely repeating the things that have cropped up. I want to spend a little time on these issues simply to improve our understanding. We have had the benefit of some learned explanations by some of your colleagues, but I would just like to press on some of them.

I think I have Mr Broughton and Dr Hamilton-Wallis in my sights here for many of these issues.

MR BROUGHTON: I feared that you may have. The differences between the two sports. Primarily, the differences are only important to those who actually hunt the hounds, and not as much importance to those who actually ride behind.

The bloodhound hunts the natural scent. The natural scent of a human being, the clean boot.

Therefore, we have many different days --

THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry, why is it called the clean boot?

MR BROUGHTON: I suppose it means no artificial scent, just natural scent. I suppose the clean boot could also be referred to foxes and deer, et cetera, as well, if there is no artificial scent.

MR COX: Not a dirty one anyway.

MR BROUGHTON: But we hunt the clean boot, and so our hounds are of most important to us. The actual art of hunting a bloodhound is of importance to those who actually hunt them.

As regards to the way the day is contrived, there is not much difference between drag hunting and hunting the clean boot. Hunting the clean boot can sometimes be a little slower, if the scent is not as good as what it could be. Some days we can hunt at 16 miles an hour. Sometimes we can hunt at 5 miles an hour. There will be the odd day that they cannot hunt at all, and that is very difficult.

A lot of the followers enjoy it when it is at 5 miles an hour because they can actually settle down and watch the hounds working. I enjoy it when it is a little faster because I can be upfront. I am proud of my hounds. I am proud of the way that they work. I am sure many draghound huntsman feel the same as well. That is primarily the difference between the two. So we are probably more hound-led, but I know there are some people in this room who love their draghounds and have put their life into them; and one cannot take that away. But hunting the bloodhound is hunting a natural scent. That is the only difference.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there anything in the point that bloodhounds are more a collection of individuals rather than a pack?

MR BROUGHTON: Bloodhounds are more difficult to handle, most definitely, but when the pack has been bred on the premises, and has been worked for that particular job,

they become much easier. A singular bloodhound is very independent, but when the pack come together they are not so independent.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: There were a couple of points. The first is with regard to the "too fast" bit of the point that you had raised. It probably crosses over as well into some of the points that Phil has just raised.

I think I cannot stress heavily enough the very, very basic differences between packs around the country. I think that there is always inevitably going to be a price to be paid for the time that was taken, that was available to do all the research, and the problems that come out of the slightly small sample sizes, and the methodology.

One of the problems is that there is a tendency then to compare specific very, very unique packs. You literally are comparing individuals. So I think there is/there are differences. There are differences between the sports, but I would tend to agree with Phil in saying that those differences are very much down to the individuals.

We have packs like the Berks and Bucks, for example, the Isle of Wedmore, where the hound work is crucial to them, and the way they approach their sport.

There would be other packs who --

THE CHAIRMAN: Could you say a little bit more about that and why it is different?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: With respect to the draghound and bloodhound?

THE CHAIRMAN: The two you just mentioned.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: The Berks and Bucks? I think to be honest the

differences would probably come down to the individuals who head the organisations. If they are hunting people, and they have a preference, and they have a desire to see hounds work, then they will lay on days that do that.

If there is a problem in the sport, it is often that the requests of the individuals hunting the hounds, or the way they do it, sometimes does not always go hand in hand with what the field want, which is not a problem with fox hunting because they cannot moan at the fox. But it is a problem with drag hunting, and it is

certainly an area -- you will find some draghound packs, for example, where the hounds will not feature so importantly. It may be that the Master came out of some other equestrian orientated sport, had a look and he took it up, and he put his emphasis on the pack and the activities of that pack.

On the subject of the "too fast" bit, I think that the too fast bit certainly came about historically as a result of the way drag hunting originally came about, and was originally borne out of the university and the military packs. At the time they came about, it was certainly true that they were crazy. It was a point in time where people did not have quite the regard for their own personal safety that they have today.

To say that it still exists would be. There are some packs that choose to go faster,

and a number of the bloodhound packs that are south of the London band the Cokeham and the Kent and Surrey Bloodhounds, of whom will undoubtedly have a much faster pace than certain other packs in other parts of

the country.

My own pack, for example, in Wales, we tend not to jump very much at all. That would possibly be not unique to us, but we would be in a minority within the Association with regard to that.

So I think that the "too fast" bit, it is certainly faster than quarry hunting, but that in itself is not a problem, because the pace with which the hounds hunt, it has been mentioned by Graham, is down often to factors that are outside the control of the hunt.

But certainly lines can be laid in short segments and lifted; and the field Master can then take a role in slowing a line down, for example, and that no longer -- it ceases to be an issue.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are the hounds necessary to this, or are they a decorative addition?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I think, arguably, again, that comes down to the individual pack. I think if you have a pack where they are taking out, 50 or 60 hounds -- I know that there is a Berks and Bucks representative in the audience -- if there was a suggestion that his hounds went, well, of course they are crucial; they do set the pace for the day and they add to the ambience of the day, and they are certainly important, yes.

There is a mock hunt, where they can chase an individual on a horse. You do not have to change the rules of the game very much to come up with something that is quite unique and distinctive, as you can see with rugby/football, or squash and tennis, or lots of other sports that appear similar but are very

fundamentally different.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sir Richard, do you have anything to add on that?

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, I think I made the point it is very unwise to generalise about hunting with drag or bloodhounds. I think we tend to do something a little bit different from the others. You asked about whether bloodhounds were pack hounds. That was certainly the case. There will be literature about that; that the bloodhound is not naturally a pack hound.

When I started about 30 years ago now I was told I would never be able to get a pack of bloodhounds together because they are not natural pack hounds, but that could indeed be said historically of the foxhound, long ago in the middle of the last century; that when you had hounds trencher-fed they tended to hunt individually. If you keep hounds, two or three generations, in kennels together, and you are feeding them together and exercising them together, then they will develop a pack instinct but it does take a number of years to do that.

That said, those of us who have had bloodhounds have, I regret to say, had to cheat a little bit. I do not think any of us can quite claim -- and Phil would agree with me about this -- that we all have pure-bred bloodhounds.

We have had to go to the foxhounds, to Dumfriesshire in particular, to bring in a bit of speed, to bring back the voice, and the scenting qualities to some extent, because after the war, when some of us got

going on this, there were very few bloodhounds about, because in the war nearly all of them, most of them, were put down. They were so expensive to keep.

The result was that those bloodhounds that did exist were all show bloodhounds. Therefore, in the show world, of course, you lose your voice, you lose their quality and also the nose. It is not tested. So it took quite a long time for us to get packs of bloodhounds together.

I think I must emphasise, it can be very difficult to expand hunting with bloodhounds because the number of hounds one can use now are very limited.

I am sure Phil would agree with me about this. It is very difficult to get good hounds. So to increase the number of bloodhound packs from this point would be extremely difficult to get good blood lines, unless one resorted to out-crosses.

You asked about the clean boot, Lord Burns. There is such a thing as dirty boot hunting. I must not make accusation from where I am, but I think there are some who have packs of bloodhounds, if I may say so, who do add a little something to their boot to enable it to be a little easier in order to speed it up. I did have a joint Master at one point who was very keen on doing that. I eventually detected what was going on.

So there is such a thing as dirty boot hunting, and the reason is that so many of the people who come out with us want excitement. They are not necessarily hound people.

I agree with Phil, if you start a pack of

bloodhounds you are a hound man; you are interested in what I regret is called dog work here. That is a rather sexist phrase, as far as I am concerned, because we have dogs and bitches.

That is your prime interest. But what is undoubtedly the case is, if you want to subscribe to what a lot of people do, you have to give them excitement, a good deal of jumping and speed as well. If you cannot give them that, then you will not get their subscriptions.

As to hunting without hounds, well I think one of the great attractions of hunting with bloodhounds is the hound work, and the voice. I can get lyrical -- I will not at this point -- about the sound and the valley. You only need five or six couples of bloodhounds to have a tremendous cry, that deep voice, much better than yappy beagles or foxhounds. There is a wonderful cry, but also it is a tremendous challenge when scenting conditions -- the research paper I think has been good on the scenting issue.

Scenting conditions can be atrocious at certain times, but to see a good pack of hounds unravelling and overcoming the difficulties I think can be very rewarding; and that I think is one of the main reasons why those of us who are so mad as to have a pack of bloodhounds go into it, because it can get almost obsessional.

So we are, as Phil said, more concerned, particularly those who are into this type of hounds, with the art of venery rather than the galloping over

other people's land. But our subscribers on the other hand -- and this is the difficulty we are in -- do not see the hound work in the main, or we try to enable them to do so but it is much more difficult.

If you have a field of 30 behind you, they cannot -- it is physically impossible to jump over all the jumps simultaneously to see what is going on. So you are bound to have two-thirds at least who are not seeing the hound work.

But we do try, actually, to have lines where there are also routes where you do not need to jump, particularly for children. We have a special field Master, who is giving a commentary to those who are introduced to it to explain to them why the hounds are casting, what they are doing and all the difficulties and so forth.

In that way we have enthused quite a number of young people to support us. We have a number now who are getting almost obsessional about it, as I am.

THE CHAIRMAN: How long would it take to double the number of bloodhounds?

SIR RICHARD BODY: To train them?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, to double the number. You said that --

SIR RICHARD BODY: I have had litters. You can get quite a good litter of 6, 7 or 8 puppies, but half of them revert back to those awful showhounds we have been trying to get rid of, with great wrinkles and long ears and cannot see properly. You have to give them a home; you cannot keep them. So it is a lot of luck, an awful lot of luck.

I have had wonderful bitches, and they do not breed -- and then you have dog hounds and they get difficult too sometimes. It is awfully difficult. I am really sweating at it with others over 30 years. It took a long time to get a really good pack of hounds, it really did.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, they say the owners emulate the hounds, no disrespect!

You asked a question of how long it would take. At this moment in time, if packs wished to form today there would be a possibility of forming one pack this year by drawing hounds from all the others.

It is not just breeding the hounds; it is training the hounds. It is getting them into the pack environment; teaching them to go on the roads; teaching them to go left, to go right, to come over when there is a car coming. It is teaching them that takes the time, not the breeding of them.

They are difficult animals to breed also. Very, very large litters and high mortality rates. But it is not the actual getting hold of the hounds; it is actually forming the pack that takes the time.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you have five years, where would you get to in that time?

MR BROUGHTON: You might end up with another 12, 10 packs possibly, if you really put yourself out, but you would have to really put yourself out. Our Association does not really go at it hard. At the end of the day, I do not think any of us have enough time to do that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I ask whether anybody else has any

issues, either comments to make or questions they want to raise on this subject?

MR HART: Thank you, Lord Burns.

Just really to follow on something which I wanted to really support Phil Broughton on, with regard to the venery aspect of hunting which has been touched on in the report, and to add that as is clearly the case and acceptably is the case for principally bloodhound hunting.

But to take it on one stage of the quarry hunt as well, there are certain aspects which I think are borne out in principle in the report as to people's definition of hound work; what actually appeals to them; how it fits in with their priorities; why they go hunting.

It is quite subliminal in some ways. It is the case of the huntsman, or the hunt staff, or the hunt organisers. It is the reconnoitre before the day. It is the planning of the day. It is knowing where the wild animal is likely to be found. It is knowing how it is likely to behave.

All of these things which need to be taken into the calculation in preparation of the day, and which requires a knowledge of the natural world, and the knowledge of that particular animal which is perhaps in some cases second to none. It is the way that hounds behave when you are going to the meet; whether they are turning into the wind and looking interested and detect how the scenting conditions are that day. Is it a ground scent? Is it an air scent? Is that scent going to evaporate in 1 minute or 5 minutes?

How quickly the huntsman has to adapt to the individual circumstances, which are almost totally unpredictable and yet you try to predict them. It is the way the hounds actually draw, the way they work up to the foxes, picking up the drag from where the fox has been the night before; working up to it in a thick patch of brambles or a gorse break, and which hounds actually do it; which are better at finding it, which are better at hunting it. These sort of techniques which one has with experience and a particular skill. It is what you do when you are hunting a fox when two or three other foxes interfere. I am using foxes as an example; I am referring to all quarry species. It is what happens when the distractions from other foxes are interfering with the process of that hunt; what happens when the hounds actually change foxes from the fox they started with on to a fresh one; whether the old hounds come back and reunite with the original fox; they tune into an individual scent, the balance between experienced old hounds and experienced young ones. It is all of these unique features which make sure that there are no two days hunting which are ever the same.

I recall the days -- and I have not had as many as some people around this table. One thing I can guarantee you, no two were ever the same. What is more, no two hunts were ever the same. The behaviour of no two foxes was ever quite identical. The behaviour of the hounds was never quite identical.

These are aspects of venery which in some cases are impossible to describe eloquently enough. Certainly, and with the greatest respect to all of those who

attempt to do it, it is those fineries which cannot actually be mimicked.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was just going to offer the challenge to our friend by all means.

MR DAVIES: I thought that was a very nice exposition with which we would have no favour if you remove the word "fox". Everything that was described there we would support. It is wonderful for the hounds. It is wonderful for the horses. It is wonderful for the hunters. It is bloody awful for the thing being hunted.

We would love to see hounds being exercised in the traditional way, with all the pleasures of the countryside which I have talked about before. But take out the cruelty aspect and the RSPCA is very happy with what you have just said.

THE CHAIRMAN: If I interpret Simon correctly, he was saying this was only possible with the fox. But I am now throwing this challenge to colleagues --

MR DAVIES: I would disagree with that, as you would imagine.

THE CHAIRMAN: --as to whether they would wish to say they can do as well.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: No, to be perfectly honest, I wish we could, and we simply cannot.

I think one of the points that is often missed with regard to the sport is that it does follow a predetermined route. Just about all of the points that Simon raised are things we cannot do. Some things we cannot do. There are circumstances in which we can do them quite well, but the sports are fundamentally

different.

The thing that drives people to go fox hunting and drives people to go drag hunting is quite different; and that is not to say that some people who go fox hunting might not fancy a bit of drag hunting. It is certainly true to say -- and I think it was brought out in the report -- some people, many drag hunters do go fox hunting as well. The preference, I do not know, it would be like asking a tennis player why they play tennis over squash.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why do the lines have to be fixed?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: That is primarily because of the amount of country that we cover.

We, in South Wales, have some very substantial commons that we hunt. We do not always fix the lines and we call them floating lines. We will, in those circumstances, allow a line layer to leave at a particular time in the morning, and then instruct him to be back at a point, usually at a particular time in the day. He can then go off and get into soft wood forest. Everybody can chase him. It is a very, very different thing. The problem there is you are talking of 4,000 or 5,000 acres. There are parts of our country where we can do that in, but I would hasten to add only one point, in our country, and I know that my neighbouring pack -- and in fact I do not know of any other packs in the Association that have that amount of free country.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why does it take so much more country for drag hunting than it does for quarry hunting? Is it just down to the speed? Because in one sense you would have thought, given you can to some degree control it, you

can actually get more in a particular area. That would be my naive interpretation, whereas everything I read says that you actually need rather more space to do drag hunting. I have not quite got to the bottom of this.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I think to answer that question we really have to look a little bit more closely at what fox hunters do in their day. They will meet at 11 o'clock. They will be finishing at 5 o'clock. Anybody who has a horse will be telling you they are probably not going to be doing much canter pace, for more than 40 minutes, if they have a good day. Their day is very much based and focused around what they do in the 5 hours. We can take a group of followers up onto a mountain and say, "You must stand here now in the rain because this is what the fox hunt did last week", but that is not why they are there. You take away the purpose and you take away the reason for being there. Then you take away vast areas of what they do and what drives them to be there.

The issue over the country, yes, I mean, what it does essentially is, it strips out from fox hunting, so much of their activity, that we get left with that 40 minutes, and try to do our best with that, and try to put that into a day. But it still means that we have to be covering the country. 12 and 15 miles of country is quite normal then for a drag hunt to be covering in a day. It stands to reason that that places massive demands then on your ability to run the pack.

The other thing also I would like to say, locally, with our foxhound packs, for example, they can often put their hounds to a cover. Again, for want of a better

expression, they can rattle a fox between two covers a mile apart all day and have a wonderful day. We cannot do that; that will give us two and a half minutes of sport.

We cannot take a field out of 30 or 40 people and say, "We are doing this mile and then we are going to take you back here". You can put a circle round and let the hounds go round in a circle, but nobody is going to be following it.

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, may I follow that up, because there are several points to be made. All hunting depends upon the consent of the farming community. I think drag hunting and hunting with bloodhounds requires a full-hearted consent because we are not offering the farmer anything in return; and I think it is much more difficult to persuade farmers.

One of the problems we have is that we cannot obviously go over arable crops. We cannot go over fields of vegetables and such like. We cannot work where we do not wish to go, into woodlands with foxhounds, and we tend to have grassland.

If we are to have three lines, which we always aim for, and the optimum is three miles of -- free line for three miles. That is 9 miles. We nearly always fall short of that optimum which we strive for in order to satisfy our subscribers. If we get to get 6 miles, it can be extremely difficult, of grassland in the southern half of England where we are, where the pack of which I am now Chairman is, it is extremely difficult to find perhaps 15 to 20 farmers who are willing to allow you to

go over their land, particularly when there has been heavy rainfall, as there has been in recent weeks, where you have 30 horses galloping over or cantering over perhaps, galloping over their grassland, and you are not very popular.

We have often had to cancel meets when there has been a heavy rainfall when the foxhounds do not cancel their meets, simply because the farmers say, "You are going to do something useful, and you always have done it". They do not say that about us.

I think we also have to recognise, Lord Burns, in the last 30 years something like 7 million acres of agricultural land, pasture land, including downland has been ploughed up. Generally speaking, it is not suitable for hunting with bloodhounds. I know people do it, quite successfully, and we do, but it does mean going around headland, and that is very difficult to do, particularly if you are on a tread horse which can stick to an area of headlands.

But you cannot just have obstacles sticking to the hedge when you have only got a few feet on either side. So you do have to go into the arable crops and jump over obstacles; and that is not popular with farmers. So as a general rule, so far as we are concerned, farmers do not want us on arable land. They say, "All right, come over on the grass or the pastures so long as the sheep are not there, or they are lambing", or whatever.

But to find 9 miles of that sort of country is extremely difficult. We often end up with only 6 or 7, and we regret this. This is one of the reasons, Lord

Burns, why I must emphasise that support for drag hunting is rather slipping away. I do not think I shall be contradicted, but I think most packs find that rather fewer people are now going out than they were two years ago, partly because we cannot give them long enough hunts over the kind of obstacles they wish to go over, et cetera.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I come back to Daryl's points. You agreed quite strongly with Simon that the two types of venery are different; that it is hard to produce in drag hunting the venery associated with live quarry hunting. But you also just made a point very strongly that drag hunting is different; they do not want to stand in the rain on top of a mountain; and they do not want to do a short hunt between two covers.

My question is which is the most important; the difficulty of the reproducing because it is two different veneries, or the fact that people do not actually want to reproduce?

Following that up, if you have a situation in the event of a ban, when people do want to reproduce the fox hunting type of venery because that is the only alternative to that, to what extent do you think you could overcome some of the differences? Because you are then providing for a very different demand.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I think to answer that question you have to look at the activities of the pack as they are now, like my own pack, desperately trying to survive. I have done everything in my power. I have done everything in the last 5 years I can think of, and things I have disagreed

with which other people have suggested, to try and do that.

As far as I am concerned, if William could show me how to do it, I will do it. It is down to the basic question of providing what the followers want, or just being able to do it, because obviously there are more people fox hunting than there are drag hunting.

If we could do that we would open up a market, but we cannot open up the market with existing fox hunters any more than we can with people that do not go hunting at all.

PROFESSOR WINTER: You do not need to, because at the moment people who want a fox hunting experience can do that, and those who want a drag hunting experience can come with you. It is obvious where the balance in the numbers lies.

What I am saying is, if the fox hunting was not open to them, to what extent could you adapt and alter your kind of hunting to provide the kind of hunting experience that currently people get from fox hunting, because they do not need to go with you at the moment if that is what they want.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I take the point. I think the point I was trying to make earlier with regard to what activities are pursued by the fox hunters, I think I am trying to point out that of the 6 hours they are out they spend 5 hours doing something that we just cannot do, in terms of standing around looking for quarry, and if anybody could get our followers to stand around in the rain for no real reason, we would be all right because the problems

often arise from getting them to do something strenuous. Then, after you get them to do that, getting them to hang around for a little bit, and that is where the problems lie. If there was, if you could put, Phil -- and I have had many conversations over many late evenings trying to see if there was a spin that could be put on it that would get people to do that.

But I think, at the end of the day, fox hunters go out to try and find a fox. Whether the riders go out to do that, I am not sure. But what I am saying is that is what their sport involves, because that incorporates about 5/6ths of the day; there is a reason for them doing it. They are going out to do something. There is a reason for them doing it. They do it. They go equipped with little hip flasks to do it. That is the problem. So I think there is all sorts of things that you may be able to do with the laying of the drag to slow the drag up. We do it, but it still does not address the central problem. The central problem is the time we spend literally pursuing from a standstill point this sport.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns.

Could I pick up on one point, please, from Phil Broughton; that one of the key issues in this seems to be this issue of predictability or unpredictability. I was going to back to some of the comments that you made this morning as to just for whom the drag hunt is predictable or unpredictable because, if I am understanding you correctly, what you said this morning is that the majority of people who are actually out with

the drag hunt or the bloodhound hunt it will indeed be an unpredictable experience.

I wonder if I could ask whether that could be expanded a little bit.

MR BROUGHTON: Absolutely. 95 per cent of those people that follow behind, they do not have a clue where they are going. Most of them have never hunted over that country before. So it is unpredictable to them.

But I think "unpredictable" is being used in two senses of the word. The unpredictableness of what the fox would do is completely different.

MR SWANN: Could I come back on that, Lord Burns. One point that one might say is that human ingenuity should be able to outperform that of the fox; I am not sure that everyone would agree with me.

But is there a possibility that this could be looking to future developments. I know there is speculation -- and I appreciate that it has to be speculation -- but could this level of unpredictability be developed?

MR BROUGHTON: There is a possibility that it could, but who wants to emulate a fox when you are hunting a human?

The idea of having a pack of bloodhounds is that they have human sense, like a foxhound has fox sense.

My hounds have human sense. They actually think for themselves where that human may have gone. When the scent is no longer there, and they cannot find it. You will see them take a beeline for a stile two fields away, because they have realised that the human does not want to jump 6 strands of barbed wire.

Why should our sport emulate someone else? We would not wish it to.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to move the conversation on to how things might develop in the event that there was no quarry hunting. I realise quite a lot of people sitting around this table do not want to imagine that situation. But we are forced to ask ourselves that question.

I would really like to probe how you would see your sport, your activity, developing, and some of the different ways that it might develop. Whether there are any more varieties that you would be offering in the event that there was a ban.

I think this is one of the issues that Michael was getting at. I have a lot of time for the argument. Because what it says is that at the moment there is both fox hunting and there is drag/bloodhound hunting. It is not surprising, therefore, that the two emerge as complementary activities. They are not trying to replace each other. They are doing something that is different.

In the event that there was a ban, then there are a greater series of options than available, it is argued, for both drag and bloodhound hunting.

I would just like to press you to speculate on some of the ways in which you might see your activities developing if there were a ban. We have to try and think ourselves into a state of mind now that there is one, rather than all the time saying I do not want one. But it is trying to get some view as to how you see the possibilities that might develop.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I think to answer that question we could possibly look at the packs that exist in areas where there is no live quarry hunting. I think the foreign experience, the situation in Germany, and certainly the situation in the Isle of Man, Anglesey and Jersey which are examples, and history has not produced any change to the procedure.

If I were to try and sit down and think how it would change, I simply do not know. There is nothing that -- we have tried just about everything. I mean, you can emulate a fox only to a certain degree. I mean, it would be a poor pretence, but whether that would be what people wanted would be a completely different issue.

The point I am trying to make is that what makes people go fox hunting I think you cannot underestimate how tied that is into the fox. One wonders how many people would go fishing in a fish farm, for example, where there is no competition to pull the fish out of water but there are 10,000 for you to pull out at will. People will not do that.

For the life of me, I cannot imagine how the sport could change. But I would certainly say I would take any suggestions from anybody. If somebody comes along and tells me do this differently, I will do it.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are saying that you are asking the questions rather than giving the answers?

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I am saying, unfortunately, that I do not have the answers, but we are open to suggestions from anybody.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, I think within our Associations

we have explored every different angle that it is possible to explore. We have tried every twist and turn to say we have packs that do not jump now; packs that jump with an alternative at the side; we have packs that go very slow; packs that sort of work in completely different ways to the ones that you have seen.

At the end of the day, their numbers are coming down. Their support is coming down. How much of this is because of the political problems that we have with hunting at the moment, I do not know. But certainly, at the moment, we are looking for any advice and any suggestions because we feel that our sport does need a new twist.

THE CHAIRMAN: So the suggestion in a sense that has been made, is that you have not been sufficiently imaginative, and there are all sorts of opportunities out there that you have failed to spot. Is that a line that you have accepted?

MR BROUGHTON: Absolutely not.

MR COX: Lord Burns, before we move on too fast, can I make a couple of points. One is a sort of coda to the question you asked sometime ago about the breeding of bloodhounds, and how quickly it might be possible to increase their numbers. In response to what was an extraordinarily difficult question, you got a straight answer, namely, that there were a lot of uncertainties. The one thing that was not mentioned which is going to matter to people who do this sort of thing is quality. I will give you an outrageous example of what we are talking about from Daphne Moore's Book of the

Foxhound, talking of what the Heythrop hunt did in 1875 - I may have the year wrong.

During one summer they bred about 140 foxhound puppies and kept 12. We are talking about destroying the others, not putting them out to homes and all the rest of it, and that kind of commitment to excellence is what has produced what we now have in working dogs. I am not for one minute suggesting that current bloodhound breeders would do that sort of thing, but that concern with quality would be a further -- whether they could be taken into the sort of training that Phil Broughton said they would have to undergo and so forth would be a further constraint on the speed with which you could expect to increase their numbers.

The other point I wanted to make, a predictable gale of laughter greeted the point about surely we ought to be able to do better than the fox. Actually there are quite technical reasons in the report which explain why it is not possible to do certain things artificially that you may be able to do with the foxhounds and the fox, and I will leave it to people better qualified than me to explain if you wish to hear. One is training the dogs not to work a heel line, i.e. animals when they hit a scent line need to know, or learn or come to acquire the skill to know, whether the quarry has gone in that direction or that direction. Young dogs spent a lot of time, whether they be gundogs, hound or whatever, travelling in the wrong direction until they learn and they acquire those skills.

Because of the sort of scent that is laid for draghounds, and the use of aniseed, various other ways

of accentuating the strength of the smell, it is very, very hard to either lay contiguous lines or to train dogs to not to work a heel line.

I say there are various other things that one could say, but there are actually very good points that need to be made in response to the obvious assertion, "Surely we can do better than the fox." That is to miss the point entirely.

MR HART: Talking about the possible implications of a ban, and how they would possibly take

up blood or drag hunting, even if they are not prepared to admit it now. Again can we just bear in mind for the purposes of this seminar all of those people who do not own horses, cannot own horses and live in areas of the country where horses and the ground do not go side-by-side, i.e. the Lake District, some of the West Country, some of the fells, some of the upland areas, the foot hunters, all the people I mentioned this morning to whom drag hunting is not an alternative, and who actually make up a substantial proportion of the hunting community who would be affected by a ban on hunting.

We seem to be limiting ourselves purely to those people who are rich enough or bold enough to own a horse. One other point briefly on the use of country, the hunts can of course, and do, avoid pastures of land by going round whatever it might be.

You can visit the same piece of country with quarry hounds 5, 10 times a season, but the chances are that the quarry, and certainly the followers, will never actually take the same route across country exactly

twice; and that is why it is possible sometimes to use country more frequently for quarry hunting than it would be for drag hunting.

MR MANLEY: Can I add something to this general debate that we just touched on here. Indeed, it actually does form a basis for some comment within the literature review.

This idea about being able to develop the sport further, make it interesting, make it more particularly attractive to other participants, I am sure that has been dealt with by some other researchers.

Indeed we looked at that. We looked very deeply at what that was based upon. We came to a very strong conclusion that it was really based on very, very little. It is interesting here, the obvious thing is in a sense the suggestions. It is interesting here to hear Daryl and Phil asking, they appeared to be desperately asking, everybody else for suggestions. Just a comment I would like to make.

MR DAVIES: I would not expect you to come all the way with me on this, and I would not even suggest it, but if you really wanted to find some suggestions you could go in for virtual reality, and do the whole thing from your office, which is what most people seem to be doing with their lives nowadays -- but I would not put that as a sensible suggestion.

I think there is a little bit of overemphasis, if I can say this, on the bloodhound issue. I do not see a major impact of a ban on hunting affecting the bloodhounds packs. I think it is a specialist sport. It has a particular appeal to a particular sector of

people. I do not think that we would expect to see a massive increase in bloodhound sport.

But we do expect that if you cannot ride to hounds to hunt the fox, then the drag hunt in its present form is an acceptable alternative. If there is a ban on hunting the fox then we have additional land available; we have hounds available; we have skilled people available; all of whom have to be converted but it can be done.

I think that that is what we expect. I would not expect the Draghunt Association to change their rules particularly. They might look at perhaps improving it in a general sense, but not because of this issue.

I am concerned that there seems to be maybe a political (with a small P) reluctance for the Draghunt Association to even consider the numbers who may wish to transfer to their sport if there is a ban. I can understand why. I do not want to spell them out, I do not want to be offensive, but I can understand it.

If there is going to be a ban, for God's sake let us start talking about how to manage that ban. I cannot even get round the table to discuss the effects of a ban with anybody because, of course, quite understandably, they cannot publicly say we are planning such a thing because it would be to admit the possibility of defeat.

I understand all of that, but to say that if there is a ban there will not be large numbers of people coming into the drag hunt world looking for a sport I think is to put one's head in the sand. We should be planning for that. That is what I am saying. I am not

suggesting it needs to be improved.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Can I respond to that, please.

I have absolutely no problem whatsoever in confronting what would happen in the event of a ban. I do not hunt live quarry. What I have a problem with is that I have, on the ground, put a drag hunt pack together - the first drag hunt pack in South Wales. I have brought about 3-400 people to the sport, that I looked at over a 2 to 3 year period. I have brought them in from a variety of different horse disciplines. Quite simply, they do not come back. It is a very specialised sport. I have tried raising this point before. If what you said was true, then we should be able. I think it has to be borne in mind that if the figures supplied by the Countryside Alliance are correct, in that there are about 40 to 60,000 horse riders who go fox hunting and about 500,000 who do not, we have an audience there. There is a group. We have 500,000 horse riders and we cannot bring them to the sport. It is not just a case of being unable to get them out. I think the point you are doing is you are trying desperately to hold the sport up as a solution to the problem, the economic argument that you face politically in warring with your opponents. What we are trying to say is that that is not fair, because it is quite simply untrue. If you can provide any evidence to suggest that it is true -- and I have about an 88,000 bill as a result of my last 5 years antics -- show me how to improve that and reduce that and I will do it.

But surely it has to come from making the sport appealing to the 9 out of 10 people who own horses to start off with. If you can help us do that, I would be more than willing to take suggestions.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a challenge!

MR DAVIES: Very quickly, we do not see drag hunting as the only alternative to live quarry hunting. We see a very significant part of that, and I thought, Daryl, if I had this right, your own figures gave me the answer. You said 60-odd people came to join your hunt and after a year half of them have gone fox hunting. Well, if there was no fox hunting I do not think you would have lost them.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I do not know if you misinterpreted the figure. Of 300 who came, there were 60 converts, 30 of which came to us and 30 of which went to the fox hunt pack. So it is looking at a 1 in 10 figure. These are of people who will turn up and repeat the exercise. There will be people who would turn up and flake out halfway through, and they do not fare in the figures at all.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Chairman.

I would really like to support what Peter has said, because what we are looking at is people who specifically want to ride to hounds. Of that great number of people who own horses in this country, they have no interest in riding to hounds; they want to pursue their other interests, be it eventing or just hobby riding or whatever.

But for those people who want to ride to hounds, collectively they may go once and try it, be it a fox

hunt or a drag hunt. They may say they do not like it. I would suspect there is a drop-out rate from fox hunts who do it once and decide they do not like it. This is not exclusive to drag hunts; people will drop out of fox hunting as well.

For people who want to ride to hounds, they want all the experience, all the paraphernalia that goes with it. If there is no live quarry hunting and they want to ride to hounds, the likelihood is they would look to drag hunting. They might go once and decide they do not like it. They might choose to pursue other equestrian interests.

We believe this is one of a suite of interests which is available for people who like to ride, but for those who specifically want to ride to hounds then this is an alternative where they can work with dogs. MR HART: Peter Davies has missed the point which we made earlier on, which is actually reinforced in evidence, which is three things. Where drag hunt exists where quarry hunts do not, these problems he has suggested can be managed out cannot be managed out.

If the German experience was anything to go by, where they have had 63 years to do that, they have failed to do it with no distractions from quarry hunting at all.

What it also ignored is the community, to which I referred just now, could not do it even if they wanted to. We seem to be restricting ourselves to this part of middle England, where undoubtedly the prospect would be some transition.

THE CHAIRMAN: You raised this point. I need to ask, has anybody tried drag beagling, or things

which would be possible for people to do on foot.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Has anybody tried using beagle hounds to go drag hunting?

THE CHAIRMAN: What I am looking at is a sport which involves hunting an artificial scent, but where the people can follow on foot.

MR DAVIES: I think I beagled at Sandhurst!

THE CHAIRMAN: I am simply asking for clarification in terms of Simon's point that he mentioned two or three times now. What about that part of the country that is not suitable for horses?

MR POLAND: The answer, Mr Chairman, is yes, drag hunting caters not only for the mounted follower but also for the foot follower if he wants to, as does fox hunting. With fox hunting you have hoards of people following across country on foot, one way or another, for yards or miles. Drag hunting you do not have the same experience; you have people who follow in cars. In Germany, they are bussed around in trailers. So you actually have the option at the moment for people to follow draghounds on foot right across country, but very, very few people opt to do so.

Now I might be a bit confused because I thought last week we were told by the RSPCA that they agreed and admitted that if drag hunting was to take on it would have to be in a modified form.

A few minutes ago we heard the Director General Davies tell us that no, drag hunting, as it stands, would be sufficient an alternative. Either he was right

today or they were right last week; it cannot be both.

If you are going to find a new formula everybody looks at it for hours and hours and hours; years and years and years. If such a formula was to be found, you have to appreciate, I think, that it would deter a lot of the existing drag hunters, because they go drag hunting for the sport that they now enjoy. They would not want it slowed down. They would not want it done differently. So it would deter them.

Whatever conclusion you come to, I am afraid that there must be a limit according to the number of packs of draghounds or bloodhounds that can be formed. The MDBA submission -- which I think was absolutely brilliant, and I think was largely done by Dr Wallis -- calculated that there could be a maximum of 51 new packs of drag and bloodhounds. That gives you an extra 1,434 days hunting, i.e. a total of 2,151 days hunting in the season, compared to 18,000 days of quarry hunting at the moment. If the field stood at their present levels and many people could not take larger fields, You would have an increase in weekly people following, or total weekly following of 2,106. If you doubled that, you would only have 4,212.

Those figures are based on the findings of the MDBA themselves. Come what may, you cannot marry those figures up with the vast amounts of people that now go quarry hunting, some of whom agree, quite possibly, that quite high percentage might want to transfer, they could not simply accommodate them.

MR SWANN: Chairman, if I could respond to the first point

that was made there. I will make a fundamental point that I speak for three organisations, which are IFAW, LACS and the RSPCA.

Peter Davies obviously speaks for the RSPCA, but that is not to say that I have been quoted correctly because what we actually said in our evidence is that drag hunting, as it currently exists, is a specialised form of activity which has evolved in the way it has because there is concurrently quarry hunting in this country. Had there not been quarry hunting in this country, nobody can say how drag hunting would have evolved because none of us have a crystal ball.

What I did say in the event of a ban on fox hunting, similarly, without a crystal ball, nobody can say how drag hunting might develop in the future. We made the point that there might be the possibility for it to develop in ways which are different than that which currently exists. I think we would all benefit from the wisdom of hindsight in years to come and look back; we do not have that benefit of hindsight, and we can only speculate as to how things may change.

The point we would like to make in this respect, the people that particularly like quarry hunting, there might be the possibility of altering drag hunting in a way that more nearly mimics quarry hunting, but this is not to say we have taken anything from drag hunting as it exists today -- which we think is an excellent activity and one which we fully support.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: I actually dispute the point you have just raised. I dispute it primarily because we have examples

where fox hunting does not exist and where drags hunts have developed. In the case of the Anglesey, for example, I was speaking to the Masters in the last week or 10 days. They cross the water to go elsewhere in mainland Wales.

So the truth is -- and yet they have the facility there to do what they like on that piece of ground, but they have been unable to do what you are telling us will happen.

So what I am saying to you is that you have no evidence to support what you have just said.

MR SWANN: Chairman, if I can respond to that. You are taking my comments out of context. I have not said that things will happen; I have said that things could happen.

You refer to the Isle of Man. I lived on the Isle of Man for 4 and a half years. The Isle of Man was mentioned this morning. But during --

THE CHAIRMAN: I have the feeling that you have contacts everywhere!

MR SWANN: In that 4 and a half years on the Isle of Man, I worked as a practising veterinary surgeon and met quite a few people who were involved in the drag hunt. A lot of them were people who preferred to live quarry hunt. Nobody disputes this; that when you have live quarry hunting side by side, people who have been brought up on live quarry hunting, and who go live quarry hunting, there may well be a preference to go live quarry hunting because that is the sport that they prefer to take part in, because what you are doing in drag hunting at the

moment is drag hunting as it has developed over a large number of years and which exists in the format that you currently practice.

I am making the point that neither you, nor I, can say with any degree of confidence how a sport may develop over a number of years. We cannot say that, because sports can be seen to have developed in ways that nobody could have predicted. Given that -- and we fully believe there will be an uptake of drag hunting by people who now quarry hunt if there is a ban -- with that collective wisdom, none of us I believe round this table can say exactly what will happen.

MR OLIVER-BELLASIS: Lord Burns, can I pick up the point relating to access, because it strikes me that one of the controlling factors in all of this is the access to the land and, therefore, the farmer's willingness to give that access.

I cannot say -- and I have not seen any data which accurately predicts -- what numbers of farmers would allow access to drag hunts, but I think it would be perhaps wrong to assume that the same level of access would be given to drag hunts as is currently given to quarry hunts.

In addition, it strikes me -- and the point was made earlier by Daryl -- that you have this difficulty over a farmer who decides for whatever reason that the hunt cannot come across that piece of land. You have the difficulty that that could put out a very substantial acreage, if it was in a key area. When hunting with hounds you can actually work around that for the very

reason that has been explained earlier, in that foxes do not run in straight lines, they tend to go from cover to cover.

So I really think we need to think about what access would be given to draghounds if there was to be a demand for more drag hunting and bloodhound hunting in the event of a ban, because I am not persuaded that the two would equate in terms of that level of access.

MR HART: On the subject of access, one thing which I think was referred to in the report which came out quite strongly, which has not actually been touched on here. I can speak from personal experience from Wales, needless to say, is that hunting in its existing form was in the worst case tolerated and in the best cases welcomed because of the contribution it made in pest control terms referred to last week, and also with some of the other services that hunts provide, which, with the best will in the world, might not be replicable with drag hunting.

THE CHAIRMAN: I still have one or two minor or technical issues I would like to raise before we come to an end. I think we are probably getting towards the end because we are getting to the point where we are getting political statements, which usually signifies we are getting towards the end. So we are reaching that point.

Could you deal with some of the issues which have been raised about how close you can have lines together, and the issue about doubling-back, et cetera? What the limits are on that? Again, we read sometimes conflicting things about this. I am looking

for clarification.

MR BROUGHTON: Certainly, Lord Burns. You asked about this earlier, and you were not answered. I might need to bring Graham in in a few minutes, but one has to remember that we are hunting a scent. Foxhounds hunt the hot scent. A scent that is probably only a few seconds old, at the most, a couple of minutes old. They are very close behind their quarry.

We hunt cold scent. My scent might be an hour old.

My hounds have an incredible nose. When I am about half a mile from where the runner actually got out of his motor car to start, my hounds will tell me. They will start looking at me and saying, "We have it." You know it is coming.

I can remember a day not long ago where we hunted 3 miles, three sides of a square. We went half a mile at the first side with the hounds. They went straight across and killed the runner at the finish. That is why you cannot loop around; the fox could. It could go around like that all day long with a pack of hounds behind him, but we cannot.

I think, Graham, if you could take over from that.

One has to just remember that we are hunting two different types of scent, and that is where the constraint lies.

THE CHAIRMAN: So, basically, your runner is not fast enough!

MR BROUGHTON: I doubt any runner would be fast enough.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Can I just add to that. With respect to draghounds, and because the scent tends to be a little

bit stronger, the problems experienced which Phil just outlined become very, very major problems with regard to drag hunting. I think Graham mentioned earlier that I am not aware of, for example, a draghound pack that has successfully taught a heel line.

For example, where they are hunting live quarry, they can detect if they have hunted over that line before, which is something that I am not aware of anybody being able to do successfully with draghounds. So that constrains the situation a bit more as well.

MR COX: I will say something -- and stop me as soon as you find it boring. The danger, when you are talking about scent, is that one assumes that different quarry species, or artificial scent, or whatever, the scent is scent is scent.

The key point to get over is the unpredictability element of it. We are talking about situations which can vary from -- and I am talking about gun dogs now which is what I have some experience of -- a dog which will from a distance of this wall to that wall instantly acknowledge the presence of a bird, and the same dog on a different day which may get that close to it without being aware that it is there.

This is not apocryphal. I am talking about things that I have witnessed time and time again. So it is that kind of uncertainty which is crucial to this whole thing. As far as the scent business goes, atmospheric conditions are crucial. The best analogy to think of probably is of scent as a sort of plume of smoke, which may be concentrated at one point but it quickly

dissipates. How fast it dissipates relates to the wind and so forth, and the ways in which dogs work and when we heard this morning about there being air scent, when dogs seem to get some awareness of things at this sort of level but are unable to make anything of it at ground level.

Conversely, you get other things and so on and so forth. It is that extraordinary variety. The crucial thing I would like to emphasise is that you are not just leaving the dog to it; you are talking all the time about a relationship between dogs and humans, the huntsman or the person who is handling the dog. That is fundamental; whether you are watching dogs finding explosives, drugs, people in avalanches, earthquakes, grouse on grouse moors, or whatever it happens to be. That kind of interest is why people stay and become obsessed with it; very often it is that sort of thing they are obsessed by.

MR BROUGHTON: I have answered the question as to why we cannot successfully mimic fox hunting, because of the scent; that is why we cannot successfully mimic the sport of fox hunting.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is why you need so much more land, is it?

MR BROUGHTON: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: So these two things are related?

MR BROUGHTON: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: The extent to which you cannot double-back, or have lines which are close together, means that you have to have a greater amount of land. Although

it may not be straight, it has to be more of a linear type. Is that correct?

MR BROUGHTON: Absolutely correct.

SIR RICHARD BODY: You can also have a situation where you may have perhaps 10 or 12 farmers who are willing to have you. You only need 2 or 3 in a key position who say, "No, we do not want anyone here. We have lambing, whatever it is. I do not want you", that may wipe out that meet altogether.

THE CHAIRMAN: I understand that. I was trying to get at why it is that the amount of land that is needed seems to be so much bigger than it is for fox hunting. And I think we have been getting there, in terms of the line and the nature of it.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Can I add to that. One of the other problems is the way the draghounds and the followers actually cross an individual farmer's country; they also tend to do it in a linear way. The damage compared to fox hunting, for example, there they tend to spread out and take their own lines, where individuals will go up a road to get from one place to another. They will not have a single line tending to go through their farm, which adds to the problem, and means that we can visit a farm, for example, once or twice whereas foxhounds, as has been said by someone, can go back repeatedly.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that I am inclined to stop the general discussion now, and do as we have done on other occasions; which is to go round the table in the opposite direction to the way that we went this morning. By now you will be familiar with this.

I would have thought that would probably just about bring us to tea, which means that we can get away slightly earlier than planned. Given that we have a Bank Holiday weekend, I think that may be preferable.

MR DAVIES: For us in the RSPCA, this is a moral issue; we believe the majority of people in this country have that and hold that moral issue; and that we will constantly seek to obtain legislation to ban live quarry hunting until we achieve it.

We see drag hunting as one of the alternatives to which people who are then denied the sport of their choice will turn; there are others. We see some distinct advantages in that turning. Hunting will be able to take place over land of your choice, or by negotiation anyway; that that will be helpful in dealings with farmers; and it will avoid both the hounds, the horses and indeed the humans going into the sort of hazardous areas that are reported year on year.

Incidentally, when we were in Germany and saw not a complete drag hunt but just a demonstration of technique, they had been hunting in that area for a long time. It is a confined area. They expand it by negotiation with the farmers on an annual basis. They could not hunt anywhere else in that area because it was bounded by an autobahn and a canal; and the risk would have been too great to have followed a live quarry over those areas.

Also in Germany -- and I do not know how much this is done in England, where I have been to drag hunts -- the obstacles which are taken are graded; so that if you

are inexperienced, or your horse is inexperienced, you are offered the alternative of a lower jump; if you are an average rider, a middle jump; if you have the experience and you really want to do it, you have a higher jump.

That, in our experience, is a powerful argument.

We believe that, although it will never be possible to replicate the unpredictability of a fox, man has replicated unpredictability in many, many areas. It should be possible, perhaps with modern techniques, who knows what is going to be coming in, to more readily replicate the movement of a fox.

Again in Germany, I have seen the drag hunts held up for 20 minutes while the hounds were cast to follow a broken trail, to go down false trails, to come back to the central point and pick up the real trail and go on. You need a lot of land for that, but I have seen it done; and that allows the slower rider to catch up with the faster, and avoid some of the hell for leather riding that can happen.

But the RSPCA is not going to dictate to the drag hunt world what they do about their sport. That is their business, not ours. I am sure they have been thinking about this for a long time, but things do change. Modern advances do happen.

If in any way we can help the management of that change by supporting, we will do so. Certainly we want to be able to take the responsible part in managing the change, which we believe will be inevitable when legislation comes in to ban live quarry hunting.

Thank you.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns.

I think Peter has probably said most of what I had in mind to say. I think one of the things that has become apparent from the research contract and from the discussions around the table is that drag hunting in this country has an enormous amount of variety. This has come out time and time again; that there are no two drag hunts which appear to operate in exactly the same way. Within that variation, there is obviously a lot of potential to exploit different practices for different people's requirements.

I will agree with what Peter said exactly; that drag hunting will never be an exact substitute for live quarry hunting. This is not what we have actually tried to state. We have tried to state that drag hunting is one of an entire range of equestrian activities for people who still wish to enjoy riding in the event of a ban on live quarry hunting.

I think in fairness there is very little else I wish to say. I think there is so much speculation on this issue because nobody can say exactly how people will respond in certain circumstances which they may not wish to face the prospect of.

As so many people, as we saw in the report, so many people who were questioned do actually hunt, then I think it is very difficult to think other than that they would wish to protect their sport as it exists. In terms of who will take up drag hunting, which farmers will allow land, I think many of these are so fraught with

speculation that I thoroughly sympathise with the research team and the job they have had to do.

But I think there is a significant trend in that report, in that the number of farmers who did indicate a positive response is, from our point of view, extremely encouraging.

Thank you, Chairman.

MR HART: Lord Burns, thank you.

Generally speaking, the Alliance welcomes the report. I think it is a useful and effective contribution to this specific part of this debate.

We, as the Alliance, have always recognised drag hunting as an exciting sport in its own right but, along with the drag hunters in this country and abroad, we have never seen it as a replacement or alternative as the sort of hunting about which this Inquiry is talking.

We have taken note as well, Deadline 2000 see drag hunting as being able to continue skills, traditions, jobs and, in some cases, community-based activities associated with current hunting. I think that is interesting because it confirms that they admit that these aspects of hunting do actually exist.

However, we have also noted that Deadline 2000 have never once contacted the UK drag hunting organisations in the preparation of their case, neither have they come up with the alternative model which we have been debating so much this afternoon, which will set out, we are told, how they will overcome all these substitutional problems.

The report, as far as we can ascertain, confirms

that amongst most, or some, quarry hunters who have tried drag hunting there is little enthusiasm to take it up as a full-time alternative. It is not just a question of their preference. The report confirms an importance to a considerable number of drag hunters of the challenging jump and the ride and that aspect of it. To many of the hunting communities, as I said before, that is actually not an option, even where there is a willingness to go down that road.

We also talked at some length about venery. I am not going to repeat what I said earlier, except that it is sort of a strange relationship, and the nearest comparison I can come up with is the sort of purist nature of the carp fisherman or the pike fisherman, or the falconer with his birds. If any aspect of their day or weekend could be predicted in the manner they are talking about, even vaguely, the appeal would go.

It is rather like knowing what the result of a cricket match or football match will be tomorrow. If we knew what that was, we probably would not bother to go and see it.

To the extent there is a willingness to convert, land restrictions are also clearly a problem. The farmers and landholders -- and it is important to state here it is their decision, and their decision alone which dictates the fate of not only drag hunting but all hunting -- has shown that there is a general lack of enthusiasm to allow drag hunting in any way different from what it is now. In addition, the report sets out many criticisms of the 1996 NOP poll on which it seems

Deadline 2000 are heavily dependent. Finally, the idea of payment to landowners for hunting may work in theory, but not in practice, since it undermines the unique way in which all hunting is conducted, and that is by this strange arrangement of goodwill. Indeed, despite a willingness to pay farmers, the New Forest draghounds have still not left their kennels due to a lack of country, and they have been actually up and running -- or up and not running, as the case may be -- for something nearly a year. Worse still, such charges are likely to exclude certain socio-economic groups from actually taking part in the activities that they currently are able to afford to do.

Just one final point which I think is important.

There is obviously a certain amount of anger experienced by the hunting community which generates out of actually being told by others what is good for them, or what they should be doing, especially by organisations -- and I am not attempting to be confrontational or indeed disrespectful here, but whatever you may think -- who have actually no practical experience of the activities, how they can be arranged and actually indeed no particular interest in whether they work or not, even if they were in place.

I repeat the last example which I referred to earlier, the German one, I am delighted that Peter Davies invited us to go to Germany on Tuesday, because I think it highlighted, precisely reinforced the evidence which the MDBA have put forward, and that is that they have had 63 years to perfect this art since Hitler made

hunting illegal, not for welfare reasons, but for other reasons we have discovered, and they have not yet, despite having twice the number of horses and riders that we have in this country, they have not in any way been able to achieve what we are told we can achieve in this country in a matter of weeks.

MR DAVIES: Point of order, it was not Hitler, but that is by the way.

MR POLAND: Lord Burns, I was challenged on something I made in my last statement. I have since looked at my papers.

Mr Swann did say on the 6th April:

"We firmly believe that there is ample scope for expansion of drag hunting, not necessarily in the form in which it is practised now but in a form in which we should go into in more detail when we consider it appropriate."

That does contradict what General Davies said. We had hoped today would be the appropriate day, because it has been the ideal day, the seminar on drag hunting, the authoritative day for drag hunting to be looked at, for the whole question to be looked into. We had hoped we would be given details into what form this would be. We have been given no details. The best we can think is that their view is an absolute charade.

MR OLIVER-BELLASIS: Lord Burns, I think it is clear that, from a farmers point of view, we need to have the ability to control pests on our land. Therefore, I would suggest that before we contemplate the ban there should be at least some agreement or an attempt at an agreement to put something in place that will enable that change

to happen in a way in which we can all contribute to the new solution.

I think that access onto the land is an issue. I believe that although the percentage shown in the report may have been encouraging to some, the fact is it is substantially below the numbers who are prepared at the moment to allow quarry hunting. I think the issue of cost is likely to be an issue in terms of the state of agriculture, and people looking for other ways to make money where they perceive that there is not a cost benefit, which there would not be with other forms of hunting.

I am concerned, and cannot answer the question about public liability, but I think it is an issue where you are building something quite specifically and then maybe selling the right for people to come onto the land.

Perhaps you will forgive me replying to the contention that animal cunning will be overtaken by human ingenuity. My experience of foxes is that human ingenuity will never, ever, ever overcome the fox's animal cunning.

SIR RICHARD BODY: Lord Burns, General Davies did say he was willing to go around the table and discuss this with others. The Association of which I am Chairman would gladly accept that invitation. I am sure that would go for the Master of Draghounds and Bloodhounds Association. In particular, we would like to show him, or others, or Mr Swan as well, some of the difficulties we are encountering now.

It has been touched upon already. I have made the point -- and I do not want to repeat myself -- but I do detect, and our Masters do detect, already a certain amount of misgivings about drag hunting because our best hopes undoubtedly are those who are active fox hunters, or who are delighted in seeing hounds crossing their land, if a ban were imposed, there would be anger among them; there would be resentment. Our Masters, as I say, have detected already a little hint of that. There have been murmurings already. It is very worrying from our point of view because if we lose their goodwill then I do not see how we could develop. It would be very difficult for us to continue.

The other thing I did mention about the rather practical difficulty -- and this again is something the RSPCA I do not think quite understands -- if we are going to take 30 pounds off people, or an annual subscription running into a few hundred pounds, you have to give them quite a few thrills and excitement, that does mean jumps.

I appreciate Phil Broughton views it rather differently -- he has other hazards up in Lincolnshire. So far as our packs are concerned, we do depend on an appreciable number of hunt jumps, of obstacles of different kinds, not always the same, different obstacles and sometimes challenging ones. They have to be built. They have to be built; they have to be maintained. That does require a great deal of labour. We can only call upon the volunteers for that purpose. I know one pack of bloodhounds has professionals doing it, but

we cannot afford that.

To maintain over our country some 200 or 300 jumps is simply not something we can do by ourselves; and that is why we have been very dependent upon the foxhounds for the jumps that they put in. Most of our country is the same as foxhound country, because that is where we can more easily go. If fox hunting were to go, I cannot see how we could maintain those jumps in the way that we have been able to do at the moment; I do not think it is practical.

This is something which one of our Masters feels extremely strongly about. She has been responsible for organising the teams and maintaining these jumps. She said, "On a Sunday afternoon I can get 3 or 4 people to help, but we cannot do more than three or four jumps in an afternoon before it gets dark, and then they want to break off. We are dealing with volunteers, and you cannot push them too hard."

So, I regret to say this, we are pessimistic about the future if fox hunting were to be abolished, and we regret this very much.

May I just say one word about forming new packs.

There are three of us here who have formed new packs. I am sure they will agree with me it is no easy task. You have to get your hound. You have to get -- Phil Broughton had one of my hounds. I did not let him have the best! I have had some of his and his were even worse!

But you do not give away your best hounds. Then you have to get them wheeled into a pack that hunts as

one. This can take 2 or 3 years. This is one of the reasons why packs in Germany have been collapsing. They come and go. They are on our books one year, they go off the next year. They lose heart.

So it is difficult. I think from the Master's point of view, he has to be very determined. He has to be rather sanguine minded. He has to give a lot of time to it; opening up new country; getting followers together, kennels together, hounds together; all the rest of it. It is a huge operation.

I really do not see that in the future there is going to be many more, or perhaps any more, packs of bloodhounds being established, given not only that difficulty, that requirement of great determination, but also the other two factors which I have emphasised already; that if fox hunting goes, I think drag hunting or hunting with bloodhounds is going to be much more difficult.

My members have asked me to emphasise to you that we are more pessimistic than we were a year ago about the future. Opinion among my members has changed quite considerably in the last few months on this subject. I would hope, Lord Burns, you would take this into account.

DR HAMILTON-WALLIS: Lord Burns, thank you. I think a more general summation to this is going to be done by Phil. I would like to just pick up on one point that has been mentioned by Sir Richard, and that is the pessimism about the future.

I come from a part of South Wales where we have

quite uniquely a substantial number of unregistered foxhound packs. Within 5 or 10 miles of my kennels, I can probably count between 15 or 20 unregistered packs. Packs which do not fall under the control of the Master of Foxhounds Association. This has come about primarily, I think, because of the way hounds were distributed into a trencher-fed system during the war, as opposed to being put down. It meant that there was an availability of hounds.

We have a small piece of forestry around us where we hunt. The Forestry Commission has asked us in the last few years not to go in there. It is interesting to note of the 12 or 13 packs in the area, that there are only 2 packs which do not go in there; that is my pack and the registered foxhound pack. All the other packs go in there, and they hunt whenever they want to, every day of the week.

The Forestry Commission -- and with all due respect to the RSPCA -- they have failed to curb the antics of such individuals, both with respect to hunting of foxes and with respect to hunting badgers, with respect to badger baiting, which has been reported. The RSPCA -- the effect of what I am saying -- no organisation to date has been able to control these antics. The truth of the matter is that any piece of legislation brought in to ban fox hunting will by definition have to exempt, or should exempt, drag hunting, and will probably exempt rabbits.

It does not take a genius to work out that any individual who goes on foot, or who is caught with a

pack of hounds, will say he is hunting rabbits and he accidentally killed a fox. Any pack who are caught out mounted will say they are drag hunting. I think that there can be no conclusion other than that a ban is going to have not just a detrimental, but a devastating effect on our sport.

Thank you.

MR BROUGHTON: Lord Burns, if one item filtered through to me today, it would be the naivety of hunting in general of those who seek to use drag hunting to achieve their own aims. I feel that their naivety on the hunting issue is unbelievable.

We are not an alternative, and to be called so is disrespectful to my Association. We are a fantastic sport in our own right. We are looking to change. We certainly are not an alternative. We rely totally on the sporting nature of our farmers. The longer this issue goes on, the more damage is being done to my sport.

I can see it. I see attitudes changing every day.

The RSPCA calls it an alternative. Another farmer gets more difficult, and I have to go and see him, talk to him and explain things to him. If this goes on much longer, we will be in great difficulties. We love our hounds. We support all those sports who use hounds; and we will continue to do so.

Lord Burns, Members of the Committee, on behalf of my Association, thank you for inviting Daryl and myself here today. Secondly, I offer our sincere congratulations to you for conducting this Inquiry in such an open, fair and democratic manner, whilst keeping

to your very tight limitations. My Association says well done.

MR MANLEY: Did you want a last sum-up from me?

I am not going to attempt to sum-up. I think overall that we have mostly listened a lot. I think as a team we have found this whole subject area fascinating. I think it is also with some degree of comfort, particularly with these bodies represented here, that in the short period of time that we had available to do it we have not gone too far off the mark.

What we have uncovered unfortunately has been a bit more of a muddle. There are a lot more questions there; that surely is the realistic situation. Given the time and opportunity, obviously, one can take this further. I appreciate that that is not going to be possible within this context, but what has been put there has been done with all the honesty and objectivity that we have been able to muster.

The only thing that particularly has bounced back -- which in some respects I have to take on the nose here, criticism of the research and the research team myself, but I do want to issue some caution as applied to some of the aspects of hypothetical situations, and in particular deal with this, in particular the issue dealing with farmers. We are not happy about this. There was disinterest. There was probable confusion. I certainly would not want to rest too much weight on some of those responses.

An issue about the payment, which we spent so much time dealing with. You know we said that is obviously

something we could reflect on, and I think really needs a lot more -- it was deliberately done. There is no simple answer to it. I think if our role has been nothing else but to act as a catalyst to deal with all those issues, then I think we can be reasonably satisfied.

There is, I am afraid, no simple answers from our point of view. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I am very grateful for the participation of everyone. Much of the attention has been on practitioners today rather than the paper. But I think the paper was very helpful in setting the scene, and drawing out some of the issues which enabled us to put questions to the practitioners. I think that has been very useful.

I hope that you have had the opportunity to listen to some of the things that have been said, and maybe you want to take them into account in the final paper.

But I am very grateful to everyone for coming.

Friday at this time of year is not, I know, everyone's favourite time, but we have found it enormously useful. It is a subject which comes up a good deal. Certainly for my part, and I am sure for other Members of the Committee, we feel a good deal better informed now than we did when we started this morning. So I am very grateful.

Thank you very much.

(3.05).

(Seminar adjourned)