

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO HUNTING WITH DOGS

ORAL EVIDENCE: COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE AND DEADLINE 2000

Thursday, 6th April 2000

AT: Posthouse Hotel,

Bloomsbury,

Coram Street,

London, WC1N 1HT.

Members of Committee:

LORD BURNS (Chairman)

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH

PROFESSOR LORD SOULSBY

PROFESSOR MICHAEL WINTER

Thursday, 6th April 2000.

SESSION ONE - PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF HUNTING

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE

Representation Panel Chairman:

John Jackson

Chairman, Countryside Alliance

Panel:

Simon Hart
Hunting

Countryside Alliance Campaign For

Brian Fanshawe
Hunting

Countryside Alliance Campaign For

Sam Butler

Masters Of Foxhounds Association

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| James Eberle Beagles | Association Of Masters Of Harriers And |
| Tom Yandle | Master Of Deerhounds Association |
| Barrie Wade | National Working Terrier Federation |
| Charles Blanning | National Coursing Club |
| Deborah Blount | Association Of Lurcher Clubs |
| Adrian Simpson | Federation Of Welsh Packs |
| Desmond Hobson | Masters Of Minkhounds Association |

(10.00 am).

THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning and welcome to everyone. Thank you for coming to the next stage in our proceedings. I am afraid we have had quite a bit of difficulty in finding an appropriate room in London for these various events, which is why we are having to move around, but I hope you all find this comfortable enough.

We have divided the two days into four sessions.

Today, we are looking at the practical aspects of hunting and the economic and social aspects of hunting.

We would like to do one topic this morning and the other this afternoon, but that is not fixed. I think, in part, we will have to see how we get on in terms of the pace of the questions and answers. We will try to keep the agenda moving. We hope that we can all, in a sense, do our part to keep the agenda moving because we have quite a lot to cover.

If possible, we would like to go beyond the written evidence. We have had a lot of written evidence; we have read that, and the question is to how far we can probe some of that further.

There is a practical question about microphones,

in which you have to press the green button in order to speak. If you would also, please, press it to turn it off when you have finished speaking. I am told that I have the power on this microphone to speak over anyone who is speaking, but I am sure that I will not have to use that.

So I would like to welcome your team, Mr Jackson, and invite you to make your opening statement.

MR JACKSON: Thank you very much, Lord Burns.

Lord Burns, Members of the Committee, the Countryside Alliance speaks on behalf of a growing membership; now in excess of 85,000, as well as more than 300,000 members of the affiliated organisations. Many, but by no means all, of those 380,000 people are actively involved in hunting.

The Alliance seeks to further the interests of all those who live, work in or use the countryside. The Alliance sees the countryside, including its wildlife, as a dynamic and evolving whole, which is part of the heritage of the whole nation. It is in that wide context that the Alliance is robust in its views on the merits of lawful and regulated hunting, which it sees as a classless, open and public activity..

The Inquiry already knows that the Alliance campaigned vigorously for the facts about hunting to be established and reported on by an independent public inquiry. The Alliance is anxious to assist the Inquiry to report fully and within the timescale that has been set.

The Alliance campaigned for an inquiry, not just

because hunting is a complex topic but because of the danger that irreversible decisions affecting many people could be taken following an emotionally charged and incompletely informed debate.

Our history as a nation of creating new offences in such circumstances is a most unhappy one. On occasion, we have unjustly reduced personal freedom and deprived minorities of the tolerance they are entitled to expect in a modern, pluralist society. I can give a specific example of this, if the Inquiry wishes.

Of course, minorities should only expect that tolerance within agreed norms, and it is an agreed norm, strongly supported by the Alliance, that cruelty to animals is wrong. It is not a simple matter to establish what cruelty is in an absolute sense, and particularly, to the extent that it involves ethics and moral values, is a problem which has to be left to Parliament.

The legislation enacted by Parliament to date, and designed to protect animals, defines the offence of cruelty by reference to specific acts, cruelly beating or kicking, for example, and there is a sweeping up reference to causing unnecessary suffering.

This is particularly relevant to hunting because, in a situation in which the killing of wild animals is necessary for a range of different reasons, the proper expression of the agreed norm is that no more suffering should be imposed on a wild animal than would be by other available and lawful methods of killing. The Alliance is, and always will be, opposed to the causing of unnecessary suffering.

The establishment of whether a particular method of killing involves more or less suffering than others is largely susceptible to scientific analysis of established facts and to discussion, assisted by informed scientific opinion. Such an analysis and discussion in the case of hunting would be of great value to Parliament and the whole community.

In the view of the Alliance, it is imperative that the Inquiry tries its utmost to make a finding on this question of unnecessary suffering. It is imperative because it is only the prevention of such suffering which would, as a matter of public interest, justify a reduction in the personal freedom of many.

It is true, of course, that personal freedom, the exercise of liberty by any minority, carries with it obligation. In this case, the obligation is to show respect for wild animals, individually and as a whole, and, in the carrying out of necessary killing of individual animals, to inflict as little suffering as possible.

Minorities are also obliged to defend the right of those who do not agree with them to protest and be heard. Those minorities also have an obligation to listen and learn.

It is sometimes said that animals are also a minority. It is grotesque to suggest that animals can also have obligations. Animals can only behave instinctively or as actual experience has conditioned them to behave. It is we humans, and only we, with our powers of reason, who can have obligation.

The Alliance is glad that the Inquiry's terms of reference include the consequences for animal welfare of any ban on hunting.

Whilst the Alliance believes that personal freedom and cruelty, in a relative sense, are the central questions, it also believes that it is right to put them into a real social context. The Inquiry already knows that there are strong feelings in the rural community about hunting. The Alliance believes that this is due, in large part, to the feeling that the strands, of which hunting is one, that go to make up the web supporting the coherence of small rural communities are gradually being pulled out by an unknowing urban majority.

Community disintegration and its consequences are bad for the whole of society, and the Alliance is particularly pleased that the Inquiry's remit also covers the social and economic consequences of any ban on hunting.

In this context, the Inquiry is interested in drag hunting, for those that advocate a hunting ban argue that substitution by drag hunting would alleviate the social and economic disadvantages flowing from such a ban.

In the view of the Alliance, this is rather like a Local Authority banning the showing of films in local cinemas, and arguing that, much as people may have enjoyed going to the movies, opera and ballet are excellent substitutes, and better for people anyway. Do we really want a society which values personal freedom in that kind of way?

That is the end of my introduction.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Clearly, of course, some of the issues that you have touched on in your opening statement are issues that we will be returning to later in our session, and of course we must also emphasise that we will be looking further at some of the issues in the context of the seminars and the research work that we have commissioned.

The first topic we want to deal with falls under the general heading of practical aspects of hunting. Is there anything by way of opening statements that you want to make on that topic?

MR JACKSON: I believe my colleague Simon Hart would like to. I think there are a few moments available for such a statement.

MR HART: Lord Burns, Members of the Committee.

Engaging in hunting morally corrupts all those engaged in it and provokes a loss of moral and behavioural judgment. In a submission to the Inquiry from a member of Deadline 2000, this allegation is made against the many thousands of people to whom hunting is a job, a pastime, a source of business, all amounting to a way of life.

Published evidence to the Inquiry from over 50 diverse organisations, and evidence contained in over 5,000 submissions from private individuals, sets out quite clearly why hunting is important to them, their communities and their livelihoods. Furthermore, the submissions describe, through substantive evidence, why accountable hunting is to the ultimate conservation

benefit of the various quarry species and their habitat by a selectivity and vigorous regulation.

Evidence describes how the governing bodies of hunting continue to strive and maintain an improved standard set down over several hundred years of active and practical management of the countryside. Hunting continues to flourish throughout the UK. It is accountable, and it takes place in the public domain. The evidence provided by hunting organisations, and the Countryside Alliance overview, is factual and reflects hunting in England and Wales as it is, not as it is portrayed by those who campaign for it to be made a criminal offence.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. We set out in advance on the agenda a list of topics that we would like to go through. I am not sure whether in all cases we will be able to cover them all, but I think we start in that spirit.

Under the general heading of fox hunting, the first issue that we have put down is autumn/cub hunting. As you know we have been to a number of events. We have read a great deal about fox hunting, but of course one of the things that we have not seen is autumn or cub hunting as a result of the time at which we were established.

Clearly, this is a controversial issue, and I would just like to begin by asking you to set out, in a sense, your description as to this particular form of hunting, why it takes place and where it fits into the

general issue of hunting.

MR JACKSON: Simon Hart will deal with that, Lord Burns.

MR HART: Lord Burns.

You will be familiar with the Alliance overview evidence on that, on page 105 of our submission but, just to recap that, the objectives of autumn hunting are threefold: Firstly, to cull a reasonable number of foxes; secondly, to disperse concentrations of foxes which have built up at that particular time of year; and, thirdly, to introduce the young hounds which have been bred that year to the practice of hunting, and to teach them to hunt fox and nothing else.

THE CHAIRMAN: In terms of some of the evidence that we have seen, there has been the question as to what extent the cubs are still dependent on their mothers at that stage in the process, and to what extent they are fully grown. Is there anything that you want to say in response to some of the issues that have been made, some of the points that have been put about that?

MR HART: Yes, two things, really. First of all, evidence -- which I think you will have seen from the Game Conservancy -- points out that it is extremely difficult to tell at that time of year, simply because of the maturity of the foxes in question, the difference between a so-called cub and an adult fox.

What we have said in our own overview evidence is that they are fully grown, totally independent of their parents at that time of year, and well able to, and indeed actually re coping and feeding independent of their dog and vixen parents.

MR JACKSON: The expression cub is perhaps unfortunate, Lord Burns; in fact, they are already young adults.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Could I ask you to explain a little more what you mean by dispersal?

MR HART: Autumn hunting normally starts in September, sometimes a little later, depending on largely agricultural constraints at that time of year. Litters of cubs which have been born in specific areas, which have not in fact spread for any particular reason, there has been an abundant food supply during the summer months which can be referred to in other evidence. One of the purposes of hunting at that time of year is that the practice of hunting will automatically remove a few of those particular concentrations of foxes but, at the same time, actually spread them into neighbouring regions which may actually be less populated, and, therefore, minimising that possible risk of overpopulation, and, therefore, unacceptability to the farming community in those specific areas.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I just explore that a little further. As the lay person in this area, I would have thought if a fox was moved off, it would come back again to its natural territory. Have you evidence that that is not the case; that they do actually disperse out into unpopulated territories?

MR HART: Experience has shown that is not the case, because hunting is a gradual process. It takes place not in one area, just once a year; it happens maybe once every three weeks, once every four weeks. It does not happen in one specific parish or farm; it is a practice which

is spread over entire counties, covering all sorts of areas.

So the overall effect, coupled with other methods of fox control, which will also often be going on at the same time, the result of which has to be judged by farmers as to whether you have been effective. If you have been effective, then complaints from farmers, by the local population, tend to be reduced, and that is the experience we have found.

THE CHAIRMAN: Some of the descriptions we have seen, and videos we have seen, describe the process of members of the hunt in a sense seeking to impede the flight of foxes during this activity.

I mean, is this a typical practice? Is this part and parcel of it? And to what extent are you trying during autumn hunting, in a sense, to keep the foxes within the confined area, and to what extent are you trying to disperse them?

MR HART: Holding up, which I think is a sort of expression which will cover that -- again, I think it is largely misunderstood. The purpose of it, in fact, is principally to restrict the whole hunting practice to a specific area, largely because of standing crops and other things like cattle, which are out at that time of year, unlike later on in the winter, where there are no standing crops and cattle are generally in, you are actually wanting to contain your morning's hunting to a specific area.

A lot of hunts do not even practice holding up. As you will have seen from the MFHA's submissions, the

rules regarding its conduct and how it actually takes place, the restrictions which member hunts are bound by are quite severe. Nine times out of ten, most holding up actually only takes place if you, for example, have a square wood perhaps on two sides of it, to prevent the foxes exiting on those two sides as opposed to exiting the whole wood.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: You mentioned the MFHA, and I would like to explore in a more general sense the extent to which the variety of rules we have seen covering various aspects of hunting and the organisations responsible for them; how do these actually operate. How is it that a failure against the rule is reported? What action then follows? We notice when we visited hare coursing, for example, that there was a person present who was actually looking at it from the organisational point of view. Is there an equivalent in the other areas?

MR JACKSON: Sam Butler will talk about this from MFHA's point of view, and perhaps others can chime in.

MR BUTLER: Sir John, an interesting question.

MFHA, as with all hunting organisations, have had rules and codes of conduct for a huge number of years, almost ever since hunting has taken place.

Hunting takes place with the permission of land owners, who indeed exert their own, as it were, authority on hunting, as it does indeed in the public domain.

As you may be aware, Masters are appointed each year to be responsible for the running of hunting on the

days and during the whole of the season, in fact the whole of the year. So it is with that blessing that hunting takes place.

The rules are laid down, and are annexed at the back of the MFHA submission, as are the AMHB, the Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles, and all those associations, for you to see very clearly. The MFHA introduced 18 months ago a new disciplinary committee to oversee those rules, and it is for anyone within the hunting fraternity to make a representation to the MFHA, who indeed themselves will put that to the Disciplinary Steward.

The Disciplinary Steward will then decide whether or not those rules or codes of conduct, or whether indeed hunting, has been brought into disrepute in any way. They will look carefully at those and make a judgment on those.

You may be further aware that the Independent Supervisory Authority for Hunting has been established under the Independent Chairmanship of Sir Ronald Waterhouse. He has indeed, or is indeed, appointing independent commissioners to sit with him. That Independent Supervisory Authority for Hunting is there as a supervisory authority, over and above the hunting rules, to see that those are conducted.

MR JACKSON: You mentioned other bodies, you might like to hear from Mr Blanning about the National Coursing Club, or indeed, Deborah Blount, perhaps you would like to talk about the Association of Lurcher Clubs?

MS BLOUNT: Thank you.

The primary role of lurcher work has always been for pest control purposes. Because of this, and the individual nature of much lurcher work, it has only recently come under the umbrella of a regulatory organisation, which was when the Association of Lurcher Clubs was formed, which was only five years ago. The Association is a member of the Independent Supervisory Authority for Hunting.

We do promote, well, our members must abide by, a code of conduct and the rules set out by our Association.

MR JACKSON: Charles, do you want to add anything?

MR BLANNING: As Sir John has mentioned, the National Coursing Club has at each one of its meetings an official known as the Coursing Inspector, who supervises the meetings in regard to the rules of the National Coursing Club, and specifically to rule 41, which is entitled "The welfare of the hare".

If the Coursing Inspector finds that the rules of the National Coursing Club have not been applied correctly, then it is within his rights to report the club, or the individual who has been at fault, to the Standing Committee of the National Coursing Club, which in itself has the right to disqualify from affiliation the club concerned, or to disqualify the individual, if an individual was at fault.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell me how many incidents have been reported in the course of the last 12 months by the inspectors?

MR BLANNING: In the last 12 months, there have been two.

LORD SOULSBY: My first question has been answered in that are there lay people on these committees, that is non-hunting people? I think that was answered in the positive sense.

The other one was: Is there an appeal system to any individual or hunt who are accused of breaking the rules, and who is the appeal body that they go to?

MR JACKSON: That will vary body by body. Perhaps you would like to talk about the MFHA.

MR BUTLER: Lord Soulsby, just to be positive with regards to your first point, the Commissioners are independent, and they are appointed by an appointments panel who were picked within the Memorandum of Association of ISAH Limited, and under the jurisdiction of Sir Ronald Waterhouse. That is the first point.

The second point is that ISAH is there to consider and review the rules and the codes of conduct of hunting at any time. It is also there if it considers that the Disciplinary Committee for the Master of Fox Hounds Association has not dealt with the particular matter in an appropriate way, or if, indeed, any member of the public, or indeed any member within hunting, considers it has not been dealt with in a proper way. The sanctions there are suspension or, indeed, disqualification.

LORD SOULSBY: The Committee might like to hear something from Adrian Simpson from the Federation of Welsh Packs.

MR SIMPSON: Good morning.

As far as the Federation of Welsh Packs are concerned, I would refer you to the submission, and with

your permission I shall read out from our constitution which forms part of the submission.

"Should the Committee have reason to believe that a member pack of the federation has acted in any way prejudicial to the interests or the good name of hunting, it may forthwith be suspended from the Federation of Welsh Packs, and within 28 days of his suspension shall be required to furnish a written explanation to the Secretary for consideration by the Committee, or to appear personally by the Committee or both."

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I want two points to clarify. First of all, the ISAH arrangement; is it actually operating, or is it simply now planned? In a second sense, from whom do the complaints come? Are they from the public at large, or are they from people within the hunting fraternity?

MR BUTLER: Sir John, firstly and Ronald Waterhouse makes an apology -- although it is not indeed his fault -- but ISAH did have a technical problem in that the word "authority" was not acceptable to the Government authority, so we had to change that, or it had to be changed to ISAH Limited. The appointments panel is there and the commissioners are all but in place.

My view is that, if there had been a problem this season, then Sir Ronald would have been in a position to have dealt with it. He, indeed, has read the rules, read the codes of conduct, and is familiar with it, and, for all intents and purposes, could have dealt with a situation if it had come.

The second point is that, a member of the public -- the intention is that hunting should be open, public and open to scrutiny -- therefore, if a member of the public felt that they wished to make a point to ISAH Limited, then indeed it could do so, but, equally, there are plenty of people in my experience within the hunting field itself who feel that hunting should, and must, stand public scrutiny, and indeed could make a representation themselves.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Could I just follow up on that point, please.

Could you tell me how many hunts are affiliated to ISAH?

MR BUTLER: Dr Edwards, all members of the Master of Foxhounds Association all member hunts are affiliated to ISAH; as indeed are all the harriers and beagle packs; as indeed are all the mink packs; as indeed are all the deer hound packs.

Everybody agreed that they should come under the jurisdiction, under the umbrella, of ISAH; as indeed is the National Working Terrier Federation, the Association of Lurcher Clubs, the National Coursing Club and the Federation of Welsh Packs.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: It includes all registered?

MR BUTLER: All registered, all regulated hunts within the country.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: It has not heard any cases at all?

MR BUTLER: It has not heard any cases.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Could you just clarify, on the hunting field is any one person responsible for bringing forward

cases of bad practice, or is it entirely equitable that anybody can?

MR FANSHAW: Thank you, Dr Edwards.

First of all, going back to ISAH, all these organisations, whether they are the hunting organisations or the National Coursing Club or the National Working Terrier Federation, volunteered to be part of ISAH; and I think that is relevant.

As far as today's hunting practice, if I have understood your question correctly, the Master in charge for the day is solely responsible for the conduct of that day's hunting. It is the Master in charge who is solely responsible for everything that happens in that particular day.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I just press on the question, therefore, of where, in a sense, complaints come from which have to go to the authorities. Are they typically complaints that come from either anti-hunt observers, or from cases where there have been cameras, or cases where people have simply been observing, or where there have been issues of trespass; or are there other cases where they are brought internally from within, in a sense, the hunting fraternity itself?

We would just like to get some idea of the balance of the issues that you deal with.

MR BUTLER: Lord Burns, speaking on behalf of the MFHA, the Master of Fox Hounds Association -- although I am sure other associations around will add to this -- in our experience, complaints come from the wide variety of examples that you give.

There are those, as I said to Dr Edwards, within hunting who feel that matters, or rules, or codes of conduct, or that hunting has been brought into disrepute, and that is not the way that it should continue, and that should be looked into.

But, equally, there are plenty of others, where either videos or cameras or the press have picked up incidents, that we need to consider very carefully indeed, if hunting has been brought into disrepute and codes of conduct have been broken.

MR JACKSON: It would be helpful if Tom Yandle added to this from a West Country point of view.

MR YANDLE: Thank you.

The Master of Deer Hounds Association behaves in exactly the same way as the Master of Fox Hounds Association, although of course we only have three packs so we are quite small. We would listen to complaints from anyone, and we would deal with it in the same way as the MFHA and the other organisations.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: You mentioned quite clearly that the registered packs are involved in this. I was wondering to what extent the hunting takes place in an unregistered manner that is known to you?

MR JACKSON: Adrian Simpson from Wales will talk about that.

MR SIMPSON: I assume that we are talking about packs not registered by the MFHA, and we are talking actually about the shooting packs, what you referred to as shooting packs.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I was thinking of all forms of hunting, but clearly shooting packs would be one of

them.

MR JACKSON: The reason we have asked Adrian Simpson to deal with this is because we think the majority of this activity is concentrated in the gun pack area.

MR SIMPSON: As you know yourself, from your field visits to Wales, shooting packs are probably predominant in Wales. They have evolved over the last 20 or 30 years of a necessity to deal with the increase in the forestation and the increase in the fox population.

The reason for the formation of the Federation was to unite all sorts of hunting in Wales, or all methods of hunting in Wales, and to govern all hunting in Wales. Shooting packs in Wales are members of the Federation of Welsh Packs.

You will see from our submission that we have strict rules and guidelines regarding hunting in Wales, and regarding the shooting packs in Wales.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that we may, if we have some time at the end of this session, want to maybe come back to some of the whole issues of regulation and self-regulation, but I would like to just press on with the topics for the moment set out in the agenda.

I have a final question on the issue of autumn hunting, which is the third point that you mentioned about introducing young hounds into the pack. My understanding from our field visits is that this is not done, for example, in the case of the fell packs and, as far as I know, it is not done in the case of the deer packs.

Why is it that they can do without this process of

introducing hounds, whereas with fox hunting it is felt that it is necessary?

MR HART: Lord Burns, I obviously cannot speak on behalf of the stag hounds but, as far as the fox hounds are concerned, every year a proportion of young hounds are bred to add to the existing packs.

The purpose of actually taking them out hunting is obviously that they need to obtain experience, plenty of work at that time of year to teach them about hunting, largely not actually to teach them about catching foxes but a few disciplinary matters, and to make sure that they gain from the experience of the older hounds, and that they hone their instincts into hunting fox and fox alone.

It is not a case of training young hounds to kill, which is sometimes an accusation which is made.

MR YANDLE: The young hounds with the deer hunting packs are taken out on certain days, usually days when the hunt is likely to be more in the open. They are introduced to the line of the deer in the same way, and they are taught to hunt and, more importantly, taught not to hunt other animals.

So it is exactly the same thing. It happens throughout the autumn and up to Christmas. By Christmas time, the young hounds would all have been introduced to hunting the line of the deer.

MR JACKSON: Brian Fanshawe can say something helpful about that, I think, Lord Burns.

MR FANSHAW: The normal practice with the young hounds is that either the huntsman, or generally the walker, may

often take the young hound out on a lead, and will wait until the older hounds have found a fox, and then the young hound is released to join the pack when the pack has started hunting the fox; and that way they learn to hunt the fox.

Only hounds in my experience, (tape) and I think in general experience, learn far more from their older hounds than they ever do from any human interference.

THE CHAIRMAN: My point in a sense that I am pressing is simply why is it, in one case, that it seems to require something which comes under a different heading, and has a different practice, whereas in other cases it just seems to be part of the normal year's hunting where this introduction takes place?

MR FANSHAW: I think a lot of it is the timing. These hounds are probably about 15 or 18 months old. They have to start some time. The beginning of a particular season is the obvious time to do just that.

LORD SOULSBY: Could I just follow up on that.

The juvenile hound, if we could call it that, or any canine, would normally be imprinted from its more senior member of the pack. There are many examples other than hunting where the juvenile goes along with the more adult, and becomes an adult in due course. You do not necessarily need a juvenile fox to chase.

It would seem to me at least that the practice of not cubbing, of just having young hounds follow the adults, has been shown to be quite an effective way of training the young hounds to become adult and responsible hounds.

Would you agree with that?

MR FANSHAW: I would agree, Lord Soulsby, totally with what you say. I think there is a process of learning of the young hounds right through the summer exercise. When the young hounds go exercising with the older hounds, you will see them, whilst they exercise, that they will pick up the smoozes, the smells that have been about, and have their heads down.

The old hounds know it is not the time to go hunting, but you can see the gradual development of young hounds right through the period of the hounding exercise, leading up to when they start hunting.

I think it is quite right that we do not take unduly immature hounds out hunting because if you get into a long day's hunting, just through their immaturity, they would not be able to keep up with the pack.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I move on to the question of artificial earths and stopping-up of earths.

I think some of us -- and a lot of the people who have commented on this -- see a paradox in the situation where there appears to be the use of artificial earths and yet, at the same time, part of the argument for fox hunting is pest control.

The question is how one sees the consistency of this behaviour, and is it widespread? Are artificial earths still being created? Is this a normal part of the practice of hunting?

MR HART: To answer the second question first, very few hunts at all have artificial earths. If you talk to

Adrian Simpson in Wales, or the Fells, the existence of an artificial earth is something that does not really enter their heads.

The purpose of artificial earths has been misrepresented over the years, and hence is why there is this sort of grey area. It is sometimes seen to be some way of increasing the fox population. In fact that is not the case. The purpose of artificial earths is to encourage fox populations to live in an area where you expect to find them, can find them and then can safely hunt them.

So, it is a management device, as opposed to some forced system of artificially keeping the population high or artificial -- the problem is that artificial earths are sometimes interpreted as meaning artificial fox. Quite the opposite is the case. It is simply a way of knowing, if you are a huntsman, that you can go to a specific area of the country with a better chance of finding a fox than otherwise would be available.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I move on to the question of earth stopping, which is another issue which gets quite a lot of attention.

Is the purpose of this simply to prolong the chase? How far does the practice differ between areas? And how far do you think the regulations are in practice followed?

Going round talking to people, we often have it put to us that the practice and the regulations in this area do not necessarily accord all the time?

MR HART: The MFHA rules, which Sam Butler can talk about,

regarding earth stopping are quite clear. Indeed, the law of the land with regard to the 92 Badgers Act makes it perfectly clear what hunts are able to do or not do. Again, I think earth stopping has always been interpreted as a system whereby hunts can be prolonged indefinitely, but in practice that is not the case. Earth stopping's principal purpose always was to be done at night, while foxes were out feeding; so that they then lay up above ground so they could be found on the day's hunting.

Clearly, of course, the bigger earths, if they were stopped, would prevent a fox going to ground during the course of the hunt, which would enable fox control to be carried out rather more effectively.

The fact of the matter is that anybody who perhaps walks across a bit of England or Wales will realise that to do comprehensive earth stopping would be completely impractical.

Earth stopping accounts for probably five, maybe ten per cent of the available earths available to foxes for a day's hunting. What it does is stop them getting into places where it is impossible to control them.

MR JACKSON: Lord Burns, I am assured by my friends who hunt -- which I do not -- that earth stopping is specifically not for the purpose of prolonging the pursuit.

MR FANSHAW: I think there is one further point; that if earth stopping was limited, or even banned, then I think from farmers there would be an increased call for the use of terriers to control foxes.

Hunting has to justify itself and I think that is likely to happen. That would be our opinion.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think maybe let us move on to the question about terrier work, which of course is another area which has come under a good deal of scrutiny.

There are questions that in a sense come to mind here, which is the extent to which there is contact between terriers and foxes underground; the impact of the terrier work upon the foxes; and to the extent to which that is putting them under pressure that they would never normally experience; and whether there are any alternatives and other ways other than digging out which would be possible to deal with foxes that have gone to ground.

MR JACKSON: Barrie Wade will deal with these questions, Lord Burns.

MR WADE: Thank you.

In which order would you like me to deal with those, Lord Burns? There are a number of points that you raised.

THE CHAIRMAN: First of all, I will deal with the extent to which there is contact between the terrier and the fox.

MR WADE: My own experience of terriers is something over 35 years, to put the whole thing into context. The opponents of terrier work often suggest that terrier work is akin to causing two animals to fight below ground, linked to dog fighting, and they attempt to brutalise it in that manner.

My own experience is that within 35 years I have never lost a dog below ground; I have never had a dog

killed below ground; and I have never had a dog injured in such a manner as a result of work that it was necessary for me to seek professional veterinary advice. The National Working Terrier Federation drew up a Code of Conduct in 1994. It was as a result of concerns regarding such allegations, and also because of certain practices which we ourselves disapproved of.

The whole basis of our code is, first of all, to identify those practices which are legal. There is a considerable amount of legal control of the activity of terrier work. We are subject to three Acts; the 1911 Cruelty to Animals Act, the 1992 Badgers Act and the 1996 Wild Mammals Protection Act.

So, first of all, the purpose was to identify those practices which are legal, and, secondly, to identify those practices which are best. When I say best, that is because the intention is to minimise any risk of injury to either dog or their quarry.

Does that deal with the point?

THE CHAIRMAN: Before bringing in Professor Winter, this is an issue which I think I probably had more people speak to me about, as I went round my normal day's work, than anything else.

It is something which people who have not been involved in hunting, both in terms of the descriptions of it, and whenever they see films, are surprised about, because it seems to be nothing that would be reproduced in a natural circumstances of a dog, of things being in that position underground.

The part of the question which I do not know that

you have addressed is whether there is any other way of dealing with this, either by bolting foxes into nets, or other ways which do not involve what many people find is a practice which is difficult to accept?

MR WADE: In terms of natural process, Lord Burns, we do cover that in our submission. From a terrier's viewpoint, it is a very natural process. As anyone who has owned a pet terrier will know, the biggest problem is not actually encouraging a terrier to go down a hole; the problem is actually preventing them from doing so. There are many recorded incidences of that taking place. It is a regular function of some of our member clubs to rescue pet terriers following their natural instincts to go down holes and, because of their inexperience and more often the inexperience of their owners, get into a confused situation.

In terms of the practices that you mentioned of bolting, yes, I mean, bolting is one of the methods of using terriers below ground. Specifically, our Code of Conduct indicates that the role of a terrier is to, first of all, locate their quarry below ground.

I would like on that very much to liken that very much to the role of other animals which are involved in the hunting process.

To me, the underground cover of a series of tunnels, or, as happens in the Lake District, larger up piles, are very akin to what happens with hounds where they find a fox in dense cover. Their role is to locate that animal and then to flush it out.

It is common practice to use nets. The natural

instinct of a fox would, in most instances, to actually bolt from that earth, and it does not necessarily need a terrier to do it. A terrier is the most appropriate manner of doing it, but there are many, many instances of foxes bolting from their earths as a result of minimal intervention.

An example is, I have had it happen, when I have gone out with ferrets rabbiting. I have actually bolted two foxes in that way. It is not uncommon.

Friends when they are out earth stopping, once again, their experience is that, whilst they are out earth stopping of an evening, because the fox is lying there very, very quiet, and has not been disturbed, the simple action of throwing soil into an earth on occasions has caused that fox to leave from another entrance hole.

So, in terms of the general practices associated with terrier work, a fox which has not been hunted very often, if a terrier is entered, that would bolt very, very quickly. One of the methods is certainly to place a net over a hole, and it is one of the methods that I personally favour. It may well be that that fox is bolted to standing guns in a pest control situation; it is not uncommon.

There will also be situations -- and it needs to be born in mind -- where not all foxes will bolt or can bolt. A fox earth is a combination of tunnels. It could well be that, when that terrier locates that fox, it is in what we would term a block end tunnel so it is not possible for it to bolt. If it is not in a block end,

then the typical example is that a terrier, by its nature of yapping, will work that terrier around, that fox around the earth, until at some point in time it is likely to bolt.

Typical examples of timescales, I would guess a typical bolt would be between almost instantaneous and ten minutes.

Does that help?

MR HART: One or two points, firstly, relating to terrier work, involving recognised hunting, and that is that it has been made quite clear to associations that digging is only to take place at the request of the farmer, landowner, or in some cases the gamekeeper. It is not part of the sporting aspect of the day's hunting. It is there, and is only put in place when that request is actually made.

I think it is also worth pointing out that, of course, terrier work in itself is not restricted purely to hunting activities. You will have seen submissions from the National Gamekeepers Organisation, and indeed BASC, the shooting organisation, which describe in detail how important fox control with terriers is, particularly in upland areas, where they have no other way of control available to them.

Finally, of course -- and Adrian Simpson will be able to comment on this -- with regard to what happens with an injured fox which may take refuge in an underground place, for example, if there are shotgun injuries or road casualty injuries, and you know that a fox is located underground, the only method available to

humanely dispose of that fox is with the use of terriers.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Could I pursue the issue of regulation of terrier work during fox hunting on the day. Mr Fanshawe earlier said that the Master is solely responsible for activities on the day.

I am given to understand that people are encouraged to stay away from the digging work now; the field moves on. It tends to be done by the terrier men, who are left to get on with it. 25 per cent of terrier men, according to the NWTf evidence, are members of that federation, so I am left wondering exactly who is responsible for regulation, and for reporting incidents to the NWTf on the day, if such incidents occur.

MR FANSHAWE: To repeat what I first said. The Master in charge is totally responsible for everything that happens on that day. If he wants to instruct his terrier man to despatch a fox, he will do it knowing that he has the land owner's permission.

As regards going away, it undoubtedly happened in some places, and perhaps particularly in Ireland, where the whole village used to join in when there was a dig. This is deemed unacceptable. I think, in actual efficiency of despatching a fox, it is much easier if there are only one or two people present who know exactly what they are doing and why they are doing it. Their job is to despatch the fox and tidy up the hole when they have completed the job.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I just clarify that then. That means your Code of Good Practice, or your Code of Practice,

would encourage people to stay away, and that means that there is not likely to be anybody there other than those engaged in that activity?

MR FANSHAW: That is quite correct. It is at times impossible to tell the land owner, if he happens to be present with his family, to get off your land. You simply cannot do that.

But I think all experienced terrier men would confirm that they find their job much easier if they are getting on with their work, with their dogs, not getting outside advice from dozens of other people who are longing to interfere. There has been a great improvement over the last ten years.

MR BUTLER: Lord Burns, could I just -- because it is extremely important this. Within the MFHA, we are particularly concerned about terrier work, the regulation of it and the supervision of it.

All terrier men now are licensed within the MFHA.

As you say, about 25 per cent are also members of the National Working Terrier Federation. So every single terrier man is licensed. They are licensed annually. They have to attend regular seminars where the process of well-regulated and conducted terrier work is gone through with those men who are there. They must also hold Firearms Certificates.

So it has been a particular concern. Ironically, we took the view that it is not a public spectacle, and that it is a method of pest control to account for that fox quickly and as humanely as possible, whether that be netting to or digging to and shooting humanely.

We took the view it was not a sport, a spectacle, for as many people as possible. The terrier man and one or two assistants were there to despatch that fox humanely, and with the rules of the licence which that terrier man has been given.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Could I follow up on the licensing. Presumably, then a terrier man would lose his licence if a case was brought forward of bad practice. How many cases of such bad practice have you had, and who have they been brought forward by?

MR BUTLER: To answer your first question, Dr Edwards, yes, if there was a case, then that terrier man would lose his licence automatically, and would not be recognised by the hunt as a terrier man.

What I cannot tell you -- I am not on the Disciplinary Committee -- is how many cases have been brought forward, or how many licences revoked, but they would be automatically revoked if those rules are broken.

MR WADE: As far as I am aware -- I cannot speak for the MFHA but -- within the Master of Mink Hounds Association, there is one example and that person was excluded.

In addition to that, within the National Working Terrier Federation, we maintain a register of unsuitable persons, and that is a register at the moment that runs at approximately 20, 25 individuals. They are people who have broken the law in certain ways. They are people who, in our opinion, are of unsuitable character, dog thieves, known associates of dog thieves, people with

poaching convictions and so on and so forth.

MR JACKSON: I am told by Mr Hart that there is one pending case coming up with the MFHA at the moment.

LORD SOULSBY: If I could just go back to the comment made by Simon Hart, which I think you said digging out is only on request. Is that so?

MR JACKSON: Yes, that was --

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I ask, what is the nature of the request? Do you assume that people agree with it, unless they tell you they do not? Or do you actually specifically go to get agreement? Is this written? Is this verbal? Are records kept of this?

Is this, in other words, a casual practice, or is this something which is in terms of assessing whether or not people have agreed to it, or is it a genuine process of discovery?

MR HART: In the course of the planning of any day's hunting, either the huntsman or the Master will have a pretty good idea of the feeling of the farmers, where they are going to be, and what their attitude is to foxes in that particular area. It can vary at times of year.

I can quote a number of examples where farmers wish to be digging in September, October or November, but did not wish it to happen after Christmas, for example.

I have known other farmers who would stipulate at lambing time that all foxes run to ground should be dug; similarly with keepers in areas where pheasants are a particularly valuable crop.

But the one thing for certain is that no organiser of a day's hunting will dig where he is not certain that he has the full support of the land owner. That can sometimes be given at the beginning of the season. The land owner can say, "Yes, fine, if you run a fox to ground, we would like you to dig it." Other times it will vary day-to-day.

One thing is for sure, there would be serious repercussions for anybody who went against that particular permission, and, what is more, a Master would not want to do that, simply because if he offended the particular land owner by disobeying the instructions the chances of him being able to hunt there again are greatly diminished.

LORD SOULSBY: How many hunts would end up without digging out taking place?

MR HART: Do you mean where the fox has--

LORD SOULSBY: Where the fox has gone to ground and the decision is to leave it there?

MR HART: It would be impossible to produce a statistic because it varies so much. Certainly, in parts of the world digging is far more frequent. In parts of Wales, 80 per cent of the annual cull of foxes is via the use of terriers.

In other parts of England perhaps it is a little bit less, but it would be a relatively small proportion, about as accurate as I could get, of the actual number of foxes which are hunted to the number of foxes which are marked to ground, which are the number of foxes which are actually then dug out at the request of that

particular land owner.

LORD SOULSBY: There seems to me a dichotomy of authority here with the owner of the land, the huntsman and the terrier man, but I might be wrong. Am I wrong in suspecting that?

MR BUTLER: Lord Soulsby, I do not think it is a dichotomy at all. The decision to dig, whether it be within the MFHA rules, on a day's traditional fox hunting -- and Barrie Wade of the National Working Terrier Federation will correct me -- or whether it be within their rules and codes of conduct, the authority to dig on that land rests with the land owner.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are limited in terms of time. I would like to move on to the question of the kill and the end of the hunt. I mean, there are basically two stories which one finds in the evidence. One, which one might say is the pro-hunting story, is that when the hounds catch the fox it is instant death by severing the cervical cord. On occasions it might be bowled over by the first dog and it is then killed by the second. The challenge is that it is often the case that the fox is disembowelled alive.

What is the balance, would you say, of these two versions? Presumably, it is not all or nothing in either case, and I do not suppose either side suggests that it is all or nothing.

But do you have any feel as to this? And do you have any evidence that could influence, in a sense, that debate about what the outcome is at the end of a hunt, because I think this is another issue which receives a

lot of attention?

MR JACKSON: Brian Fanshawe will help on this, supported by Simon Hart?

MR FANSHAW: Lord Burns, as far as the evidence is concerned, the Vets for Hunting, in their submission, said that the kill occurs quickly, with the lead hound snatching the fox and dislocating the neck somewhat in the a terrier would kill a rat. They further say the cause of death is probably cervical dislocation.

This is confirmed by Cunningham 1999 on the basis of three autopsies carried out some years ago. More recently, Mr Bob Baskerville has recorded similar findings, post mortem in foxes killed by hounds, using X-ray radiography. I understand he has sent his report in.

The hound when he catches the fox is above the fox and he catches the fox across the shoulders or the back of the neck. One of the reasons he does that is the same action as the terrier killing the rat. They know jolly well that if they do not catch the fox that way that they will be bitten back.

It is virtually impossible for the hound to, firstly, grab the fox by the belly. Actually, although it is not relevant to what I am saying, at a conference last week, Professor Harris said that most foxes were killed by disembowelling, and it is very quick, but I would say that foxes are not killed by disembowelling.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I just interrupt. Are you saying that this never happens, or this only happens in a very small proportion of occasions?

MR FANSHAWE: We have taken opinion from a number of experienced huntsman, which we have not yet submitted, and the huntsman who have hunted over a great many years. In total, there are over 75,000 kills that they have been a part of. Of those 75,000, there are only 25 where we have recordings when something marginal has gone wrong; and the reasons have been interference from opponents to hunting, foxes losing their balance, particularly going downhill very sharply or on particularly rocky territory, and very occasionally a young hound.

MR JACKSON: So that is 25 cases out of 75,000 cases, Lord Burns. There will be a further submission on this if it helps the Inquiry.

MR FANSHAWE: Further evidence, again -- it is opinion but it is independent -- I would like to refer the Inquiry to what Mr Richard Phelps said in his submission. If you would like me to I will read it out, but you have probably read it.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Could we turn attention to deer just for a moment. We know the standard format that is presented to us of deer being brought to bay and then despatched by shooting. Clearly, we have also seen some video evidence of that not always working in quite the right way.

So have you any idea of what proportion of cases it does not quite work, where obviously hounds are biting at the deer before the person comes to catch at the end and despatch it?

MR YANDLE: Thank you. I have seen many kills in my life,

and I have to say that I suppose there is bound to be sometimes human error when using a gun. So I would estimate something like 1 in 20 kills, 5 per cent, when a second shot might have to be used.

I have also seen the videos that you have seen.

The time between when the deer was brought to bay and it was killed with a pistol shot is very short, something in the region of 38 seconds, the particular one. I would like to point out that that is not a long period of time, compared to any other form of killing deer with a rifle or whatever.

LORD SOULSBY: When you say 1 in 20 may require a second shot, is that with the free bullet or a captive bolt?

MR YANDLE: The hunt gun is a folding shotgun, under the auspices of the British Deer Act, which allows a short-barrelled gun, loaded with buck shot, which is a very effective weapon at close quarters.

If the person using that should have not killed the deer, then it is much more likely to be, if it was wounded, killed with a free bullet in a humane killer. It could equally be killed by a captive bolt, but the free bullet is probably more efficient in this particular case. So the second shot is usually because of it not being a clean kill, but it does not happen very often.

There is, I suppose, the odd time -- in fact, I know that there is an odd time -- when the shot with the shotgun actually misses altogether. It might -- you are aiming at the back of the head, at quite close quarters with the shotgun, and you do not have much spread with

the bullet, and you might well hit the horn, or something like that, then of course there is a time lag between that shot, putting another cartridge in the gun if it is a single barrelled gun, and the second shot. It should not be more than a few seconds, but that could be the second shot.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think this question about the kill and the issue of the conflicting evidence here is something that I do not think we can go into much further today, but obviously it is an issue which keeps cropping up. We will be seeking over the course of the rest of the inquiry to try and see what there is in terms of evidence on this. We may have to come back to that. We have five minutes before we are due to break. I would like to raise the question at this stage in terms of control of hounds; issues of trespass; the question of hounds turning up where they are not welcome. There is another issue on which we have had a lot of letters have been from people who are against hunting, and who described events when they have been seriously inconvenienced by hunting because of either being on their land when they did not want them or because of the general intrusion.

I think I would like to ask how far you think this is a problem and you recognise it as a problem. What are the things that you are able to do, and are trying to do about that? And to what extent does the disciplinary process deal effectively with complaints of this type?

MR JACKSON: Brian Fanshawe and Tom Yandle will deal with this, and Sam Butler will sweep up on it.

MR FANSHAWE: The control of the hounds during the day is solely the responsibility of the huntsman and his whippers in.

I think the misconception about the control of hounds is that frequently the hounds will be hunting their quarry several fields in front of the mounted field, including the hunt staff. They are seen by the public to be out of control; they are not out of control whilst they are hunting the fox. They are totally concentrated on their job of hunting the fox. We have difficulty explaining that they are still within the control. The huntsman can control his hounds from quite a distance by the use of his horn, or, indeed, even his movements.

There has been, over the last ten years of villages developing, and perhaps more foxes feeding in villages, instances where hounds have run into villages. Hunting is very aware of this. Everything is done, when villages are approached, that the huntsman and his whippers in get very close to the hounds so that they can deviate them away.

But it is very difficult to teach a hound, whose single task is to hunt the fox, that somebody's garden is not an area where he, the hounds, have permission. So there are instances; we are aware of it, and everything is done to limit these occasions.

We have referred to the Independent Supervising Authority. I dare say that will be where some of the complaints in future might come from.

MR YANDLE: By its very essence, deer hunting is selective.

That means, as you might have seen on your visits, that hounds are quite often stopped because they are on the wrong deer. That happens several times during the day. To me, that emphasises the fact that hounds are being properly controlled.

MR BUTLER: Lord Burns, it is a problem. The built-up areas, it is illegal to be on a motorway or a railway. You, indeed, I suspect, have had a great number of letters that have reached you on the subject, and indeed there are plenty of press articles. I think the problem is of public relations.

Where the hunts -- and I know this by sitting on the MFHA committee, and my experience of the campaign funding -- are able to identify incidents, visit those who own gardens, et cetera, very often those matters can be put to rest straight away.

Wherever there is damage, or problems to private property, hunts indeed will put that right, and indeed many of them are insured for the major incidents. The number of instances actually referred to the insurers are very small indeed.

The problems with livestock and damage of crops are, again, very small, minimal. We can provide details of those to the Committee, if required, at a later date. They are in the public domain. But it is something that hunting has to address, and is addressing all the time. Indeed, there is a sub-committee working on the amalgamation of hunts and boundary changes as we speak, and that was a recommendation of the Phelps Report.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Given that there is an increasing

amount of the territory which is now built-up, including built-up roads and so forth, does this, effectively, mean the territory over which you can hunt is diminishing all the time?

MR BUTLER: Sir John, that is correct. Certainly in southern England, the territory over which one can hunt is diminishing, but hundreds indeed are amalgamating and hunts are reducing the number of times they actually go hunting in a season to make up for that.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Could I follow up on the hounds and their knowledge of private boundaries and so forth. I accept, quite happily, that they do not know about private property and where they are not allowed. To what extent do the hounds also know about non-quarry species. It seems, reading the evidence, that the domestic pets that come off worse are probably cats and the feline species. To what extent are the hounds trained not to scent and kill cats? Is it possible, for example, to introduce them to cats in the way that they are introduced to livestock; so that they do not follow that?

MR BUTLER: Dr Edwards, the upbringing of hounds from puppies to when they go hunting is generally in the company of all sorts of animals, cats included. The instances of cats being killed by fox hounds are well documented, and no doubt have been submitted to you. There is never an excuse; there is never a good reason; we can never in any way try and reduce the trauma that catching a cat obviously causes. Most of us are cat owners understand that only too well.

What I can say is that recorded instances of fox hounds killing cats you can count on the fingers of one hand, bearing in mind that on an average year 22,500 hunting days take place. Hounds are out of their kennel from 11 o'clock to 5 o'clock on those days.

In the last ten years, if one calculates that up, I am pleased -- if that is the right word -- to say that the incidence of where that occurs are extremely negligible. I think one can finally say that it is sadly not uncommon for a domestic dog to catch a cat, sometimes out in the middle of nowhere, a wild cat or indeed a domestic one. It is not unheard of, but I think that the incidences are so minimal that it is a reasonable reflection of the efforts that professional huntsman go to, to ensure that their hounds hunt only fox are in 99.9 per cent of occasions entirely satisfactory.

THE CHAIRMAN: Final question, and then we must break. The rules, as I recall, for coursing require that nobody should interfere with the flight of the hare. There are not similar rules for other forms of hunting. Spectators and people around do, as I understand it, interfere both with the flight of the fox and with the deer. Is this something which is a cause for concern to you? Is it something you encourage? Or is it something which is out of your control? Or do you not think that it matters; it is a normal part of hunting?

MR JACKSON: When Tom Yandle referred Lord Burns to a filming incident, which was explained to the Inquiry involved interference with the deer -- Tom.

MR YANDLE: Thank you.

The fact that there are, as you saw last week, lots of onlookers at a deer hunt often means that, inadvertently, the followers are on a road which is a public road. It is quite difficult to stop them being on that road when the deer would want to cross the road. So, yes, sadly, sometimes people do interfere with the flight of the deer. There have, as our Chairman says, been instances when people, other people who have been training to film perhaps the death of the deer, have got in the way and, we think, created -- in fact, we know created -- an incident that was more serious than it should have been before.

So it does happen. I think all hunts do their best to make sure that human interference to the quarry species is lessened or minimised, but certainly it is bound to happen when people are watching from public highways.

MR BUTLER: Lord Burns, fox hunting and hare hunting are very much based on hunting the quarry in its wild and natural state. The only people who should hunt the hounds are the professional staff who have been brought up to it, trained to it.

We know that the Copper the fox incident example, that may have been brought to your attention, would not have occurred had it not been for interference from third parties.

To answer your question directly: Do we encourage people to interfere with the flight or the hunting of the quarry species? The answer is no.

THE CHAIRMAN: That applies in the case of stag hunting too, does it, in cases where it is thought that the stag might be going onto land that you are prohibited from hunting on?

MR YANDLE: If you have lots of followers in vehicles, it would be natural for them to go to one of the boundaries. I would hope that they would do no more than be there. It has happened in the past.

I think you have probably been given photographic evidence that people were trying to turn a deer from a certain place, but do not forget there are people that keep these deer. The hunt is a reasonable procedure on Exmoor. It is a management tool. A lot of people get very upset by people trying to interfere with that.

So, yes, it has happened in the way that you say, but it does not happen very much. We are doing our best to reduce the incidence of people interfering with the flight of deer.

MR BUTLER: May I just qualify my comments. There are, of course, instances that we have discussed this morning during autumn hunting where a fox or the hounds may not be allowed to go on a particular farm, railways, motorways, built-up areas, where hunts may well position people to discourage the quarry species from going onto that area, because it is either illegal or because hounds have been asked specifically not to go there, or we know they are not wanted.

I am sorry, I think that would be interference from that point of view.

MR FANSHAW: And if I might add, for safety reasons.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we must break now. There are quite a lot of issues here that we have still not covered in this session. I think I would like to reflect over the course of the remainder of the morning whether to start the afternoon session with one or two of the outstanding points, or whether to try and come to them at the end of the afternoon session, but I would like to reflect on that if I may.

Thank you very much for the evidence that we have had so far.

(Short break).

SESSION TWO -PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF HUNTING

DEADLINE 2000

Representation Panel Chairman

William Swann Veterinary Consultant

Panel:

Douglas Batchelor LACS Chairman

Colin Booty RSPCA Senior Wildlife Officer

Mike Huskisson LACS monitor

David Coulthrad LACS Head of Public Affairs

Kevin Hill IFAW monitor

THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, and thank you for coming today to give evidence.

You will have seen the form that we have followed during the first session. We propose to follow a similar pattern during this session. I would like to ask you whether you have any opening statement that you would like to make, Mr Swan?

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns, yes, I do. Would you like to proceed with that now?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, please.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, my Lord, Members of the Committee. Hunting with dogs is cruel. It is indicative of the strength of feeling caused by this issue that three organisations with differing core activities, the RSPCA, IFAW and the League Against Cruel Sports, joined together to form the Campaign for the Protection of Hunted Animals.

This group opposes hunting with dogs because of the cruelty involved. This is not an issue of town verses country. It is not an issue of urban dweller verses rural dweller. Nor has it anything to do with class or privilege.

The supporters of hunting have cynically introduced these irrelevancies to divert the issue from the indefensible to the arguable. I say cynical because the supporters of hunting have mounted a campaign of misinformation to try to deceive the rural population into believing that massive job losses would follow a ban on hunting.

Sean Rickard, a leading agricultural economist, whose report was submitted to this inquiry on April 3rd has demonstrated that those fears are largely unfounded. Our organisations do not oppose the culling of wild animals where good reasons to do so exists. Deer are necessarily culled to control their population on welfare grounds and to protect woodland.

We agree with the submission from the Ministry of Agriculture that foxes have little impact on lamb mortality, but we also accept their view that foxes can occasionally be a local nuisance.

However, whilst acknowledging the need to control foxes as individuals, we do not accept the need, nor indeed do we believe it is practical, to control fox populations.

The contingencies for the prevention of rabies in Britain -- which we hope are never required -- make provision for the removal of foxes from the area of an incident, but the advisory group who looked at fox control acknowledged that it is not possible to permanently control the population of an animal with so fast a population recovery capacity.

We do not accept that there is a general need to cull hares, which are, in our opinion, in need of the protection of conservation legislation. We are opposed to hunting with dogs because it is unnecessary, and it causes suffering.

It may be asked, what is suffering? If I beat a dog with a stick, it will show signs of distress; it will cry out, try to run away or even try to bite me.

Its flesh will show histological evidence of damage consistent with that beating.

The law accepts that it will suffer. Some might argue that the distress seen is the dog's instinctive response to a particular set of circumstances, and that this instinctive behaviour is invoked if I become the agency of the beating as perhaps it would in some natural incident.

However, the dog has the protection of the law because the beating is carried out not by some natural agency but by a human being, subject to the ethical and moral constraints of our society.

We are distressed by animal suffering and judge as cruel those who inflict suffering unnecessarily. An animal pursued by a pack of dogs will run away. If the pursuit continues, that animal will show signs of distress. In time, as Professor Bateson has shown, it will develop physiological damage of its tissues. It may similarly be said that it suffers.

That the pursued animal is wild is irrelevant. The agency whereby the animal is pursued is human, and moral and ethical judgments which apply to all human activities are relevant. These are not wild encounters. These are acts perpetrated by people, and the hounds are an agency of the huntsman. They are improper acts.

I have developed on the point that hunting is cruel and unnecessary because it is fundamental to our presentation. I ask the Committee to note that there is no recognised form of humane killing that makes use of dogs as the agency of killing.

If it is necessary to kill foxes, they can be shot humanely by a competent marksman; and that the marksman may need to become competent is unsurprising. A gun is a tool, and no one would suggest taking any modern agricultural device and using it without first becoming fully competent in its use.

Deer are culled throughout most of the United Kingdom by shooting. Official guidelines exist to ensure the use of appropriate gun calibres and bullet weights. Deadline 2000, the Campaign for the Protection of Hunted Animals, recognises that hunting has evolved around it a pagentry and ceremony which is part of Britain's cultural heritage. However, it is no longer necessary to go to war to enjoy the pomp and circumstances of our many festivals celebrating Britain's military and colonial past.

Hunting can, and will, survive as a sport, but one that does not involve killing animals. In India, as recorded by the history of the Peshwarvale Hunt, and other books, hunts move seamlessly between live quarry hunting and drag hunting as circumstances required.

In Germany, where live quarry hunting was banned in the 1930s, drag hunting is practised in a form quite different from the high speed chases characteristic of some of our existing drag hunts.

Drag hunting can be -- in the words of a stag Hunter turned drag hunter -- what you make it. We believe that the vast majority of people who hunt do so because they enjoy the ride and enjoy working with hounds. For these people, killing animals is not a

necessary part of their enjoyment.

Most people involved in hunting are not sadistic.

We do not believe that these same people will destroy their horses, or their hounds, in an event of a ban on hunting with dogs. They will convert to drag hunting in a modified form. They will continue, as now, to continue their many and diverse equestrian activities.

I wish to quote Peter Carruthers, who is the Professor of Philosophy of Sheffield University, his words:

"For those who hunt animals for sport rather than to feed themselves, or to earn a living, do so from motives that must certainly count as trivial in comparison to the suffering they cause. While the pleasures of the hunt need not be directly sadistic, it need not be the suffering of the animal which is the object of enjoyment. They are inseparably bound up with the enjoyment of power and the final domination.

"It does seem plausible that those who indulge in such pleasures may be reinforcing aspects of their characters that may make them unfit in various ways for their moral dealings with human beings."

Sean Rickard has shown us how few, if indeed any, jobs will be lost in the short to medium term in the event of a ban. We have commissioned our own research, out of a sense of responsibility. The results confirm our view that a ban on hunting will have little impact on the rural economy.

Horse ownership in Britain is increasing. Most of the benefits which appear to accrue from hunting

actually arise from horse ownership. There is no reason to suppose that horse ownership will decrease in the event of a ban.

We acknowledge the local services provided by hunt kennels in disposing of unwanted farm livestock.

However, we believe this to be a minor consideration for several reasons. Most, if not all, kennel incinerators have a limited capacity, in the region of 50 kilograms of material per hour. To process as much animal waste as some have claimed would require many years of incinerator time.

Also, a revision of the relevant European Directive is likely to have a major impact on hunt kennel knacker facilities. We believe that very few of them will choose to upgrade on economic grounds.

We further wish to remark upon the impossibility of regulating live quarry hunting. The hunt havoc data, made available to the Committee, demonstrates that the unpredictability of the route taken by the quarry species leads to social disruption and genuine distress to people inadvertently caught up in the progress of a hunt.

We will present a case for a total ban on hunting with dogs because it is cruel. But there is a parallel argument based on social disruption. We do not believe that there exists a middle way of regulated hunting.

Finally, we draw attention to the precedent established in law that wild animals should be afforded protection from cruelty, as defined in the Wild Mammals Protection Act, 1996.

My Lord, Chairman, that completes my opening address. As a product of the rural economy, I was brought up to be economic with words. I would ask your guidance. I now have a brief introduction to the first session. Would you wish me to continue or break?

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I would like you to continue please.

MR SWANN: Thank you, my Lord.

In seeking to assist the Committee of Inquiry, I should not wish it to be thought that we do in any way condone some hunting practices as being better or more ethical than others. We oppose all forms of life quarry hunting with dogs because it causes unnecessary suffering.

However, we accept that the Committee has a duty to understand hunting practices. We will assist you in gathering factual evidence. Our organisations have a wealth of experience, which includes the inability of huntsman to avoid cruelty. They extend the chase as much as possible, causing distress, unnecessary suffering and, ultimately, physiological damage.

We will cite huntsman's own records and our own observations. We will show the inability of huntsman to kill animals humanely. Dogs do not, contrary to what you may be told, kill cleanly in all cases. We will refer to veterinary evidence and studies by UFAW, the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare.

We shall further show the inability of huntsman to control their hounds, or supporters, who continue to cause distress to those inadvertently caught up in the

hunt's progress.

We have presented recent hunt habit data to the Committee. Finally, we shall show the inability of huntsman to stop unacceptable disturbance of the natural environment.

We have here to give evidence hunt followers, who have first-hand experience of artificial earths, stopping-up of earths and (inaudible) and terrier work.

Thank you, my Lord.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for that introduction. We propose to work down the list of issues that we put at the back of the agenda, but it may be quite sensible to begin with the question of the group we put to the Countryside Alliance earlier, about the regulation of hunting, and how far you think that they deal with the complaints that you have, or that you observe.

I am not putting any particular point on it. I just invite you to comment on what you have read, in terms of the evidence, and your own experiences of the self-regulation that takes place, and how far you think that is effective.

MR SWANN: Before I pass this question to Douglas Bachelor, I shall make the point that the RSPCA, as the world's leading animal welfare organisation, has not been contacted to offer advice, or to give any input into any regulation procedures that have been proposed.

Douglas.

MR BATCHELOR: I would reiterate that same point; that I think the view of most people who are opposed to hunting with dogs is that regulatory bodies so far have been set

up by those hunting themselves. They have no faith in those bodies. They do not, by and large, bring any evidence to those bodies. Likewise, we have not been approached in supplying anything for this new body that has been allegedly set up.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is your own experience? Do you have experience yourselves of taking complaints to the various hunt bodies? Do you have anything, any experiences of that type of reports?

MR BATCHELOR: Our experience has been, where possible, that we have assisted people, as have our colleagues in IFAW, taking people to the legal processes where you feel the law has been broken, but we have not had any faith in the self-regulatory processes that have existed in the past.

MR SWANN: I think, my Lord, I may summarise that by saying these organisations have no direct experience of working with the self-regulating bodies.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Can we deal, first of all, with the issue of autumn/cub hunting. Is there any observations that you would like to make about that?

MR SWANN: I am going to pass this over to David Coulthred and to Mike Huskisson. Thank you.

MR HUSKISSON: Good morning, Lord Burns, and Members of the Committee.

My experience of some 30 years of following hunts, and observing them at very close quarters, has taught me that cub hunting -- and it is cub hunting; it always has been the hunting term for it, cub hunting -- is done

primarily for two purposes; first, to train the new entry of hounds, the young puppies, brought into the pack every year to train them to hunt and pursue and kill the quarry; in most cases, of course, we are talking about the fox.

The second purpose is, curiously enough, to train the foxes as well. Hunting people have said to me that the idea was to get good foxes. A lot of the cub hunting that I saw involved the sort of concept of holding up, where the woods, the covers, would be surrounded by a ring of riders, and the hounds put into that cover, because they knew from the landowner that there was a vixen with cubs in the wood; and the purpose being that the hounds would chase the fox, and the cubs in the wood, and anything that tried to break-out they would chase back by shouting at it, banging their crops on the saddles, riding across it, to try to force the young cubs back into the wood; that way to try and guarantee that there would be a kill in the wood, whereby you would have the more experienced hounds who would pile into the fox cubs, and the young hounds would get caught up in the excitement of it as well, and learn what it was about, but any foxes that broke through the ring and got away, they could have brought the hounds out and chased after it and kill it.

But the perception which is given to me by the hunting people is that that was a good fox, one that would do for another day, and they would leave.

MR SWANN: My Lord, I think David Coulthred may wish to say a word on this as well.

MR COULTHREAD: Thank you. I would just like to make two points. The first being that the practice of holding up has been investigated by the Committee this morning. But the fact that small copses of woods are surrounded by hunt followers, that young foxes are actually often are beaten back in by blood hounds or whatever, to ensure that they are available for hunting, actually show that the idea of them being involved in dispersal simply is not the purpose of cub hunting; it is actually, in fact, the exact opposite.

The second point that has to be made is that people are often concerned about the fate of the young foxes. There is also the matter of the young hounds who may not make the grade as a result of being introduced into the pack. Many of those are also shot as a result of cub hunting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have any evidence in relation to that last point, either in terms of the numbers that are involved, or generally the extent to which that happens?

MR COULTHREAD: We have evidence from a study of the Geoffrey Craghill Memorial Trust, which actually looks at the consequences of closing down a large pack of fox hounds, where they actually talked in terms of the number of hounds bred every year.

They reckon an estimate of something like 36 young hounds bred by each pack every year, which works out at about 10,000 hounds bred every year. If the number of hounds is remaining constant at around 20,000 and 10,000 being bred every year, that means that 10,000 hounds are also being disposed of; many of those will be younger

hounds.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I actually wanted to go back to an earlier question -- forgive me, I am awfully slow.

I just want to confirm something really; that you had not actually been invited to be involved in any of these self-regulatory activities. Can I just check-up, would that mean that, if you had have been invited, you would have taken part, or would you not wish to take part at all?

MR SWANN: Basically, because of our opposition to hunting, obviously, we would not wish to take part in looking at such issues of how hunting is practised, but these associations have always expressed a considerable willingness to help on matters such as rehoming hounds, in looking for alternative places for them to go, and also helping out with the horses. It is on this side that obviously comes into the regulation process that the societies would have had a non-partisan approach, and would be willing to help, and in fact extend that offer now.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify where you stood on that issue. That does raise the question posed to us about the number of hounds, and, as it were, maintaining the size of the pack and so on.

Two points there, really. One was, is it necessarily the case that those young hounds who are bred but do not enter the packs are necessarily killed, or do they have other destinations open to them?

If, in a sense, at that stage they are perhaps

less imprinted on hunting than they would have been, had they become full members of the pack?

MR HUSKISSON: As I understand it, Professor Sir John Marsh, the young hounds that show a reluctance to enter into the pack can meet several fates. Some of them will be redrafted on into drag hunting, say, to try and teach them to hunt the artificial scent. Sometimes the hunts will persevere with hounds, thinking that it might have some benefit in the pack, perhaps for its scenting ability. But, if it cannot be drafted on to other hunts, why should another fox hunt want one fox hound that will not hunt in your country, why should they want one, then it can be put down.

Hounds can be put down for a variety of faults:

They could be mute hounds, they could be babblers, all sorts of technical terms, but basically they do not do what the huntsman wants.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the IFAW evidence, it is suggested that at the stage of autumn/cub hunting that, in fact, the cubs are only half grown. Is that a measure of what you think is the stage that it takes for full development?

We talk about breaking up family groups before they are independent. As you will have heard this morning, that was not the evidence that we were given this morning. It was suggested that, in fact, they were much more, in fact, fully grown.

MR HUSKISSON: Lord Burns, the question of when the cub hunting starts is debatable. You heard this morning it was put at September. Actually, we tend to think it is the first Saturday in August, but we have even had cub

hunting going on in July. So quite how they describe that as autumn hunting is beyond me.

We would dispute the age of the cubs involved, and state that they are cubs. I mean, they may, yes, be well on the way towards adulthood.

THE CHAIRMAN: What age would you define as the point of adulthood?

MR HUSKISSON: Well I have to pass that to one of my colleagues.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, I am going to ask Colin Booty, our Wildlife Officer, to comment on this.

MR BOOTY: Yes, Chairman.

You referred to the IFAW evidence. The IFAW submission makes cross-reference to a detailed book by H.G Lloyd, The Red Fox. In that is a table of data showing the growth rate of foxes. It is against that that one can make the judgment about whether you think how big they are, and what age they are, it was in that context that that point was made in that submission. So I think the evidence in the supporting work is there.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will check that.

It is also suggested in the same piece of evidence that this may account for some of the problems that farmers and gatekeepers have, because of foxes being forced off their natural range.

Is that, in a sense, a hypothesis, or is there anything to support that?

MR SWANN: I am sorry, Lord Burns, my fault I am sure, I missed the emphasis of the question. You are asking about dispersal onto adjacent agricultural land?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I am sorry. It is in paragraph 3 that I am looking at, the evidence suggests, talking about cub hunting.

"It may also account for many of the problems reported by farmers and gamekeepers at this time of the year, inexperienced foxes forced off their native range have no option but to take the easiest prey available, such as domestic stock."

It was the suggestion, in a way, that the process of dispersal may actually be causing problems for farmers. I was just asking, really out of curiosity, whether this was a hypothesis. Again, is there any evidence?

MR SWANN: This was largely based on comments which have been received from farmers. Some farmers do not like the process of cubbing taking place on farms adjacent to them because they think it does, on occasions, push foxes through onto land which they hold. So it is based on evidence presented to us from actual farmers.

THE CHAIRMAN: Shall we move on to the issue of artificial earths. What do you see as the purpose of artificial earths? How common do you think they are? Is this something which you think is something that we should regulate?

MR SWANN: I would like to pass this question to Mike Huskisson, who has most experience in this field.

MR HUSKISSON: To be honest, I really do not dispute the views expressed by the Duke of Beaufort in his book, "Fox Hunting", where he says that, in countries where earths are scarce, it is sometimes found necessary to

make artificial earths to provide somewhere for local foxes to have their cubs; in other words, for breeding purposes.

Now, he is a leading authority on hunting, and I do not dispute the words that he expresses there. I do not say that every hunt in the country has artificial earths. I concede that it varies from hunting country to hunting country. Some of them have a great number. One of them I know, the Thurlow Hunt, which is not far from myself, has at least 31 artificial earths that we know of.

It could well be that they are going at it with a great deal of enthusiasm because the chap is a shooting man and views the fox cubs in the same way as raising pheasants. Whereas other hunts, perhaps, have far fewer. But, again, it is a comment from our opponents that there are artificial earths in most hunting countries in the United Kingdom, and I dispute that.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Could I follow you up on that, and the extent to which those artificial earths -- which perhaps will be a good case example -- are still being created or still in use.

I would suspect that a shooting person would not want them, rather than encouraging them. Are they historical, or are they current?

MR HUSKISSON: They are certainly historic. If you go back to the first instance of the Hunting Directory, there is a guide on how to build artificial earths. That was at the back end of not the last Century but the one before that.

They are still building them -- by building, I also add refurbishing as well because they take existing ones, that have become a bit clumped for whatever reason, and they are putting in new pipes, and making them nice and cosy and warm again for foxes. So it is still an ongoing. It is still happening.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next item on our list is the question of stopping-up of earth in sets. We would be interested in what evidence you have about that, to the extent to which you think -- well, both the reasons why it is practised, but any information you have in terms of the extent to which this is done in accordance with the guidelines, or if you feel that that is not happening. Again, this is something which we have received some communications about. We would be interested in anything that you have to say on the subject.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, Mike Huskisson is working quite hard this morning. I am going to pass this back to him and Kevin Hill, who has direct evidence from his own observations.

MR HUSKISSON: Lord Burns, and Members of the Committee. Again, my experience of some 30 years of following hounds and earth stopping, that is done to keep the foxes running above ground. They have to have a gallop. There has to be a pursuit, a chase; that is what people are there for; that is what they pay for; that is where the support comes. If they put hounds into a wood, and the fox runs 50 yards in the wood and disappears straight down a hole, then that is no use for them at all. As it was put to me, the purpose of the stopping

was to keep the foxes above ground so they can provide sport.

As to the sort of the nature of the stopping that is done, we have heard from the National Federation of Badger Groups. They have put their own submission in about the badger sets, and the legality or illegality of that on occasion. You will be well aware of that.

But I find that what does happen sometimes is that people, surprisingly enough, are actually unaware of how things change in the countryside. We have taken a close look at the Thurlow hunt. Some of the artificial earths there are actually taken over by badgers. The hunting people who, sort of, gleefully have gone along and stopped these artificial earths up have found actually that they are stopping-up badger sets unknown to them, and allegedly unbeknown to them. It does raise issues of difficulties in the countryside, and causes a lot of inconvenience and harm to other species besides the target ones.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I ask a further question about hard stopping of sets or badger's holes, which in the IFAW evidence is pointed out does occur and is a breach of hunting rules. I think what would be very helpful to us is some idea of the extent of that.

Obviously, there is some evidence but how often and how much documentary evidence do you have of that and the frequency of it?

MR SWANN: I would like to pass this question to Colin Booty, who is our Wildlife Expert.

MR BOOTY: Professor Winter, as Mike Huskisson has already

mentioned, there has been a very detailed submission from the National Federation of Badger Groups, and they do deal with this point in some detail.

They are very concerned about the activities of the hunts and stopping-up earths. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, there are still a very big number of problems arising.

They do give numerous case examples in that, including sets which have been abandoned after activities, and also an example where, in Leicestershire, a badger was found half stuck, half in, half out of a badger set, which had been filled with supposedly loose soil after persistent rain for five days that had changed the consistency.

The badger had been unable to dig it itself out completely. When the badger group came along, they rescued this rather distressed badger, took him to a vet who decided the best course of action was euthanasia. So there are examples of that in that submission.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I just ask, we appreciate the examples, the cases, we have been given to consider. The line of my question is very much to try and get a sense of the proportionate importance of this.

In your monitoring and the monitoring of your colleagues, and the work that is done -- you do not like earth stopping at all and we recognise that of course -- but you presumably see examples of earth stopping that is in accordance with the hunt rules, soft material, and you see examples that are not, and you just indicated some of those.

What we would like, I think, is a sense of what you feel the relative proportions are between those two practices?

MR SWANN: Professor Winter, I feel it might be helpful to you to have some comments from the hunt monitors, who might be able to shed some light on that.

MR HILL: Yes, Professor Winter.

In my opinion, monitoring fox hunts, certainly for this last season, I certainly reiterate the points of Mike Huskisson; that the earths are in fact stopped purposely to prolong the chase.

Regarding the manner in which they are stopped, certainly, in particular, badger sets, on a few occasions we have in fact this last year reported those incidents to the police for investigation.

So I do feel that -- bearing in mind, if you could, that we do not have a free range to go exactly where we wish, and we keep entirely to public footpaths -- it is my feeling that the widespread over stopping, hard stopping of fox earths does take place.

It is very difficult for us to actually put a figure on the hard stopping in relation to what is acceptable because we just do not have that access to private land and, further, to the artificial earths they are stopped as well.

The reference I believe to the Countryside Alliance Report suggested that foxes could come and go in artificial earths, just like a bird from a nest, I can say is wrong, because I, in fact, have seen an artificial earth stopped on the day of the hunt, when

the hunt has finished the artificial earth is on stop. Another point I would like to raise is the practice of stopping the earth in, after the fox has gone below ground. There have been several recorded cases of this this year. Certainly there was one reported widely in the newspapers before Christmas, regarding the Quorn Hunt, when the fox actually went below ground and was stopped in.

I would like to suggest that it poses a serious welfare problem to the fox, bearing in mind that it has probably been chased for some considerable time.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, just to address a point which you have raised earlier with the purpose of helping the Committee. There was a newspaper article in the Daily Mirror on 3rd October 1999, in which the Beaufort Hunt did actually indicate that it was building artificial earths at that time to attract foxes to the countryside, as hunting is all about conservation and control. I thought that might be helpful with regard to the recent incident.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

One of the points that has been put to us is that stopping-up is not so much about prolonging the hunt, but it is to avoid the situation of foxes going to ground very quickly, which would then involve more terrier work.

Do you have any observations on that?

MR SWANN: Mike, I am afraid it is over to you again.

MR HUSKISSON: I really do not recall ever hearing that offered as a reason for it. I mean, the terriermen, they

go out, and they are enthusiastic in their stopping-up of the earths and blocking them, and the purpose has been, as they put to me, to keep the fox above ground and running, they have not been saying, "We better stop up these earths to save a dig later on in the morning." They manage to keep the fox running above the ground and far enough away to find an unstopped earth, then they will go and dig it out.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Moving on from the stopping of earths, you introduced in your introduction the evidence of prolonging the chase. Do you have other examples, other than stopping-up, of ways in which the chase with any form of hunting is prolonged purposely? MR SWANN: Thank you, Dr Edwards.

The fox hunting above ground was one issue, but also we have concerns about measures to force deer to run. We have evidence, again, and the hunt monitors will give this first-hand. I am basically relaying what they have said to me. You must question them directly if you wish to corroborate this.

There are procedures where it is necessary to split the deer away from a group, where the deer does not necessarily want to split away, or does not necessarily want to run. It is not necessarily the behaviour that deer wishes to exhibit. The huntsman will beat, make noises, crack whips, and perform a lot of activities of this type to try and persuade the deer to enter into a chase. So it is with this type of activity involved. It is precipitating the chase and perpetuating it to keep the deer going for as long a chase as

possible.

There would be ample opportunities to kill the deer, if that was the purpose, long before the end of the hunt was reached. Could I ask Mike Huskisson to comment further on this.

MR HUSKISSON: Yes, Dr Victoria Edwards.

It lies right at the heart of hunting practice that it should do what they call "sporting", and as a cornerstone of that is the concept of law, which is the concept that if you bolt the cry, you give it fair law, which is to give it a start. So, if they bolt a fox out of an artificial earth, with a pipe or something like that, the hounds are held back, and it is given time to get away, get a run, and the hunt can continue.

Obviously, from a short pipe, as soon as the fox comes out it can be killed, it can be shot, killed by all sorts of means, but it does lie right at the cornerstone of hunting that these people need to be sporting.

But, of course, our interpretation of it is that it is in the interests of their fun, rather than in the interests of the well-being of the quarry.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I move on to the question of terrier work. First of all, do you have any views about the relative welfare consequences for the fox in relation to being caught above ground or being killed as a result of digging out?

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, one of the major concerns with terrier work, which we have always had, is what are, I am afraid, inevitable encounters between fox and dog

down the earth.

I have considerable first-hand experience of this in my more than 20 years as a practising veterinary surgeon. I have had very large numbers of terriers brought to me which have suffered appalling injuries as a result of underground encounters, and nobody will ever persuade me that these encounters do not take place because they evidently do.

I think, from this point of view, seeing the state in which the dogs are brought in, evidently the fox must undergo some sort of similar process. I think this is perhaps not self-evident but at least I believe it to be the case.

I could ask anyone from the panel to expand on this, and we will produce the same story. We do believe that terrier work represents a major compromise of welfare.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are, again, a set of regulations which we were hearing about this morning, in terms of the practices of terriering. Where do you think these go, in respect of dealing with some of the issues that concern you most?

MR SWANN: My Lord, I think it is very difficult to try and regulate an underground encounter between two animals which are biologically equipped to defend each other, or attack, as the case may be. I fail to see in principle how this type of regulation can occur, because, if an underground encounter is to occur, it is beyond the control of the terrierman.

I think the number of cases that we do see of dog

injuries confirms that view. I also have grave concerns with regard to terrier work; that the work that takes place is often beyond the control of the huntsman. Whereas the huntsman may, with the best will in the world, wish to maintain control, I just do not see how this is possible, given that the huntsman is rarely present, or the Huntmaster, sorry, is rarely present, at the time when digging out takes place, because, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the Huntmaster will not be present. So I fail to see how it can be regulated. These activities take place in great secrecy, or in great isolation, and I am totally opposed to the idea it can be regulated.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, could I briefly ask Mike Huskisson to comment on the same issue.

MR HUSKISSON: Lord Burns, and Members of the Committee. One of the things that concerns me, we are not exactly sure what all the rules and regulations are which have been brought in. One of the ones that has been brought to light is the concept that there should only be a limited number of people at any dig out. I always felt that was targeted at people like myself, to stop us gathering evidence, and reduce the numbers of people down to an inner core of tried and trusted people; and so that they did not have to put up with people from outside, who might have cameras up their jackets or whatever, to film what was going on. Really, we felt that that was perhaps symptomatic of the way they were thinking; that it should be kept private rather than open to public view.

LORD SOULSBY: The question of digging out a fox which has gone to earth and has escaped the hunt on a temporary basis, how far would your antagonism to hunting be alleviated if digging out was not done?

MR SWANN: I can answer that, Lord Soulsby, personally, by stating that I believe one of the greatest aspects of cruelty in hunting is the actual chase. So digging out is one aspect where I believe animal suffering does take place unnecessarily but I also firmly believe that there is a very strong case to be made -- in fact, I believe it is an overwhelming case -- that the animals are pursued to a point where they have suffered, and suffered for no good reason.

LORD SOULSBY: This does raise the sociological question, if I may go on, Chairman, of what is cruelty. We all have in our minds what that is, but I presume you would define it, as I might well define it too, as the practice of an unnecessary suffering, to be brief about it.

There is, of course, the practice of necessary suffering in terms of rodent control and control of pests and things like that. But unnecessary suffering is related to poor welfare in any way. Poor welfare comes when the animal, whatever it is, cannot compensate for the stresses that have been put upon it.

Now, you are saying that all aspects of hunting, right from the very beginning of the setting up of the fox, or the deer, or whatever, is cruel, like the whole process is.

I am not sure that everybody would agree with you,

but there must be a point where you can say that there is greater cruelty at this point than right at the very beginning. Would you be willing to acknowledge that there are shades of cruelty along a hunt?

MR SWANN: Lord Soulsby, I think the crux of the matter here is that, as we will acknowledge, welfare science is a founding science. There is, as yet, no physiological parameter that we can apply to indicate at which point that animal begins to suffer. It may suffer right from the very first moment of the chase, or it may begin to suffer at some point through it. This is not something that we are able to measure because there is no physiological way of doing it for an animal, any more than there is for a human being.

I believe that the precautionary principle must be applied here; that because we cannot define the precise point -- nobody I think would argue that suffering takes place at the end of the chase. This has been demonstrated I think beyond all reasonable doubt by Patrick Bateson. I think Patrick Bateson's conclusions might well be applicable to other species, but science has not yet caught up with that view.

Nobody can determine at which point during that chase that animal has ultimately begun to show those signs and symptoms. Indeed, this must be very much an individual concern because, if the animal is predominantly sedentary, then it will presumably begin to suffer so much sooner. But we have no way of measuring, and I believe we must apply the precautionary principle.

LORD SOULSBY: If I may, I add a final subcorollary to that. You use the phrase, "ultimately there is physiological damage to the quarry", and you obviously quote Patrick Bateson's evidence there. Of course, you are well aware that there is some difference of opinion about that, but animals which do recover from the hunt -- and not all animals are killed; they do escape and live to be hunted another day -- your concept of cruelty there, is that modified by the fact that they do escape, and they perform a normal life thereafter? Does cruelty stop when they escape? MR SWANN: No, my Lord, it does not. On the one hand, it does not mitigate against the cruelty which has already taken place to that point, but we have no data for the survivability of animals after such a chase.

Now, my own experiences with deer in Scotland would indicate that after major exertion, not in this case through hunting but through other reasons, that deer may die several days after such an escapade, and may indeed die with considerable physiological damage to the muscles, which is seen on post mortem, and we have know way of knowing what the survivability of those animals is after the kind of chase has led to physiological damage. So I do believe there is a welfare issue for animals in both circumstances.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are probably in danger of getting into the question of welfare generally which we have down for discussion on Monday and I may take things in that direction.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I would like to take you back

talking about the issue of terriers, and I heard a good deal of what you said. Earlier on you are suggesting that there are situations where you recognise there is a need to have some forms of control of pests and realising that also imports a certain amount of language. In those situations do you think there is any role for the issue of dogs at all?

MR SWANN: I do not see a role for dogs in pest control, because I believe there are alternative methods. My background is from a substantial farming family and my family have farmed for many, many generations, and it is primarily sheep farming where pests if we are talking about foxes are well-known to me. My family have never once resorted to dogs in control of foxes, and it has never been necessary, and we have had alternative means of control with which we have always been satisfied, and I believe deer where they do become -- I accept your term pests and I have no problem with this at all -- but where deer become pests, either through damage to forestry or through damage to conservation projects throughout the bulk of the British Isles and my part of the world in the north of Scotland they are shot and shot humanely and cleanly by competent marksmen, and I do not see a role for dogs in this at all.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: It has been suggested to us one of the roles of dogs is actually to discover the creatures in order that they might be shot. Given that it might be quite difficult to find these animals, do you think there is any substance in that argument?

MR SWANN: This, sir, joins the flushing argument and of

course anybody used to country pursuits will be aware this is normal practice for flushing rabbits or flushing other ground animals which are considered to be pests, or which may need to be controlled. I think there is a difference here that we are dealing with different species and we are dealing with different habitat characteristics and dealing with different principles, and with respect I do not feel that this is something that I can equate to the species in question. I certainly do not think there is a role for this with the species that we are considering in the Inquiry.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Can I follow up: You said you did not think there was any role for use of dogs. Does that include casualty deer, for example?

MR SWANN: Dr Edwards, I would like to pass that to Kevin Hill if I may.

MR HILL: Yes, casualty deer. Casualty deer, the stag hunting fraternity they seem to pin their future hopes on that particular issue. On my experience of talking to stalkers who actually go out and put those deer down with rifles is basically they may need a dog to actually point to where a deer is and then efficiently put down with a rifle, and most casualty deer in the country are put down by rifle.

LORD SOULSBY: I just want to pick you up on your comments about hunting with dogs. Might you not agree that in certain parts of the country -- the Lake District, for example -- that where at least we are told that there can be quite a loss from foxes with lambs landing on the fells that hunting with hounds is about the only method

there is of flushing out foxes and hunting them, and we are told that shooting is really not possible on the craggy areas, and it is quite dangerous, and in Wales we visited a gun pack, and there again hounds were used to flush out the foxes which were then killed by a ring of guns.

MR SWANN: My Lord, I will make one brief response to that and I am going to ask Colin Booty to also comment on this point. I will state that my own farming experiences are in the Derbyshire Peak District, which is amongst the craggiest and highest land in the country. I will make two points. Firstly, I do not accept this argument about lamb mortality. We used to farm about 1,000 ewes on upland areas, and we would not consider under any circumstances that the fox was a significant cause of lamb mortality. This is a view, which is supported by the Sheep Veterinary Society and it is supported by the Ministry of Agriculture. To me it is inarguable the fox is not -- bad farming is a cause of loss and if you have a very poorly fed ewe that is unable to defend its lambs through poor nutrition then farmers may take lambs opportunistically. Similarly, if you have lambs with very low birth weight, again caused by through poor nutrition, then foxes may take those lambs because they are not able to get up and get moving fast enough. So I am totally unconvinced by the argument of the fox as a primary predator in this situation. Times when you do need to control the fox where you have a rogue fox which will hover around the lambing fields and which perhaps you decide to cull irrespective of the type of territory

it is in it is possible to shoot it, and that is a first hand opinion. I will pass you over to Colin.

MR BOOTY: Lord Soulsby, I think there is relatively little I actually want to add to that. I think Bill has covered that but I think in those areas, such as the Lake District, a lot of shooting in fact already takes place for a variety of purposes. So it is difficult to understand why it was certainly being possible to shoot some foxes; foxes are already shot; other animals are already shot. So shooting is already taking place in those areas.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I follow up and, again, we slightly stray here and I need to very shortly bring us back to the other cases, but in the case Lord Soulsby referred to where we went to the Welsh gun packs where we were in an area with a large amount of forestry in which it was argued there were a lot of foxes and there was no way of shooting them other than by flushing them out. I just want to confirm you are saying that even in that situation you see no role for the hounds as part of the process of being able to shoot foxes?

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, may I ask for an another opinion on this from David Coulthred and Mike Huskisson who both have views on the same issue.

MR HUSKISSON: Lord Burns, you will recall that day -- no, I am sorry, it was not yourself there, but on the day where I was with the Inquiry team at the Plas Machynlleth hunt, the hounds were put into the big areas of forest and the guns, about 20 of them, were dotted in specific places and we were told by the people there

that they were put along the rides. They were not put just willy nilly; these guys went up there with their rifles, and they waited in selected spots, because that is where they knew the foxes would come out, and of the 20 that were there, only two actually got a shot that day because there were only two foxes killed, so 18 sat in there in snowdrifts without getting a shot at all. The point I am making, the foxes, if they are accused of causing any harm, it is not actually within the forest. They must come out, and it is not beyond the competence of a competent person to wait there and shoot them out. I would not think you need to have the hounds to push them out, and if people spent -- 20 of them -- spent a day there and 18 not get a shot at all you might be able to get someone in that would perhaps do the job better for you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I feel -- I do not want to stray into this because it is for another area and another time. But in relation to shooting in a sense without the use of hounds, and we have read a lot of evidence about night time shooting and lamping, et cetera, in that sort of situation. The figures in terms of the number of hours that a single person has to wait to shoot a fox is, I recall, rather larger than the case that you are referring to and then if you want to shoot foxes during the daytime in those situations where there are large amounts of forestry it was put to us, and I just wanted to get your response, that that was the most efficient way of dealing with the problem.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, could I make an initial comment about

that, and it is not intended to sound impertinent, but the comment is valid that human effort should not be a measure of methods used to kill animals if there is a method which is more humane and is more expedient, and much as I accept that people will spend a lot of time in some circumstances waiting to pick their moment, if it is absolutely established that that animal must be killed then it must be killed by the most humane method, and if that requires more effort from a humanist welfare point of view, I would not consider that unreasonable.

THE CHAIRMAN: I accept that I was simply responding to Mike Huskisson's point I think you raised the issue of the relationship of human effort to this. But I am slightly worried we are trespassing into territory which we may want to do on another occasion. There are two other subjects which I would like to in a sense complete this issue about terrier work if you have any other comments to make about it, and I would like to go on to the subject about the kill before we have run out of time today. Are there any other comments on terrier work that anyone wants to make?

MR SWANN: I would ask Kevin Hill, who has first-hand experience.

MR HILL: Yes. Lord Burns, over the years that I have monitored with hunt, consistently seen terriers put down holes where they obviously do have public land to fill them from and monitor from. It is quite clear there is an underground battle that does go on. We do have evidence on many occasions of the terrier coming out of the hole with wounds on its face, and if you look at any

terrier, lands terrier, you will see that the face is badly scarred. If I may, I would like to read out an extract which was in a publication a little while ago and this regards the practice of terrier work. And it goes like this:

"Minutes later the bitch stopped baying and we could hear a battle raging underground. Tonic, a terrier, was obviously up to the fox and was now visibly engaging it, aided by the little bitch. The fox had been killed. Tonic had taken a fair bit of punch around the muzzle, confirmed by the swelling the next day, but was still eager for more work."

That was actually in a publication of the Shooting News and I understand that Adrian Simpson contributed in part to that particular article.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, I think Mike Huskisson would also like to make a brief comment on terrier work if that is in order.

MR HUSKISSON: Lord Burns, something comes to mind I would like to raise this concept, terrier work would be sanitised by having certain terriers bay the fox, and I have seen the issue raised hard terriers and soft terriers and all this sort of thing. My experience has been out with these people and watching numerous dig-outs is that most terriers will bay a fox and most terriers will attack a fox. It really depends which way on the fox is. If the fox has gone into a hole that it can turn round in and face the terrier down head to head then the dog is more likely to bay it rather than attack it because it is more vulnerable to being bayed than

itself, but if the poor old fox is squeezed into a hole that it cannot turn round in and it is just its back side sticking out then the terrier will go in and attack it, and it was put to me once that if you put the terrier in and two holes, and it can bay at both ends, the fox is clearly able to turn about in the passage. So I really do not see much in that. It strikes me that the fox is vulnerable according to which sort of hole it has sought as sanctuary.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could we move on to the question of the kill above ground, and we were discussing in the earlier session this morning the question in a sense of the two descriptions one reads of the question of the killing being by breaking the cervical cord against the question of disembowelment. You have made the point in your evidence that there is, you believe that there is a lot of evidence of the second form of killing, and I am just wondering if you could offer us any views about what you see as the proportion of how the above ground hunt comes to an end, the different ways in which that happens.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. I am going to pass this question shortly to the two people who have most field experience but one of the difficulties, and the difficulties perhaps illustrated that recently I went to one of the world's largest databases on scientific publications to push in for evidence of dog bite injuries to find out how much evidence could be gained on what are normal dog practices and what dogs normally do, and out of 1,400 publications, I could not find a single one that gave any detailed descriptions of how

dogs actually kill, because the situation we have in Britain is almost unique in this respect in that we have a system of killing with dogs, which probably has no parallel, not to my knowledge anyway, in the form in which it is carried out here.

The nearest study I could find to this is one which was trawled from America which showed 93 dogs which showed very similar results to this were dog attacks on smaller dogs or puppies or cats, which are very similar results to those that have been put around by people observing fox injuries, that there is no specific pattern to where the bites take place. Indeed, it is suggested that some of the most instantly fatal bites are those to the chest, because a fox is quite a small animal relative to the size of a large fox hound, and where it grabs through the chest there is reason to believe that this would kill it at least as fast or as fast as dislocation of the neck.

I cannot find any evidence of dog biting behaviour which would support either view. So we are down to observations in this country on foxes of which there are pitifully few, because evidently it is difficult to get foxes for post mortem. Those foxes that have been subjected to post mortem have confirmed the view of the American study that there is no direct pattern and that bites will basically appear where the hound reaches first and that may change quite quickly once the prey has been captured and restrained, but then what follows from that might well be a fatal bite. From my point of view what is more important is the time to insensibility

because it is during that period that the animal may be able to experience pain or whatever. We have no data on this and, once again, I am very much inclined to apply as when talking to Lord Soulsby the precautionary principle that we just do not know, and just behavioural observations are not reliable in this respect, because we do not know at what point -- we cannot measure at what point the animal actually becomes insensible. In almost every other form of killing we can, because these measurements are made.

After that, Chairman, may I please pass this question to people in the field who actually see what happens.

MR HUSKISSON: Lord Burns and colleagues, I would say straight off having spent 30 years watching this, I met very few hunting people who have actually seen the kill above land. I think it is a comparatively rare event for the hunt followers to actually see it. I myself have only seen it on one occasion. How it actually happens we tend to have a sort of a somewhat jaundiced view because I have met plenty of coursing club people that show us all that the hares and coursing are killed by some bite to the neck, and I have seen on any many occasions the hare scrabbling around and screaming. Given they come from the same stable of hunting fraternity, one tends to take a slightly jaundiced view the colleagues of the fox hunters also talk about the nip to the back of the neck. The one occasion I did see a fox caught above land it had been bolted above a pipe, tried to cross the river, fell in, and I had the somewhat unpleasant experience of

watching it trying to get out. The hound piled in on top of it there was a thrashing in the water, and I could not see how the fox was killed. It was a bit like trying to see the ball in a water polo match. I could not say. All I could say it was probably killed quickly, but I did not enjoy the experience because it was an unpleasant end. I think as to whether the fox is disembowled or by then on the back of the neck, or whatever, in most cases if there is a packer there in force it is not going to last long. It only becomes a relevant issue if you have a single hound attacking the fox on their own, and I would point to the hunting literature when they talk about the hunting honour, which indicates it was the lead hound up there that caught the fox and was involved in the battle with the fox and the foxes killed instantly are incapable of fighting back of course.

MR SWANN: My Lord, may I also ask David to say a few words as well.

MR COULTHREAD: I would like to obviously talk in terms of the kill. I would like to remind the Committee that the kill invariably takes place after a chase which can have gone on, particularly in the case of deer hunting, for several hours and by which time the animal itself has been subjected to considerable stress, but earlier on the Countryside Alliance made reference to a particular cause celebre, Copper the fox. It was suggested the reason Copper sustained his injuries was because of the in the intervention of people observing that particular incident. The fact of the matter is in the case of

Copper, when the vet came to examine him he was found to have multiple puncture wounds resulting from bites to his rear quarters. So, in other words, when that fox had been caught he had been caught and bitten several times to his rear, and that is the kind of proof we have, and the only kind of proof it is often possible to obtain, simply because by the time the pack has gone in and finished off the fox, and however long it takes place, it subsequent to that is then torn to pieces so on the few occasions where we have managed to find dead foxes where they have not been savaged at that point we have managed to get post mortem reports, and we have provided the Committee with evidence of those, which shows in the vast majority of cases we have managed to actually retain foxes killed, they have not actually died by the quick means suggested by the hunting fraternity.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I turn attention to deer and ask basically the same question I asked earlier to the Alliance, which is -- and I think in the case of deer you will probably concede that the kill is seen more frequently, and you have given us examples of where the hounds have attacked the deer prior to people arriving to despatch it and the deer has not gone to bay in the normal way. My question is how often and what proportion of kills do you think that occurs?

MR SWANN: I would like to pass that to Kevin.

MR HILL: Yes. The subject of hounds attacking deer. Again, I do have to say that we monitor on public land only, so we cannot always see what has actually happened, even if it is one field away, or in some cases 20 yards away.

What I can say is that on two occasions out of the probably the approximate number of 25 occasions when I have actually had a clear kill and not been impeded by hunt followers, on two occasions I certainly have seen the hounds attack the deer. One was the Quantocks and one was Devon and Somerset stag hounds. That is the only evidence I can give, as I said. I would like to qualify that by saying that we cannot and do not see every kill.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I move on to the question which I also raised this morning, which was the question of the sense of the discipline of hounds and the whole question of trespass, the extent to which hunts go into places where people have not given permission or where it is a serious inconvenience. There are also these cases which you have given us about examples where serious problems have arisen. My question, again, is rather, as Professor Winter's question is, one about frequency. In many of the cases you presented us with are cases which occur an awful lot of the years, and the natural question is to what extent a number of -- how high the number of incidents in relation to the number of days hunting? In other words, is this a common problem? Is this a frequent problem? Or is this in a sense an isolated issue and just part of the fact that in any walk of life, in any activity, something sometimes goes wrong?

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. I would like to pass that in the first instance to David Coulthred.

MR COULTHREAD: Thank you. It is very true that the evidence we supplied in the form of I think a rather thick bundle of hunt incidents does go back a number of years. The

reason that we restricted ourselves -- and I have to say we restricted ourselves -- to those particular incidents, because they were the ones that actually appeared in local newspapers and in the national press, and we felt it was in a sense quite crucial that we were able to quantify every claim we made by verification and we felt journalists were probably the best form of verification. The reports we see during the hunting season regularly, many reports in the form of letters and phone calls, and also reports from our own monitors, but it is not possible to verify them in every single case, and frequently we hear from people who actually report to us, they can tell us about an incident but they do not want it reported because of where they live and intimidation they feel themselves if it became known they were reporting on those incidents, so we feel that an illustration we gave you was illustrative of what we regard to be the tip of an iceberg, and I say these things we would stress are those incidents that appeared in the newspapers, and many, many other incidents that must have occurred on a daily basis during the course of hunting.

What I would like to add is that subsequent to this we also supplied you with a list of incidents that we have seen reported from the 1999/2000 series, which has drawn to a close, and the beginning of that season the Countryside Alliance, or the Foxhounds Association, announced the formation of ISAH, this new regulatory body, which is going to ensure that these incidents were controlled. The presence of that authority does not seem

to have prevented this incidents of trespass happening in any way, and it does not surprise us. The simple fact is that if in the main fox hunts are pursuing a fox which is flaying, it must be said in terror of its life, that fox will run wherever it is available. If that means over motor ways, railway lines into people's back gardens that is where it will run. That is where the hounds will follow it. So it is inevitable in the course of a hunting day, with 300 hounds out, trespass incidents of this type must and will occur; it is inevitable.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, could I also ask Douglas Batchelor to comment on this and the specific question was in terms of numbers, thank you.

MR BATCHELOR: Thank you. I think it was raised earlier in questions of numbers, we specifically provided evidence of 76 pet deaths, and this is not simply a case of what you can count on the fingers of one hand. 524 cases of trespass; 91 cases where hounds were killed; 143 cases where roads and railways were involved and a total 1123 press reported cases of things that have happened that would not have happened had those animals been totally under the control of the Master, because one would have to assume that had they been under that control the incident would not have occurred. So we have provided that information. We also provided in our information evidence to suggest that the tendency to loss of control is increasing and that seems to be consistent with what was said about urbanisation of rural areas earlier on this morning, in that the number of cases in the 70s was

71, in the 80s was 329 and in the 90s was 354; so as the number of hunts declined the area available to hunt declines and the number of incidents seems to be significantly increasing. So I think the evidence that we put before you is that clearly there is an inability to control that results in incidents that everybody would regret. The reason that we used the specific incidences of press reporting is that all of those incidences are reported in our information supplied to you and can be checked on, but we do believe from all the evidence and all the contacts we have that they are the tip of a very large iceberg in terms of the havoc and chaos in the countryside caused by hunting with dogs.

PROFESSOR WINTER: I wonder if I could pursue this a bit further, the idea of the tip of the iceberg, and the idea such things are inevitable in a day's hunting. It is difficult to deal with that without a more rigorous scientific analysis, and as a scientist myself I appreciate individuals who provide information do not necessarily wish that to be reported as an individual case. I mean, the way round that obviously is to analyse that and to report statistically, to gather data statistically and to report it statistically, and I would suggest perhaps if you felt able to do that, that might be helpful to us. It might carry perhaps, dare I say, a little more weight than newspaper articles, which themselves are obviously the subject of dispute in many cases.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Professor Winter. I think indeed if we

are able to assist this committee in any way in presenting data in a way that would help you then we will obviously undertake to do that, and perhaps this could be presented at one of the research seminars, if this is going to be something the Committee will find helpful. I think I will reiterate though what David Coulthred has said is that there is a wealth of evidence that incidents do go unreported, but we have tried to confine ourselves to presenting factual evidence. I think it would be quite wrong to come here and say yes, we have considerable evidence of incidents which go unreported which people do not make formal complaints about, which people do not notify through some proper channels, and I think that would be improper to try and present evidence in that way. What we have presented are those instances where we can absolutely categorically state that these incidents did happen.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I ask a question too about interference with the flight of the pursuit of animals? Do you feel in that case that there is a lot of examples of this which go unreported and that this is a common practice, or do you agree with the points that were made earlier today that this in fact is accidental, fairly isolated and accept that it is not being encouraged by the hunt?

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns, I am going to pass that to Kevin Hill and possibly to Mike Huskisson as well.

MR HILL: Lord Burns, the impression that was given this morning that followers just merely turn up on the outskirts of land where they are not allowed I simply cannot agree with. I have seen and continue to see

followers screaming up roads in cars, blowing horns, standing on hedgerows, screaming and shouting if I may say, all designed to stop the quarry -- in this case I am talking about the stag -- from escaping to land where they cannot hunt. I would like to make forcibly that point that there is a lot of interaction by the followers to prevent deer from going where it actually wants to.

MR HUSKISSON: I would agree with Kevin, that there is a lot of effort made by hunting people to keep the quarry in an area where they can hunt it. Obviously in cub hunting and fox hunting if you make the point there that they deliberately head the young cubs back into the wood, but by and large a lot of the hedging of the quarry is inadvertent. It is because supporters are in the wrong place at the wrong time or the quarry is heading towards the main road, and the lorries thunder by and turn it back. It is not good for the huntsman. The huntsman will curse and swear if it happens. If the quarry come off line it is going to produce a check where the hounds may not pick up a new line; so it is not really something they want. What they want more than anything is to make sure they can continue to hunt the species. They will hunt deer and anything away from an area where they know they are not allowed to hunt.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we must finish in a minute or two for lunch. Could I ask a final question about this morning on the issue about unofficial hunting, or even illegal hunting, and one of the points put to us is at the moment hunting takes place within the framework where

there is self regulation and there are a set of rules and things are open and above board. There actually is quite a lot of illegal or unofficial activity of one kind or another that goes on and that if hunting was to be banned what would happen would be that a part of hunting which is regulated and which is above ground would be forced out, whereas the part which is underground and illegal would actually continue, and so we would end up with a situation where the part that was regulated better disappeared; the part that was unregulated, if anything, could even thrive. Do you have a response to that hypothesis?

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, I am going to pass this on to David Coulthred.

MR COULTHREAD: It is actually our experience that the existence of legal hunting actually has been used very often by illegal activities, in many respects as a mask for their own activities. One specific example I would give is in the practice of backing up, digging out badgers. A common defence put forward by people who are found digging up badgers -- and the police know perfectly well they are digging up badgers -- is, "Oh, I thought it was digging up foxes". That is currently an illegal activity, and this is one example, one illustration, of the way in which illegal activities are often masked by the people claiming that they are involved in an activity which is currently legal, and far from driving hunting underground and causing more people to be involved in an illegal activity I would suggest that because hunting itself is so visible those

people who are able to give up as a defence the fact that they are involved in an activity which is currently legal will become less and less and it will be far more easy to secure prosecutions for people taking part in activities which are currently already illegal.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I think we should break now for lunch. What I propose to do for this afternoon's session is to begin with the issues of economic and social issues and see how we get on with that agenda and if there is any time to spare. We may return to one or two of these issues. Otherwise, we will have to deal with it by correspondence if there are any other issues you wish to raise. Thank you very much.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, may I thank you and the Committee for taking the trouble to go into so much detail this morning which we have appreciated, being able to present the evidence to you in that sort of detail.

(Adjourned for Lunch).

SESSION THREE - ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF HUNTING

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE

Representation Panel Chairman

John Jackson Chairman, Countryside Alliance

Panel:

Richard Burge Chief Executive, Countryside Alliance

Bill Andrewes Deputy Chairman, Countryside Alliance

Nigel Burke Head of Policy, Countryside Alliance

Simon Hart Countryside Alliance Campaign for Hunting

Sam Butler Masters of Foxhounds Association

Adrian Simpson Federation of Welsh Packs

Tom Yandle Master of Deerhounds Association

Deborah Blount Association of Lurcher Clubs

THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, and welcome back.

In relation to this morning's sessions, and indeed the other session we had, once we have read the transcripts at the end of this, and reflected on things that have been said, we may want to put some questions to you for written answer. A number of things have come up, and it may be that we want to probe further.

I think, equally, if either side wish to put to us points about evidence from the other side, then we are very happy of course to receive further written evidence in that form.

As I said this morning, if we have some time at the end of the session on economic and social aspects, we may return to them, the issues that we talked about this morning, although I think the reality is that we will probably fill our time this afternoon in dealing with the issues that we are programmed to follow.

I would like to ask, again, Mr Jackson, whether you have an introductory statement that you would like to make to this whole question of the economic issues?

MR JACKSON: Yes, we have, my Lord, and it is Richard Burge who will make it.

MR BURGE: Lord Burns, Members of the Committee.

I want to note at the beginning that I am a non-participant in hunting, although I am an observer of rural life, and I live in a rural community. It is in that context that I make these comments on the economy and social life and cultural issues of hunting.

In terms of the economy. The freedom to

participate in an economic activity, to be employed in the way you wish to be employed, is as much part of your civil liberty as the right to participate in activities as a pastime, or in any other form of way of life.

There have been a number of surveys on the economic effects and contribution that hunting makes to the countryside, using a number of different methodologies. Produce studies were commissioned by us; Cobham was commissioned on behalf by the standing conference on country sports. I understand Mr Rickard has submitted yet another approach in the past few days, of which we need time, as we do all the other submissions, to analyse it and discuss it.

Our contention remains the same at the moment -- because we see no other evidence for changing it -- that 16,000 ordinary human beings' jobs are at risk if hunting with dogs is banned.

In the midst of all of these surveys, we believe strongly that it is the Inquiry team who are best placed to analyse the methodologies employed by these professionals, and to try and bring some conclusion or view to the debate about the economic impact, particularly that of jobs.

However, in saying that, there are three points we would like to make with specific reference to unemployment in rural areas. Firstly, sparsity makes the effect of one job loss much more dramatic than the equivalent job loss in a high density, urban area. Secondly, the vast majority of rural businesses are either sole traders, or small businesses, people

with below ten employees. Take away a chunk of their economic existence in terms of income, and you take those business very rapidly to the threshold below which they cannot survive economically.

Thirdly, substitute employment is a different area in rural communities. Do the skills of the substitute employment opportunities match the skills of the unemployed? Is the location of the job accessible to somebody inside a rural area with poor transport services? And when does that job become available?

Rural unemployment is often visited upon cities because people migrate to them to search for work, in exactly the same way as we discovered the rural homelessness is often visited on cities as well.

However, we believe it is the impact of social and cultural issues upon the life of the countryside, where hunting actually makes a formidable and significant impact.

Hunting is about freedom of association of individuals, and it is about the freedom to participate. A very useful stereotype has been promulgated as a myth; the myth and the stereotype of the rich toff in a red jacket on a horse.

Hunting is not like that. Hunting is socially inclusive of age, of social position, whatever that means, and wealth and richness. There are no directors' boxes on the hunting field. There is no first class compartment. It enables a range of people of various social and economic backgrounds to participate at a price they can afford and in the way they want to.

Secondly, there have been submissions saying that hunting brutalises human beings. In fact, one submission says it causes a loss of moral and behavioural judgment. We would like to see the evidence for this.

Many hunting communities have actually become more reticent, particularly in home counties, about their own activities as a result of intimidation. However, travelling further afield, further away from London, you come across communities where hunting is an open and public part of their lives, where a large proportion of the population engage in it, and an even larger proportion of the population support it, enjoy it and find it a valuable contribution to their lives.

It is a public activity. It is organised as a community. It is based in the community, and it is about participation. I have observed that for many of these people who hunt, if not all of them, it is at the soul of their existence and their lives. It matters to them, and it matters to their friends and their community.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Sir John Marsh is going to lead the questions. If I could just have one myself to start things off.

You say that 16,000 jobs are at risk, and you use the phrase "at risk". I take it from that that you mean that there are the equivalent of 16,000 jobs which are currently engaged in hunting, and that, therefore, is the maximum that you expect to be involved over the longer term, because there will be some degree of substitution if hunting were to be banned. I would just

like to confirm that is what you mean by the phrase "at risk".

MR BURKE: Good afternoon, Lord Burns.

That is, indeed, what we mean by the phrase "at risk". You say that substitute employment will take place after a hunting ban, and it is certainly true that at some level, however small, there would be substitute employment. However, there are instances when recreations, namely target pistol shooting, have been banned, and where we can see clearly that the substitute activity that was alleged/expected to take place did not take place. It did not result in a change of target shooting sports to laser shooting, crossbow shooting, rifle or black (inaudible) pistol shooting. It halved the gun trade, and caused massive business losses and job losses, proportional to the size of business, which are very serious.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you very much.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I really want to pursue three lines of discussion with you this afternoon. The first of these is really to establish a little bit more about the participants in hunting. I then want to go on to talk about the employment parts of this, and then, in rather more detail, some of the specific economic components of it, because we have been touching on that as we have looked at it.

If I can go back to the sort of participant area of it, we have a figure from your evidence that there is an annual attendance at meetings of 1.2, or nearly 1.3 million people per year.

Could you give me some idea how many different individuals this represents?

MR HART: Professor Marsh, the most up-to-date audit is the January 2000 Produce Studies Detail, and that actually lists 28,300 subscribers to packs and 39,000 supporters of club members. That is the paid up registered names and addresses, and does not account for additional people who may occasionally, or perhaps regularly, visit hunts during the course of the season.

The figure to which you refer then takes into account the amount of times that they may visit a hunt during the specific year. It is not absolutely precise, but it is the most up-to-date audit that we have. The figures in it are actually -- clearly, some people will visit more often than others. We, therefore, take that into account

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: And outside described as subscribers and supporters who are involved as well.

MR HART: Yes. If you take any social event that a hunt might hunt, that is outside the actual hunting activity itself, you may find that a number of the members of the local community who may not be paid up members will attend. In the same way as if you take a Boxing Day meeting, you will get a larger part of the community than you would midweek during the season

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: These are people involved in the hunt itself, with these ancillary activities -- I am thinking about puppy walkers. How do you see these as related to that; are they part of this same community, do they overlap?

MR HART: They overlap in some instances. You get some examples of where -- to take your example -- puppy walking is an example of a specific supporter of that hunt. They may not attend the actual hunting event themselves; they support it in that way.

Similarly, with other events, they may have a specific theme, maybe equestrian, which is run by the hunt, which may attract a certain person who is not attracted to perhaps the hunt ball, for whatever reason that might be.

So there is a fluid movement of people who will support one, if not all, of the events of their local hunt

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: In a sense, these comprise different people, different aspects of their lives as we look at it. Some of the same people who are subscribers and supporters will also be puppy walkers. Some of them will attend several hunts. Some of them will attend relatively more.

MR HART: In some cases, the actual Produce Study obviously separates those figures, but clearly you can be a puppy walker and subscriber and supporter. The differential between supporters and subscribers is a clear one, but, out of that community, yes, the others fit into it

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: One of the interesting issues is the interaction in the local community. How about the distribution of the actual supporters?

MR HART: It will vary very, very greatly between in some cases parish to parish, certainly hunt to hunt, and definitely county to county. The interaction, for

example, in the Lake District and in Wales may be very different from in the South-East of England overall.

I hope you will have seen a copy of the Bailey's Hunting Directory map, which not only covers fox/hound country, but covers the stag hounds and beagles. You will see that there is a relatively even spread of hunting activity in the UK as a whole. You will have seen, I hope, from the Produce Study, social descriptions of the individual social events that hunts run, that they vary in their style and intensity. In some of the more isolated parts of Britain, social events are more regular than in perhaps another part where they are competing.

MR JACKSON: I think Bill Andrews can help you on this as well.

MR ANDREWS: Sir John, the other thing I would say, there are of course the subscribers and the supporters you talked about, but, of course, hunting is something you can do by the day as well. Virtually all hunts allow people to come and have the odd day. I refer you to the British Equestrian Trade Association submission, where they have looked at all the people who write. I think it is some 2.4 million, of whom 14 per cent, about 300,000 people, say they have had some association with hunting in the course of the last year.

So, again, that would be people who might have just been to one cub hunting meeting or one hunt. It could be low level. It could equally be on the sort of intense level that Simon Hart has been talking about. So I think you can participate in hunting at a whole lot of

different levels. I think what Simon's figures are, are the core, the keen ones.

MS BLOUNT: The lurcher surveys which are included in the lurcher submission, one of them showed that 50 per cent of lurcher owners also follow hunting with hounds. As the estimated number of lurcher owners stood at 112,000, this shows that another 56,000 people who follow hunting with hounds -- and the figures do not show that these are regular subscribers because only 2 per cent of them read Horse and Hound.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: The picture I am getting -- to make sure I have this right -- is that there are a group of people who are core, to whom a change in hunting would be critical, who make it a regular important part of their lives, and then there is a wider periphery of people who take part on an occasional basis, to whom a change in hunting would be relatively less important.

MR JACKSON: I suspect you have to be a bit cautious in making assumptions about what is important to people, and I think this was the nub of what Richard Burge was getting at.

MR BURGE: I do not believe frequency of participation necessarily mirrors enthusiasm, or commitment, or the appointed place it has in your life.

I, for instance, fish. I adore fishing on rivers, but I do not get the opportunity to fish on rivers that often. It does not mean to say that the decline of fishing on rivers would not have a serious impact on the quality of my life

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I do not think it is necessary to

imply it is critical in terms of the numbers, but simply that we do observe for those people in the core, clearly, that it matters a great deal.

MR JACKSON: That, plainly, is right

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Can I go on to the employment aspects of it now.

We have got a really quite wide variety of very different numbers, ranging from an estimate of, what, 23,000 roughly, and 16,500, 8,000 I have seen somewhere else, and I think 3,300 more recently. These numbers vary very greatly.

Could you just take us through the difference of your approach; why we get such very different numbers from this.

MR BURKE: First of all, Professor John Marsh, I hope you have not been too influenced by submissions from the other side, which compare unlike things with unlike things.

For example, our President has been accused of using the figure 60,000 jobs inconsistently with a figure of 16,000 jobs. When we referred to 60,000 jobs that refers to jobs in country sports generally, which we regard as at a peripheral or secondary threat due to any purported hunting, ban on hunting with hounds.

The reason for that is justified in the following way. For example, some of the leaders among the campaign to ban hunting with dogs are associated with pressure groups who have as their aim the ending of all equestrian sports. Therefore, even a figure of 16,000, if quoted in context, is a figure about employment in

hunting.

However, we have two chief figures in hand. We have 16,000 from produce, which relates to fox hunting. 23,000 from Cobham, relating to all hunting.

I think you would know better than me but, when employment is calculated, this is not a precise art. I think the figures involved are sufficiently robust in their nearness without there being too near. I am sure our opposition would say that, if the figures were closer together, there would have been collusion. So that is the way I see the evidence.

I am particularly concerned about low estimates of jobs attributable to hunting. The League Against Cruel Sports evidence, for example, says that Neil Ward of the University of Newcastle believes that tens of thousands of jobs would be lost, based on poor economic assumptions, and that fewer than 1000 jobs will be lost. That is a misrepresentation of two papers by Dr Neil Ward. Dr Ward does not in fact put a figure on how many jobs will be lost at all. His reference to 1000 jobs relates only to the agreed rough size of the jobs relating to direct employment by hunts themselves. So we are looking at several methodologies. We are looking at assessing jobs. We are looking at measured employment questions from surveys which are used. So there are robust figures based on surveys. That is how everyone does it, and that is how Cobham get their business from major players and major political institutions. That is how it is done.

We note that a recent survey by Sean Rickard was

delivered six weeks late to the Inquiry. It was placed in the public domain by means of publication in The Observer, rather than immediately by transmission to the participants in this Inquiry.

So, with that reservation in mind, I discussed the Rickard Report with Sean Rickard. He agreed with me that he had used an interesting methodology for putting a low figure of about 3,500 for hunting jobs. What he has done is taken the gross expenditure on hunting from Cobham, and perhaps Produce, and calculated the employment generating potential of the money spent at a rate as if it were all input to the businesses, i.e. 50/60,000 pounds, to generate one figure.

That is not how the economy works. A lot of the total expenditure from hunt participants and supporters is not just in relation to business wages. Wages can generate about 10 or 12,000 pounds. So what we are looking at with the Rickard Report is a major accounting error, which I am sure more able people on the Inquiry will be looking at

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: We shall, of course, be looking at these research methods later on.

PROFESSOR WINTER: I wanted to pursue, basically going beyond how many people hunting employs -- I think the issue of 16,000 or 20,000 is not in some ways a huge figure. If we take it beyond 16,000, if we take out of that figure 1,000 directly employed by hunts -- and, therefore, there must be a question mark over their futures; I think we can accept that as a working hypothesis -- that leaves 15,000 people.

Those 15,000 people are largely self-employed people in the various business sectors surrounding hunting. What I want to put to you is they are self-employed; they are capable; dare I say it, they are even entrepreneurial. They are in a vibrant, rural economy, with the single exception of agriculture. Most of the data that has been presented in recent years shows the vibrancy of rural economy's, agriculture is a notable exception.

What I am saying is what would your judgment be on the extent to which adjustments will occur in that economy which will not result in those people being out of work? And over what sort of time period do you think those adjustments would take place?

MR JACKSON: I am going to ask Bill Andrews to speak first on this.

MR ANDREWS: For a start, although it is true, apart from agriculture, a lot of the rural economy is in a good state. I do not think there is any evidence that shortage of labour is holding back economic development; that is to say, they would have to find other things to do. Many of the people who are in the various trades that would be affected have very specific skills, like farriers, and who would I think not easily be redeployed. I think the essence of this question goes back to what the people who provide this income will do with their money. That is really the nub of it.

The problem with all market research about hypothetical questions, as we all know, is that it can be pretty unreliable. People do not always do later what

they say they will do in the survey. Undoubtedly, some people will move to drag hunting, and to some measure people will turn to other equestrian activities.

But I think they are just as likely to decide to spend their money on, for instance, taking up skiing. That is a winter sport. It has a lot in common with hunting: It is quite dangerous; it is outdoor, and that sort of thing. I think it is just as good a hypothesis to say they will do that.

A lot of people who spend money on hunting do not take significant foreign holidays because they cannot afford to do it. That would be another substitute which would take the money out of the economy altogether.

So I really do think it is absolutely the key question. I think it is very difficult to give an accurate answer, but I think a very significant proportion of the money which currently goes into the rural economy would actually go out of it.

What the individuals whose businesses would then be deprived of that income might do, who can tell? The better ones will find other jobs over time, but the initial impact will be a very severe disruption to those businesses and to those jobs. That is the one thing we can tell; that redeployment will take time.

MR BURGE: Professor Winter, if I may.

First of all, I think the picture for the rural economy is fairly mixed, you are right. In some areas, it is extremely vibrant. In other areas, because of the dominance of agriculture, it is on the decline. There are other things which are on the decline as well.

So, for instance, if you take hill owners, where alternative income might come, for instance, through game fishing, that is on a serious decline because of the strength of the pound making it cheaper to go fishing elsewhere than in the UK, and also the fact that the number of fish in British waters is declining markedly as well.

So it is a very mixed picture. It is very difficult to make a national assumption which has any meaning at the local level. Of course, it is the local level of people who are going to lose their jobs, not at the national level

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I am just pursuing the same line of thought for the moment. The impact of this particular flow of expenditure within the rural economy has a number of characteristics which I would like you to say a little more about to me.

First of all, it appears, as far as tourism is concerned, to be broadly accountable to the tourist business because it is a purely winter activity, as I understand.

Secondly, it seems to be made up, if you like, of relatively small contributions to a vast range of businesses within the rural economy, where it is a component of them. What I am interested in, in a sense, is the viability of those businesses as a whole in the event of a change in the fortunes affecting this particular part of their activities.

MR JACKSON: I will pass that to Bill Andrews again.

MR ANDREWS: Yes, absolutely, Professor Marsh.

I think probably farriers are a good example, typical of a lot of things, saddlers and tack shops and things. One can well see, within reasonable reach of a person there might be two or three farriers. They will lose a very significant proportion of their winter business and some of their summer business as a result, I think, if people no longer keep horses for hunting. What I can see happening is that, as a result of this, say, all three would lose a third of their turnover. The weakest would go out of business. Some of the rest of it, and that turnover would in essence accrue, or -- sorry, the two-thirds of that farrier's turnover not associated with hunting would accrue to the other two, who would end up with viable businesses, which is why we think the approach of actually trying to base the job losses on the turnover impact of this movement is probably relevant that is to say the whole of one business would go, but, yes, the other two would survive.

We have not taken all three as disappearing, but we have tried to present the jobs, do the calculations, in a way which shows what the net impact would be on employment. That will be for a horse box maker; it might be the same sort of thing true of a saddler, tack shop, or feed merchants. I think that those are good, reasonable examples I think.

MR JACKSON: I will ask Tom Yandle to add something about Exmoor.

MR YANDLE: Thank you.

You have been to Exmoor, Lord Burns. It is very much

dependent upon hunting because of the longer season that we have heard about so far. Hunting starts on Exmoor on 1st August, and goes on until the end of April. The hotels, particularly, are very dependent on the extra trade that you would get in the autumn and in the spring.

Sure, Exmoor will get plenty of visitors in the summer -- it is a marvellous place to be -- but the general view, particularly of the hotels, is that it would decimate their numbers in September, October, March and April.

The passion of Exmoor is for hunting -- and I am talking about fox hunting, beavering and stag hunting -- there are an awful lot of people involved who come there to visit, retire there, and in some part partake, but not necessarily very much, who would gradually withdraw the money.

As Bill Andrews said, it is the money that comes into the area that is important.

MR JACKSON: Richard Burge would just like to say something about trade in this context.

MR BURGE: One of the things that does fall prey to the decline in job opportunities, less money coming into a business, is training opportunities, and particularly those opportunities to train people who go and establish their own work.

I give two examples of this. First of all, farrier work. The farrier who looks after the Beaufort Hunt is also the farrier who looks after the British 3-day Olympic Team. He currently has three trainee farriers

with him. He produces a fully-fledged farrier once a year. They move out to new farrier businesses. Without hunting, he would not have to have three trainee farriers because he would not have the throughput to warrant giving them the training opportunity.

If you take saddlery -- Walsall in the Midlands, for curious reasons, is where saddle work is based -- a large number of saddlers who go through one particular firm there, which is a very high value saddler, they produce very expensive saddles, most of the youngsters who go through that end up going to run rural saddleries, they are repairing rural saddles and things like that.

Without the throughput of the business, they would retreat to the training field of people, giving people fewer opportunities.

MR JACKSON: We do not want to overwhelm you. Whether you or Sam Butler would like to say something.

MR BUTLER: Sir John, may I commend you to look at the National Trade Survey of the Alliance, which we referred to on page 21 of our submission. That was a survey that was conducted of 1000 businesses. 96 per cent of all those businesses claim that a hunting ban would have some effect on their business, and there are statistics on that

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Thank you very much.

Can I just follow up with one further question, because it has been suggested to us that a lot of this expenditure relates to horses, in one form or another, and that the horse population, apart from hunting

altogether, is itself growing.

So to what extent would the sort of losses which you were describing to me, in a sense, be alleviated because of this underlying process of growth?

MR POLAND: A lot of the activities that have been referred to are already well-supported by hunting people. I think that a hunting person who has two horses is probably going to be reduced to one. He will certainly engage less in these rural activities and social activities, and certainly spend less on horse boxes and clothes, et cetera.

I do not think any of the other equine-linked events will actually compensate for that.

LORD SOULSBY: Thank you very much.

Can I go back to the question of tourism and the local areas. You have discussed the local aspects of how the local economy is important, but I wonder if you have any figures on the role that hunting plays in national tourism and international tourism.

The reason why I ask that is that in a fell pack, which we visited a short while ago, there, the winter hunting was replaced in the summer by tourism, but it was quite remarkable to know how many people from different parts of the country, even from Somerset, were coming into the Lake District for winter hunting, stayed one week or two weeks in bed and breakfast. But there were also people there from Sweden, and one from Finland.

It occurred to me that this may be a more important role of hunting, to provide some focus for

tourism in this country, than we realised. I wonder if you have any information on that on a national basis.

MR JACKSON: I do not think we have any reliable information which we could go to at this stage, but Nigel Burke will be able to say something.

MR BURKE: All I would like to say is that we know that in rural areas substantial number of jobs are provided by tourism. It attracts 11.5 billion pounds into the economy. It has been suggested that hunting is somehow a cap, or an obstacle to that, but there is no evidence of that whatsoever.

On the contrary, we can see that, wherever there are hunting jobs, tourism has enabled, made more possible, a provider of employment because of the seasonality.

Tourism, as indeed employment of any equestrian sport, happens in the summer. People like to ride in the summer. What does someone who needs a year long income do? They need some winter occupation to maintain a portfolio of jobs and streams of income in order to put together a livelihood.

So, although we do not have qualified figures for the direct contribution of hunting bringing in tourists and the money they spend, we can say in principle that hunting is capable of supporting some tourist jobs.

PROFESSOR WINTER: I wanted to go back -- at the risk of being boring -- to this issue of job losses which we have been talking about, and particularly the assumption I think that a significant number of horses would disappear off the scene, and yet we are told earlier

that most people hunt not because of a particular hunt in the pursuit of the quarry but because of their enjoyment of horseriding.

Therefore, my question is: Would not such enthusiastic horse people continue to keep very significant numbers of horses and, if I can use the phrase, go hell for leather to find other ways of enjoying their passion?

MR JACKSON: I will ask Bill Andrews, then Sam Butler.

MR ANDREWS: I think that the enjoyment of hunting lies in riding a horse in order to watch the hounds. Whereas it is not the pursuit of the quarry, in longing to see the fox killed, but it is pursuit of the quarry watching the hounds work out the line of the fox, and following it that way. So, I think, for a lot of hunting people, they would not have the same enthusiasm for riding if hunting was taken away.

The other statistic that you will have observed in the Cobham Report is that the percentage of horses which are kept mainly for hunting, and which we have included, are those kept only for hunting.

I think what is worth remembering is that, if people keep a horse mainly for hunting, they will undoubtedly do other things with it, like hunt trialling, or maybe some team chasing, or something like that, but they will do that because it is there, because they are keeping it.

If you take away the main reason, then whether or not it would be there at all for those ancillary activities I think becomes a hypothetical question. It

is a difficult one to answer. I think probably, if you asked people, they could not give you a genuine answer if they did their best, because they will not be able to know what they will do until they are actually faced with the issue.

My judgment will be a very substantial proportion will decide to go and do something else.

MR BUTLER: Sir John, I do not have a great deal to add to that. I do not think, hypothetically, it is extraordinarily difficult. Knowing those who ride or hunt, ride to hunt, I think that, personally, from personal experience, many of those people would not keep horses in the same way.

I think I would refer you to some of the submissions from the horse welfare groups, which are very concerned about the effect on horses if it were, indeed, to be banned.

Also, please consider -- although it is not directly on horses -- the number of people who gain enjoyment from hunting on their feet, in the cars and on bicycles.

MR JACKSON: Maybe one more contribution on this, Richard Burge has something.

MR BURGE: Two things I briefly want to say. I think the point about international participation is important, and we will look into that.

For instance, there was a terrier show in Devon not so long ago. I understand it had visitors from Ireland, the Channel Islands, France, the USA, Canada and Australia there. One of the things I am concerned

about, in terms of social exclusion on this is if hunting with horses is banned in the UK rich people who hunt will simply go and hunt in Ireland and France. That is a cause of social exclusion, and it will also mean that that money, certainly at the expense of horses in the UK will be spent on horses in those countries.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Sorry to jump around. I wonder if I might return to indirect expenditure, and, in particular, the hospitality industry outside of hunting, and the extent to which that is changing over time. Tourism is a very dynamic industry. I wonder if you have any data on the changing nature of tourism, in particular the propensity towards more winter breaks and short-term breaks, and, therefore, hunting's proportional relevance to supplying income in the winter.

MR BURKE: I see from your CV that you have a particular interest in tourism. I wish that I could have provided you with more entertainment and data on this.

In fact, no, we/I have not studied winter breaks in tourism, but I would like to put in one really general point on substitute employment, and it is this: That it is not good news for people to lose their jobs with the explanation given to them that you can diversify, you might find another job.

If that were true, then the jobs threat at Longbridge, which is about 8,500, would simply not be bad news, it would not be in the papers, because they might get other jobs.

There are Government schemes and regeneration budgets available to help them, but I think it is bad news. I do not want people to lose their jobs and have to find something else to do. So although, I am afraid, that is an extremely oblique answer to your question, Dr Edwards, I think it is very well worth saying.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I press you further on this issue about what would happen to the horse economy if there was to be a ban. It has been suggested in some of the evidence that if there was to be a ban and a declining use of horses, then the market value of horses would suffer, and, as a result, it would have consequences for the use of horses and the use to which they are put.

How serious an issue is this? How sensitive is the plight of horses, the value of horses, to the sort of changes that would be involved in a hunting ban?

MR JACKSON: We will have a shot at that, and I will ask Sam Butler to start.

MR BUTLER: Again, from personal experience -- and I do not believe that we have any in the statistics. Although of course, as you rightly offered, Lord Burns, there are statistics and information you can be provided with afterwards. We would be delighted to look those out and try and work out the answer to your question.

On the question of the value of horses, people go hunting to enjoy themselves, to partake in an activity, and those horses, therefore, have a value -- of that I think there is no doubt.

People will pay money for good horses. If they are not going hunting, then the demand must fall. In answer

to your question, Lord Burns, if the demand falls, then I believe the price of horses will fall, and that will in itself have an effect on the trade.

One issue perhaps, just to go back to that, which I think is relevant, one livery yard that I have spoken to gives 22 horses specifically for hunting. They believe that those horses will no longer be kept in their livery yard for hunting, and, therefore, will not exist in that part of the country.

MR JACKSON: I will ask Michael Poland to add something.

MR POLAND: We are talking about horses of a particular quality. Mr Butler has just said the market value is determined by supply and demand. I normally breed horses for another horse activity. There is no doubt about it; that when there is a glut of horses, the prices will drop. There will be an immense number of horses sold because, as we have just been given an example of the livery yard, those people who have horses, who have more than one horse, will cut down, and people will not be buying horses.

So all that will be going on the pressure and the supply to the market. I think there already has been a certain amount of pressure in that direction. I can see that you get very little profit from selling a horse, breeding a horse and selling it now, if any.

I think it will have extremely serious consequences for those people who do breed horses, and those dealers who rely on selling second-hand horses, because there will be a removal of a large number of purchasers from the market

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Somewhere in the evidence it is said this might have an adverse effect on the welfare of horses. Have you anything to say on that?

MR POLAND: If you are going to sell a horse, you cannot always be responsible for where it is going to. A lot of people will take the opportunity probably to buy cheaper horses. In the first place, they cannot, in some instances, afford to keep them to the level they should. We keep our hunt horses. We have to keep them to a very high degree of welfare or they will not do the job for us. If you go around the country, as I am sure you do -- you look at horses -- there is a tremendous variance in the welfare of those horses according to their use.

LORD SOULSBY: One aspect of horse value and excess horses that has not yet been mentioned is that of the export horses for meat purposes. As you may know, there are several thousand horses exported, either on the hook from this country to the continent of Europe for meat. It would seem to me that if there were to be a glut of horses, as a result of cessation of hunting, and the lowering of their value, that this trade might well increase. I wonder if you have given any thought to the percentage of increase that might take place in the export of horses, either directly from the United Kingdom on the hook, as carcasses, or via other countries, where we know they go for the same purposes. Now, do you have any feeling as to the proportion of increase -- which would be temporary of course -- of this market?

MR POLAND: All I know, Mr Chairman, is that the people who sell, the hunters do not like them to go to the meat trade. They will do everything they can to prevent them going to the meat trade.

If you sell your horse at market, and it goes into that particular chain, yes, they might go to the meat trade, but I do not think it is anything that anybody in this room would like to see.

LORD SOULSBY: If I might come back on that, there are two horse slaughterhouses that I know of. There is no doubt that when you visit them you see horses that were hunters at one time in the slaughter line.

MR POLAND: That is true, but I can only speak for the majority of people I know, and that is over many, many years hunting. They will not like their horses to go into that market. If I sell a horse for slaughter, I will make sure that the knacker who takes it for me can no longer put them down himself, because their own trade is in crisis, but he will make sure that that horse is properly slaughtered, and there will be no horses, certainly from the majority of hunting people, going to the continent for the meat trade.

MR ANDREWS: I was any going to say the British Trade Association have covered this in their submission in some detail, I think, about the number of horses which they feel would come off the market as a result of a ban on hunting.

They, certainly in their submission, believe it will have a very major effect. Even a 10 per cent increase in the number of horses coming off the market,

coupled with a 10 per cent decrease in the number of buyers, will have an enormous effect on the price. As you rightly say, the bottom support price is kept up by the slaughter for meat.

I think the economics being what it is, while I entirely agree with what Michael Poland has said as what people would want, the reality is probably quite a lot will not

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Can I go on to another issue because time is running on with us.

Quite a considerable amount of evidence which we see concerns the value to the agriculture sector of a fall in stock service, and I think, in a sense, also the value to the community of picking up casualty animals on a certain basis. This depends upon the facility which the hunts have to cope with these animals basically.

Elsewhere, in other evidence, it has been suggested to us that this may become more difficult because of changing regulations at a community level. I would really like you to say a little more about how you see that changing as a result of legislation, and how you think it might change if hunting were to be banned.

MR JACKSON: I will ask Simon Hart to start on the answer to that.

MR HART: The most recent statistics referring to the Produce January 2000 Survey reveals something in the region of 366,000 animal carcasses annually collected by hunts. That is a subsidised service. It is free in some areas. It is not free in others.

In view of the proximity in some cases of local

businesses which are able to take fallen stock in, I think the majority of Britain, the closest, cleanest and most humane source of disposal of fallen farm stock, and the humane destruction of them, is via the local hunt. It is, and still is, a mass recommendation. It is a freedom food recommendation. One of the outlets for these problem animals is by local hunts.

MR JACKSON: Nigel Burke can help on this as well.

MR BURKE: To address particularly the waste incinerations directive, my department is actually dealing directly with people in the European Parliament and the ETR on this. The situation is that the Waste Incineration Directive was not a direct threat to small incinerators in agriculture until two weeks ago. There was a range of exceptions available for farm businesses, which included animal carcasses.

However, two weeks ago this list was dropped for some justifiable reason. However, the situation now is that as the Directive goes towards report stage in the European Parliament. We are looking at it going through in such a way that small incinerators capable of clearing animal carcasses will be unviable; there will be an implementation cost of 200 to 300,000 pounds, plus 12,000 pounds per annum.

The Countryside Alliance will do everything it can to persuade people to amend this Directive. There is already a ground swell of organisations attempting to do this, and that is not, by any means, all because they are concerned with the incinerators operated by hunt kennels; it is because there are 3,000 such small

incinerators. Many, many rural businesses will simply become unviable as a result of this Directive unless something is done.

As part of its portfolio, the countryside is working as hard as it can to stop it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I ask a question. What share of the market does this represent? Because we keep seeing the reports. There are some very large numbers that are involved in terms of the hunt activities that come before the stock.

We have also received other evidence that says there are lots of other outlets for this, and lots of other large numbers that are collected by other means. I cannot remember -- and maybe I just missed it -- but, roughly speaking, what share of this activity do you think is represented by hunts?

MR JACKSON: Simon Hart can help you, Lord Burns.

MR HART: Can I, Lord Burns, just refer on page 49 of our evidence, which refers to Geoff Rooker's response to a Parliamentary question in which he states:

"A small survey undertaken by the State Veterinary Service earlier this year [that is 1998] indicates that 55 per cent of calves, 35 per cent of adult bovines 25 per cent of sheep and goats and 10 per cent of pigs and lambs which have fallen may be disposed of through hunt kennels."

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I noticed that the cost to the hunts of providing fallen stock service is given as something over 3 million pounds per annum, or something like 9.20 per animal. That is the cost of it.

What revenues, if any, do the hunts receive from the fallen animals? What benefits, other than revenues, can they generate from them?

MR HART: The only usable revenue now is the hide price, which is pretty well at an all time low, and, generally, in fact, hunts take a proportion of that for the running costs of the incinerators, and the knacker facilities, which have perhaps been upgraded considerably and continue to be upgraded.

The balance referred to hunt funds, and is passed on to the staff who work for that particular hunt. There used to be a time when a lot of the waste could be sold, obviously those days have in fact gone

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: The fallen stock provided a certain amount of food for the hounds.

MR HART: Yes, that is a very good point. It is the principal source -- it is not the only source -- of food. I think the hunt's attitude to the fallen stock service is one actually of a goodwill arrangement, and it is not necessarily a commercial one.

The hunt I used to be personally responsible for normally charged at the minimum rate we felt we could get away with to keep the system going, i.e. The arrangement was that the gratitude that we expressed to farmers they showed us was reciprocated in this service we ran for them, ran alongside the pest control service that the hunt actually performed itself.

MR SIMPSON: Mr Chairman, can I add further to that regarding the situation in Wales. I would refer you to the Federation of Welsh Packs' submission, and a letter

which, with your permission, I shall quote from.

The letter was addressed to Miss Christine Wither, who, as you know, is the Agriculture Secretary from Mr Hugh Richards, President of the NFU Wales. It was sent on 6th January 2000, and reads:

"Dear Miss Wither, disposal of calves. I am writing to seek the assistance of the National Assembly for Wales to deal with a particular problem that has arisen in the disposal of calves.

"You may remember that, when the Calf Processing Aid Scheme came to an end, part of the advice from Government was that farmers should look to hunt kennels as a means of disposal. This has resulted in the position where licensed hunt kennels are under huge financial pressure because of the huge pressure in the throughput on calves.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the service currently being provided by hunt kennels is crucial in avoiding animal welfare problems that could arise if farmers were forced to dispose of their calves by other means.

"My purpose in writing is to ask the National Assembly for Wales to consider some form of limited financial compensation to assist these hunt kennels in meeting their costs, until such time as another outlet for these calves may be established.

"Clearly, the advice given by Government to farmers to use hunt kennels as a means of disposal has resulted in the current problem, and it would only seem fair that the Assembly should consider some form of aid

to help the hunt kennels deal with the problem which has developed as a result of EU Government policy.

"In view of the responsibilities, I am copying this letter to (inaudible) Jones and Hugh Brodie, both Assembly members."

He has subsequently written another letter on 3rd February. It is basically on -- I quote one paragraph from it:

"It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the pressure of unlicensed kennels is reaching breaking point. Many, many farmers continue to heed the Government's advice and use hunt kennels as a means of disposal of their calves. I am deeply concerned that unless some limited financial compensation can be found to assist these kennels, then we will be facing animal welfare problems as farmers are forced to seek alternative outlets."

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Thank you very much.

Time we turned over and asked some questions relating to the social aspects, not of course that the economic and social aspects are readily distinguishable in certain aspects.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Some very bold claims are made in your evidence about the social importance of hunting. For example, you say that the rural community in hunts are often the same entity, social activities around which many people's lives are entirely structured are hunting activities.

I am just really wanting to push you gently on that, and see how much you want to stand by that claim.

It seems to me a very strong claim.

MR JACKSON: I think we can best help you by taking you on a tour of the country. If we can start in the West Country first.

MR YANDLE: Exmoor is fairly limited in its social life; apart from anything because, as you saw the day before yesterday, it is quite high and quite difficult to get around. The farming families are all small farms, or relatively small farms, and they will all agree that the major part of their social life is involved with hunt functions.

It would not necessarily be the farmers that are hunting who go to the hunt functions, but it is a very cohesive part of Exmoor, and a very important part to the farmers, farm workers, people who do other work in agriculture and everybody involved with normal life on Exmoor. It is really very, very important.

MR JACKSON: We can go to the Midlands and ask Sam Butler to talk about it.

MR BUTLER: Your question was: Would we stand by the evidence we put forward in our report? The answer is: With experience, yes, we would. Again, we cannot -- it is provable by statistics, but seeing the effect that hunting with dogs has on the community within the Midlands, I am astonished how many hunt activities and social activities are attended by a huge cross-section, and are very often the only activities that many in rural communities now, particularly farmers, can attend. One letter I received read along the lines that he and his family enjoyed coming to the puppy show and to

the evening we put on, because that really was one of the only occasions he was able to get out with his family and have some relaxation and social interaction with others.

MR JACKSON: I will take you on Wales.

MR SIMPSON: I think, Mr Chairman, that you experienced yourself only two visits to Wales. The involvement of the farming community -- it is a little bit different with the shooting clubs -- in the main they are low costing affairs, but the role of the local community is very, very important within those low costing affairs. In some instances, the hounds, or the followers have this feeling that they belong to the hunt and the hunt belongs to the community. You have the system in being where hounds are actually kennelled throughout the winter in the hunt kennels and, during the summer months, they go out to the local farms.

I think it is quite interesting. At the risk of being boring, if I refer you to the Federation's submission, and take a typical hunt such as the hunt in midWales, it is very, very typical, and I shall quote from the submission. This is very typical of a shooting pack in midWales.

"The hunt was established in 1904, and is located in the village of Rierden in midWales, and they hunt in the surrounding area. The kennels are on a leasehold basis, and the hunt has one part-time employee. They have 350 subscribers and 50 puppy walkers and hound walkers.

"The huntsman is only employed during the winter

months, and he finds regular work during the summer on the local farms in the area. The current huntsman has hunted hounds for three seasons, and he continues the family tradition. His father previously hunted with them for 12 seasons prior to him taking up the post.

"We only hunt three days a week throughout the season. They account for 259 foxes, and 117 of those were dug with terriers. The total expenditure for the hunt was 12,410."

It is a very, very low-costing affair.

But if I could just refer you to another North Wales hunt, which is mounted, and it just goes to show the diversity of hunting in Wales. The Winstay, for instance, they spend 29,000 on their flesh collection. The (inaudible) run their whole hunt on a budget of 12,500

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I wonder if we can follow that up. Are the social activities undertaken in order to fund the hunt, or do the hunt undertake activities because they know one another and influence society?

MR SIMPSON: I am sorry?

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Are the social activities undertaken in order to fund the hunt, or are the social activities undertaken by the hunting people because they enjoy those activities amongst themselves?

MR SIMPSON: I think, in Wales, it is true to say the social activities, whether organised by the hunt or by other organisations within the community, such as the WI or any other organisations, are attended by the same people.

The hunt themselves do organise numerous social affairs as fund-raising affairs and as social occasions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I ask if there is any idea of, in a sense, what is the highest sort of penetration that you might find. If you take a community of 1000 or 2000, when we say you talk about social exclusion, as some of the evidence does about hunting, are we talking about 10 per cent of people being involved; are we talking about 25 per cent; or are we talking about 5 per cent?

Even if I go -- as we did last weekend -- to Dulverton, where there is a village or a town, however it is described, how many people is one actually seriously talking about who have some kind of involvement in hunting?

Do you have any feel for the percentage? Because I can see that it is importance to those people who are engaged in it, but I think it is more critical for us to judge what proportion of the population that is.

MR JACKSON: The answer is bound to depend on the area of the country, so I will let Tom Yandle report back first.

MR YANDLE: In Dulverton itself, there is a population of about 5,000 people. I am sure half of them would never have been hunting. I bet you the other half have been some time. I am pretty sure that they would support it, because it is the heart of the Moor. Everybody would be part of it, and the social life and everything, because that is probably the only social life they have found.

If you get down to Minehead and Lynton, it would interest very few. But I think if I knew the population of inner Exmoor, I would guess that a huge percentage

proportion of them have an interest, even if they do not go themselves. I think you would have seen that from the number of people out hunting last Saturday.

MR JACKSON: We have some hard figures, Lord Burns, which we will give you in a minute, but we will ask Michael Poland to say something.

MR POLAND: If I can speak parochially about the Isle of Wight, a population of about 120,000. The events we organise are some of the largest attended events on the island. We have the Isle of Wight Grand National, probably where probably 2 or 3,000 people are at. We also have the raft race, where again the figures is in the thousands.

So you are probably talking of 4 or 5,000 people on the Isle of Wight who are touched by the hunt's activities; so that is a measurable percentage of the island's population.

MR JACKSON: Nigel Burke can give you some figures and Simon Hart, which might help you.

MR BURKE: I am at the disadvantage of quoting from memory the Produce Studies Survey of Rural Attitudes in 1997. I think around 9 per cent of people participated in hunting in areas where the population density was 100 people per square kilometre or less; that is to say remote or fairly rural areas. In semi-rural or quite rural areas, 150 people per square kilometre or less who participate in hunting was down to I think 5 or 6 per cent.

I think the survey also asked people about their participation in other sports. They found that hunting

ranked above participation in football, rugby and cricket.

So what we are looking at is a percentage of the population. I am actually from Manchester, so if I can complete this tour with a view from Manchester. I would say that as many as 10 per cent of the people in Manchester go to watch City or United, but everyone has a view. The culture pervades beyond the participation. So, what we are looking at is something which in their minds -- you can do the percentage sums if you want to but -- is nevertheless substantial.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was not seeking to minimise it; I was seeking to get a feel of it.

MR BURKE: Sorry, Lord Burns, I have a glint in my eye.

MR JACKSON: Are you getting a feel of it? Would you like to hear from Simon Hart?

MR HART: Just a brief one, referring back to the Produce Survey 2000 of the supporters club of those respondents, 124 supporters clubs organised 1,678 social or fund-raising functions a year, at an average of 14 per club, 260 charities, 50 different ones supported by 123 out of 124 of these clubs.

I would just add one additional comment to that, which is again a reference to a Study carried out for the National Trust in 1993, which states:

"Almost two-thirds 63 per cent of the Devon and Somerset stag hounds subscribe, and three quarters, 75 per cent, of the Quantock stag hunt stated that the hunt was very or extremely important to their social activities."

There are other quotes contained which make the same point.

THE CHAIRMAN: That, if I may say, is back to the question of absolute levels rather than share, which is what I was trying to get some feel for.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Really from the quantitative proportions of people involved, I wanted to get a feel for something which is probably much more difficult to get a grasp on, and that is the qualitative importance of the social cohesion.

You mentioned on a number of occasions -- and it is put forward a lot -- that the hunt, as an activity, provides an important social cohesion. What I wanted to look on to is the other benefits of the collective action that the hunt brings, other than hunting.

So what are the knock on benefits of that, and how important is that in these communities?

MR JACKSON: I am going to take you on a similar tour, as it were. Tom.

MR YANDLE: On Exmoor, it is because of the mutual interest in the hunt. I am talking not necessarily people that go but people who have that interest. The social cohesion, I suppose, is that everybody knows everybody else.

I have made the point in my submission that it is very surprising -- perhaps it is not surprising -- that anybody who is anybody on Exmoor is welcome at everybody else's house. If you do not have class or wealth, nobody is a bit interested.

But the fact that they talk about the hunting, they do not even have to go, or know about the hunting,

or, dare I say it, feel slightly embattled because of the opponents to hunting. It is very socially cohesive.

MR ANDREWS: The one point I would like to add, Dr Edwards, is that, as you will have seen, it is more important and involves a bigger proportion of the population the more isolated the area that you are in.

There is the very obvious point that there are many fewer alternatives. Therefore, in terms of trying to gauge the importance, whereas in the South-East of England there would be lots of other things people could do relatively easily, in these communities it would be very much harder to replace this activity and these events simply because of their isolation. So I think that adds something to the colour of it.

MR JACKSON: Perhaps I could remark that one of the things we were hoping the Committee would get a feel of -- because we are talking very much about a question of feel -- would be how people felt about all this, and what it meant to them in terms of their lives, as members of communities, as you went round the country visiting various hunting occasions.

There is not the slightest doubt amongst the Alliance's membership that there are enormously strong feelings on this point. Tom Yandle put it pretty delicately, but what has started to happen very clearly is that, as people in the countryside have felt themselves coming under pressure on these aspects, there has been a strong tendency for them to become more cohesive. We believe it is one of the reasons that the membership of the Countryside Alliance is actually

growing quite strongly.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we only have time for one more question.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Can I just follow this up because it is quite clear that, amongst the members of the Countryside Alliance and the hunting community, there is an element of cohesion.

It has also been suggested to us that there is also an element of divisiveness compared to those people who feel opposed to hunting, unhappy with hunting, who feel excluded from the community as part of this.

Would you like to comment on that suggestion, because it is quite regularly made in these sort of conversations we have received with other people.

MR JACKSON: We do not believe it is true, but, Nigel, would you like to say something?

MR BURKE: Just a little. I think some of the alleged divisiveness has been exaggerated and some of it has been manufactured. It is real divisiveness but manufactured by our opposition.

For example, I have seen advertisements which literally demonise hunting people, people who wear jackets with demonic eyes -- the same as poor old Tony Blair with the demon eyes advert. When we are faced with that, I think that is some of the divisiveness we feel. But when we are told of the real opposition to hunting, and, therefore, try to extrapolate from that how much, let us take real figures not polls.

Let us take, for example, the submission of the Exeter branch of the League of Cruel Sports, a body of

56 souls. I wanted to check before I came the population of Exeter and the statistics; I was unable to do so.

It seems to me that the local organisations dedicated to the extinction of hunting, we are not seeing that many people and from that I would suggest that opposition is not very great.

MR JACKSON: Richard Burge would like to add something to this.

MR BURGE: If I may, very briefly. First of all, we must not confuse disagreement in rural communities with divisiveness. Rural communities, like any communities, are prone to disagreement between their participants. What matters is that people continue to live and work together.

I have to say, as a non-hunting person, I have never, never been a witness to divisiveness from hunting, only disagreement.

Secondly, compared to what? A lot of passions which groups of people hold can often create a sense of isolation or frustration amongst other communities who do not hold that. I do not believe that the passions that I have seen shared by hunters have provoked anywhere near the divisiveness, for instance, which passions for certain urban activities can promote in urban areas.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. It has been a very helpful session. I am very grateful for everyone's stamina. I think we should break now for tea. We will resume with you again on Monday.

Thank you very much.

(Short break).

SESSION FOUR - ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF HUNTING

DEADLINE 2000

Representation Panel Chairman

William Swann Veterinary Consultant

Panel:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mike Baker | IFAW UK Director |
| John Rolls | RSPCA Director of Communications |
| Douglas Batchelor | LACS Chairman |
| David Coulthred | LACS Head of Public Affairs |
| Carol McKenna | IFAW Consultant |
| Colin Booty | RSPCA Senior Wildlife Officer |

THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back. I am sorry we are a few minutes late. Welcome to this session.

Do you have an opening statement that you would like to make on this, on the general subject of economic and social matters?

MR SWANN: Yes, Lord Burns. It is very brief, just to introduce the subject.

The economic argument began with some 60,000 jobs at risk, and has dropped, somewhat in freefall, to now a figure lying perhaps just less than 4,000. I appreciate the Committee has commissioned its own research on this issue, but we are convinced from our own professional advisers that the impact on the rural economy in the medium term will be quite small. Sean Rickard, whom we asked to do a critique similar to the methods for us, was convinced that a lot of the businesses involved were small, self-employed, agricultural businesses.

Consequently, he employed what was, essentially, an agriculture treaties to the figures.

The central issue, we believe, is not how many people hunt or do not hunt, but it is how many people own horses. We believe that the vast majority of the expenditure associated with this issue is, in fact, expenditure which is on horses or on equestrian activities.

A very small note on this is that, in my practice days, I used to look after quite a number of equestrian facilities, and some of the people did hunt. I have a nonpartisan approach to that because horses do not

choose to hunt; people do.

When many of those horse owners left the area, a number of them moved to places such as offshore islands, where there was no hunting, and they took the horses with them. I think this is what you would expect. The welfare of hunted horses is very good; it is absolutely excellent. People who keep these horses take an enormous pride in them, and use the facility of the equestrian activities. I just find it incomprehensible that they will not continue to do this.

The final point on this is that we have heard the issue about the fallen stock and the European Directive which we put in our submission. We were aware that the alliance would be dropped. We accept, with the Countryside Alliance, that this is a problem for the fallen stock industry as a whole, which is in great disarray. The Government obviously has a need to address this.

I think that is all I have to say. Thank you, Lord Burns. I will pass you over now to our panel.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

The issue of detail, of course, in terms of numbers, et cetera, we will be wanting to follow up once we have received the research that we have commissioned and at the seminar.

I do not know if we want to get into the detail of this today, or simply some of the broader issues that are at stake. We can follow the detail at a later stage. Would you, however, agree that there are really two issues here? One is trying to account for the amount

of economic activity and social activity that is currently involved in hunting, and supported by hunting. A second question is the extent to which that activity will be replaced by other things, if there was to be a ban on hunting.

Hopefully we will be able to come to a reasonable amount of agreement about the first of those things, and maybe more of the debate will be around the second question, about the question of the replacement.

Would that sort of view accord with your evidence?

MR SWANN: Yes, thank you, Lord Burns. I am going to pass this over to Mike Baker.

MR BAKER: Thank you very much for the question.

I would like to emphasise, I suppose, firstly, the areas of agreement -- which I briefly mention because I think we have gone over that ground -- is that there are fewer than a thousand people directly employed by hunts. I think that there is also agreement that anything much more than this is in the realms of speculation. I think we are all agreed that we are unlikely to be able to come to a concrete figure. So we are looking at broad figures. Hopefully, we will be able to come to some agreement on those.

I would agree that the key question is likely to prove to be what happens to the spending that is displaced in the event of a hunting ban. The submission from the Countryside Alliance, and the statements that we have had that built up the economy as a big issue, initially raised by our opponents rather than ourselves, were based really on a view of the economy as a static

thing; that most of the accounting seemed to be a rather crude totalling of all the jobs that may be affected by the ban, and then assuming that all would go without recourse to considerations and things like the fact that horse membership, certainly continuing in very large numbers, and without factoring anything in about replacing spending.

I think that is where the key argument, the extent of that, is going to be crucial in defining the impact on the rural economy as a whole.

I think that there has been some significant ground given towards coming to that view by the Alliance in their submission and in their statements prior to the break.

I think, I believe anyway, that we are left with a situation now where we can perhaps clarify what exactly it is we have at the moment, prior, obviously, to the research that the Committee has initiated.

Firstly, there are very few sources for the spend figures, for the amount of spending associated with hunting. By and large, we are reduced to relying on sources that are dependent upon surveys of the hunters themselves and the members of the trades associated with hunting.

Secondly, there is a lot of controversy. If it is not out of order to answer a question that was asked prior to the break, rather than the one that is directly put now, to try and explain some of how we would see some of the rather large differences arising between the figures of up to 16 or 23,000 being quoted, and the

figures from Professor Rickard of 3,330, I think the paper submitted by Professor Rickard actually shows how some of those problems may have arisen, and criticises on a number of points, inflation, multipliers, the inclusion of tax, the overcounting of horse-related expenditure, the assumption that all horses/any horses which have been hunting, basically, any expenditure relating to that would immediately cease.

I think there is also a problem in that most of the figures that have come up do not have any explicit explanation of how they were derived. There is a total figure for spending, which is justified -- although we would argue that that is on the high side -- but there is no clear definition of exactly how the jobs total was derived from the figure.

The only research we have seen so far that does that is Professor Rickard's, which, as I said, was a figure which, as you know, was a figure at the lower end of the scale.

In terms of the likely job losses in the real world, as opposed to the total jobs associated with hunting -- which we would concur is likely to be around the 3,000 figure -- again, Professor Rickard makes a mean of 1,670 -- speculation but perhaps not an unreasonable assumption.

Noting that this depends on a large number of factors. Some of those factors I think will -- as we will show throughout this session, would -- lead one to believe that the impact will be perhaps even smaller than that, because many of the factors involved in

hunting in particular, and in particular the fact that most of the expenditure is horse-related, would incline us to believe that in fact the abolition of hunting would have very little impact on the rural economy as a whole, and that I believe is why the Countryside Alliance have switched mainly to talking about the impact on individuals rather than the impact on hunting.

THE CHAIRMAN: Again, I do not want to get into detail because I do not think that is for today, but would you accept that as far as, in a sense, the direct expenditure is concerned of the hunt, we probably have a reasonably good feel for what that is by a combination of surveys, et cetera, the number of just under 1,000, and what that total expenditure is.

We have had accounts for quite a lot of the hunts.

We have had the survey that has been produced.

Presumably, we do not have any great difference of opinion about the broad magnitudes associated with that.

I am just looking at the hunt. I am not talking about hunt supporters now; I am just talking about the hunt.

MR BAKER: Yes, I think there is relatively little difference in terms of the direct, for example, expenditure directly by participants. There is a relatively small difference. I think, as you expand beyond that a little, a bigger difference emerges.

THE CHAIRMAN: So the next stage, in a sense, is a direct expenditure by the hunt supporters, and that is more difficult to get at because that involves a certain amount of survey work. One cannot sample everybody,

whereas we are able to sample all of the hunts. So there will be some differences there, but, again, one might hope to be able to get a reasonably good steer on what the expenditure is of the people who actually go hunting, and the proportion of that which is attributable to hunting, although there is inevitably a problem of fixed costs. Some of the costs may be associated with other activities also.

I hope that it will be possible to get a reasonably good estimate of that. I presume that, again, that is not the source of the bulk of your differences.

MR BAKER: No, it is not a source of the bulk of the differences. There is some significant difference in the figures. I think the figure is based on the same research survey that were arrived at by Professor Rickard were of the order of 80 million pounds lower than the overall figure, perhaps slightly more, and the overall figure arrived at by Cobham, because of the challenge on many assumptions. That is quite a significant difference, but it is not the core of the argument.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is the next stage where things begin to get much more troublesome, where one traces that through the other, traces that spending through the other chunks.

We will try to come to a close view about that when we have had our own research. I think the only thing that slightly puzzles me about Dr Rickard's research is the way in which it translates the total expenditure -- and we will need to get closer to this --

on the basis of 16 jobs per million pounds, which I have yet to get a clear view of where that comes from, in a sense, and it certainly does not reflect the sort of ratio jobs to expenditure which you get with the hunt's own expenditure.

These will be some of the things I think we will want to follow up when it comes to the seminar. I do not know these, and unless you, in a sense, have a ready answer to that, it is not one I would want to get into today.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, I can very quickly say that Sean Rickard's figure was derived from using the standard tables as they apply to Scotland, primarily, because the rural parameters for Scotland more nearly approximate for the values for England and Wales.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Thank you.

I am going to leave all these questions. We should be able to look at them in more detail when we have the research in front of us. I want really to focus very much on the point which you, yourselves, raise as being the critical one, which in a sense is the process of adjustment within the rural economy.

Now, one of the problems about all this sort of discussion is that we have large aggregate numbers.

Within those large aggregates, we are looking at relatively small fractions; and that makes it very difficult to actually detect, so far as particular concerns are raised, what will be the responses.

For example, we may well get -- indeed do get -- figures showing the growth of rural economy and rural

employment. What I really want to ask you, first, is how do you see those people who are currently employed in hunting finding jobs in this growing rural economy? MR

SWANN: Sir John, I will pass that over to Mike Baker.

MR BAKER: I think there are a number of factors involved; one of the key ones is that, unlike many of the potential job losses that have been referred to, or actual job losses in this case, for instance, closure of mining communities and so on, these jobs are widely dispersed and, therefore, far more easily absorbed by the local community.

I think in terms of transferable skills, clearly the increasing areas of the rural economy, things like business services and tourism, may involve some change of skills training and so on.

If someone is directly involved in a hunt, they may need some retraining in order to move across to a different sector but that would assume that the job replacement came from those growing sectors.

Our contention is that the vast majority of people who ride in the countryside and ride to hounds would continue to do so, either through drag hunting or would find some other riding pastime; and that most of the jobs related -- as I think is agreed by all sides -- relates to expenditure associated with horseriding. Most people should, therefore, be able to continue in pretty much the same vein, with similar jobs and using some of the skills.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I was actually excluding that category. Specifically I was talking about people

appointed by hunts themselves.

One of the problems, if I may, while I am thinking about that one, is that it is true, of course, that these jobs are dispersed through the community in national aggregates. That means that in national statistics they are easily lost. It does not mean necessarily for the local community in which they are placed that there will be readily available jobs for those individuals where they are.

Are we looking at some form of further movement, as was suggested earlier?

MR BAKER: In terms of statistics being easily lost, that was exactly the point I was making earlier on; that the impact as a rural economy overall is likely to be negligible, almost immeasurable.

The impact on individuals is obviously something of greater concern, and that has been brought out before. I think that a lot of that will depend on the likelihood of transferring to more direct -- for example, if the hunt converts to a drag hunt, then the employment would presumably be able to continue pretty much as before.

Where that did not take place, there probably would be individual disruption; and that is something that there is not much to get away from. But I know that Bill has some further comments on drag hunting.

MR SWANN: Yes, Sir John.

The type of people who you are aiming the question at specifically, those who are employed on the ground in the hunt kennels, I take the point as to what you are

asking: Where they would find reemployment?

We would like to see a number of them re-employed in drag hunting because this is an area that we will wish to cover both in these oral submissions and in the research seminar, because 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 shall go into more detail when we consider it appropriate.

So I think there is potential there, because I also believe that many people who enjoy working with hounds will not cease to do so. I thoroughly believe some hound packs will continue to exist; so that some employment will remain.

For those who are outside that employment, then there are a number of relatively unskilled jobs which do become available in local labour markets. This is not presupposing people will have to move. This is one possible thing that will happen.

I also feel there is likely to be increasing employment in the service sector to agriculture because the area of agricultural waste is one which you will want to ask more about later as well.

But those areas of agricultural waste disposal which we can talk about do indicate that there may well be the potential for, not substantial but significant, employment opportunity within that area of agricultural service.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I, in this context, raise a question from the League's evidence, where you say that moves

towards eco-tourism, and could bring considerable benefits to areas like Exford. But are you saying that if there was no hunting in the course of the winter months, there would be an awful lot of people going to Exford in the winter months but who are not going there because they do not like the association with hunting. I mean, in terms of the strength of the remarks, the evidence, I was a little surprised.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, I am going to pass that over to David Coulthred.

MR COULTHREAD: I think it is an irony. One of the businesses actually going quite well in the village of Exford, which is being held up as an example of the strength of hunting in the rural community -- whereas we would argue it is being held up as an example because it is an exception to the rule -- is a hotel actually run by a League member, and has in its window League stickers.

So I think everybody passing that village knows exactly where that particular entrepreneur stands on hunting. He has reported to us -- and I think he may be reporting to you at Taunton tomorrow evening -- that a number of the people who actually come and visit Exford, when they found out the association of that town with hunting, are actually put off and say, that if it was not for the fact he was there -- and his position on hunting is well-known -- they would not come again. From his point of view -- and I think a number of other people who run businesses on Exmoor who have reported to us -- there certainly is quite a strong

association with that area with hunting, and they are certainly reporting to us that they would be enjoying greater profitability if that association was gone.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think I had a discussion with him last Saturday night -- no doubt I will be having another discussion with him tomorrow evening.

I can accept that, in a sense, in terms that you put it -- which I think is not quite the strength that it is maybe put in the evidence, but that is a smaller issue.

PROFESSOR WINTER: This is a linked question, really. It is to do with tourism, but it is also to do with the business of economic adjustment which we have been talking about.

I am sure we all accept the rural economy is not static. No economy ever is static. I am referring here to some evidence of the RSPCA. They talk about the right to roam legislation, and the suggestion that that will increase the number of leisure day visits to the countryside.

I think this is an important argument but, apart from the fact that the legislation is going through Parliament, no substantiation is given to their suggestion. I wonder if they are able to substantiate the claim that those in the countryside would increase, and hence provide economic opportunity through that.

MR SWANN: Professor Winter, I would like to ask John Rolls to answer that.

MR ROLLS: Yes, you are quite right that the legislation is still going through Parliament, but we expect it to be

enacted. We would expect, as a result, further penetration into the countryside, and as a result of that more jobs.

We have not speculated in any technical way that that would produce X-number of jobs, but we think this is an important issue in raising and opening the countryside to many more people than has been the case to date. So we do not have specific evidence to support that, but, again, it is speculation.

LORD SOULSBY: If I may just come back to Mr David Coulthred talking about Exford -- and no doubt you have heard my intervention to the Countryside Alliance about fell packs in the Lake District, where it seems at least it was represented that hunting in the winter replaced the tourist trade in the summer -- people coming from all over the Lake District often feel that the west of the country, and sometimes overseas, represented the national and international aspect to tourism for people wishing to see the fell pack working, and people staying in bed and breakfast.

Obviously, it is different in different parts of the country but, certainly in the Lake District, there would not be that antagonism that you describe in Exeter.

I wonder if you might comment on the different parts of the country, and the role of hunting in the local economy as part of the national tourist trade.

MR SWANN: Lord Soulsby, I have two people who have indicated on this; one of whom posed a question to David Coulthred, who would like to make a response.

David, would you like to go first?

MR COULTHREAD: I think there are two points to be made on that. The first one is that the role of hunting attracting people to fell packs in Cumberland in the Lake District. We see, I think, very little evidence that they attract large scale followers, simply because to follow that kind of hunting you need to be pretty fit yourself. It is actually an extremely strenuous walk, on some quite difficult terrain.

An area where there might be a greater claim for attraction of tourists probably is going back to Exmoor and to the village of Exford. What we see there is that there is a tremendous growth for alternative forms of eco-tourism, as we describe it.

One example I would give is that I remember actually watching one of the holiday programmes. They were talking about tourist safari trips in the West Country. People are actually coming in and going out and observing the deer, and finding greater profitability, and quite a great deal of profitability, from people observing the dinner action.

We see great potential for that. Again, one point we would stress is that we do know that the majority of people in this country, for whatever reason, are disturbed by hunting, and have no wish to see it. We feel that, although it is true at the moment it cannot be absolutely substantiated, we do know, certainly from the anecdotal evidence we have had, and from local businesses, that, if there was no association with hunting, there is tremendous potential for more people

to come along. So there are alternatives if hunting were to end.

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, Douglas Batchelor and I also have indicated most of my team would like to speak on this issue, if that is in order.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is an important issue, and I am very happy to hear from whoever wishes to.

MR BATCHELOR: Lord Burns, the League, as you know, employ people in the West Country, effectively managing and working on sanctuaries in the West Country so there is a form of alternative employment already created.

We actually are currently in discussions with the local tourist authority, who are very keen to develop eco-tourism, based round the fact that we do know landlords, who can be seen in our sanctuaries, and encourage business and encourage business for the local hotel trade based round that.

Clearly, that is something that we are seeking to develop with them. I think the fact that the local tourist authority are very keen on the idea suggests that they themselves believe it is viable. I think also it fits into the wider agricultural climate of a need for diversification. It does show that managing your land in a different way, with conservation of wildlife, can create employment opportunities in its own right. I think that could be quite important.

We also, to a limited extent, operate things like wildlife watch weekends, where we have members and others who like to visit the sanctuaries and see the wildlife, and have educational visits, and that brings

visitors to the local hotels.

What we do find in that sort of customer is that they are very keen that the people they do business with, be it the bed and breakfast, or wherever else, are not in any way associated with hunting. So there is a clear negative in terms of where they are prepared to stay, and what they are prepared to do, if there is an association with hunting.

We find that that is largely no problem to the hotels which we ourselves do business with. They are quite happy to go along with that, and say that it is typical of a lot of their customers, as has already been said.

MS MCKENNA: Thank you. To help the panel, I would just like to refer to some statistics that are in the IFAW's submission. The 1998 statistics from UK tourism show that 1 per cent of tourists to Wales undertook either shooting, stalking or hunting. There were no recorded figures for England. This compares to 26 per cent of visitors to Wales who visited heritage sites, and 23 per cent who went hiking, and 19 per cent of visitors to England visited heritage sites.

According to the Sports Council, this is also referred to in the IFAW submission. The most popular sports activities in the countryside are walking, golf and fishing.

Thank you.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Carol. If you could just indulge with one comment from John Rolls on this same issue.

MR ROLLS: Just to go back to Professor Winter's point. On

page 12 of our submission, we referred to Neil Ward, who says:

"The processes of social and democratic change, and associated policy developments, suggest considerable potential for the further expansion of country leisure pursuits. In connection with the right to roam legislation, we would also point to the fact that in 1996 there were 1.5 billion leisure days. Therefore, if there is only a very marginal increase through the right to roam legislation, then you could see an enormous increase in employment opportunities.

MR SWANN: Thank you.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I am interested in the argument you are putting forward. It has been put to us that, in a sense, the process of hunting is a means of managing a common good; that if, in fact, you did not add value through the hunting process, then the people whose land in fact feeds these animals would see, in a sense, an interest in cropping the animals for themselves, and the process would ultimately lead to a reduction in the number of deer -- I am thinking particularly of deer at the moment -- and to, if you like, a disappearance of the deer into areas where they could not readily be shot.

I would really like to hear your comments on that because I could see that there is a certain logic in this; that where you have common goods where nobody in a sense will believe that if he does not take the goods somebody else will, there is a loss, in a sense, of a motive to conserve.

MR SWANN: David Coulthred will answer that.

MR COULTHREAD: We often hear the arguments that no hunting means no deer. The one thing we would point to is virtually every other part of the UK, including Scotland, where there is an extremely healthy deer population, they are virtually exclusively culled by shooting. The local populations, that includes landowners and farmers, have absolutely no problem about deer being nearby.

To use hunting as a justification for the existence of deer in one small part of the country is an argument that does not hold water. The amount of deer actually culled by shooting runs to probably about 10 per cent of those that are actually culled on the normal basis of deer management.

What is actually needed in the West Country is a proper deer management process. The League will be at the forefront in proposing and trying to get together proper deer management in the West Country. We are being resisted, and we are being resisted in the main by the hunting organisations themselves.

But I would repeat, I do not believe that the people in the West Country are unique, and that they only tolerate the deer because they hunt them. They exist in all other parts of the UK, and nobody has any particular problems with them because they are properly controlled.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I, on that point, put to you, however, an argument that has been put to us, and to get a response, which is that in Scotland, basically, the stakes are

larger, in that the deer tend to spend a larger proportion of their time on a single estate.

The members have an interest in the management and the conservation themselves. Whereas what is different about the West Country is that you have a lot of small farms. Therefore, there is not the same degree of ownership of the deer because they pass more readily between establishments. Therefore, this creates this lack of ownership, the lack of identity, and, therefore, the greater chance that there will be, in a way, competitive culling, because individuals see themselves getting certain damage, but they do not get the benefit. It is an argument that is based upon, in a sense, a different pattern of ownership, a different topography, and more woodland probably too. My question is simply: Do you have any observations to make on that argument?

MR SWANN: Lord Burns, I have just been passed a note from Colin Booty, who I will bring up to speak if you want to pursue this issue. He has indicated that on the Exmoor National Park there are between -- this is an area where there is no hunting by dogs.

If you want to go into this in more detail, I will bring him up on to the panel to ask.

PROFESSOR WINTER: On the economic side, the deer management.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, let us hear from your colleague.

MR SWANN: Colin is our wildlife chap. He will probably be able to give you a better answer than I can.

MR BOOTY: This relates to the point which I think basically

boils down, in a sense, if there was not the self-interest, more deer would be killed. If you took that to an extreme conclusion, if that self-interest was not there, there would be no deer.

But, in a sense, the example that I gave was in that same area that you are talking about. This supposed commonality of interest, part of the Exmoor park area, there are upwards to 1000 fallow deer which are not subject to hunting with dogs. They are tolerated, in that sense. They are managed by shooting. So, in a sense, if that situation, that that size of the herd of the social deer can exist, be supported, sustained and tolerated, why should that not be the situation for the red?

THE CHAIRMAN: So you do not see any merits in the argument that the pattern of ownership, the size of the estates, and the size to which there is a degree of ownership of the herd makes any difference to the likelihood that, in the event of a ban, there would be a greater degree of, in a sense, self-interest in culling? Whereas it is argued at the moment there is, in a sense, a commonality of interest through the hunt.

I mean, the question is -- I am not saying it is an overwhelming argument -- but is there anything in it? Or do you really see that as not an issue at all.

MR BOOTY: We would not see that as a major issue. It was a point that was considered by the report by (inaudible) Langbine and Rory Putman in their report to the National Trust in 1992. They also pointed out in that report that the distribution of the red deer in the South-west of

England was far beyond the National Exmoor Park and the Quantocks.

So whatever happens or does not happen in the park would not necessarily affect the red deer in the South-West, and, in a sense, the patchwork nature of ownership in that situation, if you accept as a hypothesis that some owners might kill more deer, other owners might kill less deer. So the picture is not a straightforward one.

THE CHAIRMAN: What about the point that is being made that historically in the past, when hunting has not been taking place, in an attempt to be defining the number of the size of the herd -- and there is some correlation between the size of the herd and whether or not there is hunting.

MR SWANN: I beg your pardon, I thought Colin was indicating he wanted to answer on that one. He ducked out of that one. He is quite happy to carry on.

MR BOOTY: Yes, I just was not expecting to do this session. The reference you make I think alludes to what happens in the late 1700s/early 1800s, that period of time. If you look historically, what is happening with deer throughout the country is that deer numbers were at a very low ebb, whether or not the arguments about hunting with dogs. You have to look at the circumstances that were pertaining there; a severe rural, economic deprivation, severe and way beyond anything that can conceivably be the situation nowadays. There have been civil wars, Napoleonic wars. So there was a very severe disruption, and deer numbers throughout the country of

all species declined.

Subsequently, in other areas of the country where hunting with dogs is not undertaken, deer numbers have increased, and also increased on Exmoor. So we would not necessarily accept the correlation that they have only survived and increased on areas Exmoor because of that association with hunting.

PROFESSOR WINTER: I wanted to go back to deer management, and the aftermath of the ban, and your suggestion that deer management would have to take place, and that would obviously be the shooting.

I want to remember this is an economic session, and ask you how you think the economics of that would work, because it seems to me that there are two models; and maybe something in-between the one model is that it should be, in a sense, a charge to a kind of public purse in some way, but it should be deer management organised by the public sector in some manner or means. Therefore, people have to pay as you and I would pay for that.

The other model is that it should be seen as an economic resource, and that there will be deer stalking, that people would pay for deer stalking, and that is obviously on that process.

I am wondering, firstly, which of those models or some kind of measure you think would happen and is desirable. My second question, linked to that really, is that you mentioned the opposition to hunting, concern about hunting, as an economic negative in terms of inhibiting tourism and tourists coming.

Do you think deer stalking might also be such an economic inhibitor in the same kind of way? Is deer stalking necessarily any more acceptable to your average tourist?

MR SWANN: Professor Winter, I am going to just make a brief statement on that while David Coulthred gets his thoughts in order. I actually live on one of the Scottish estates where stalking is now redundant, primarily because the deer are such an important resource as a tourist attraction.

About 25,000 acres of the estate were taken out of deer forests in order to be planted as natural woodland, and so deer had to be excluded. One of the aspects to this is that red deer, in being moved in that way, will not resettle outside the home range.

There is this idea that this comparison with the Scottish Highlands and these estates being vast areas. The situation is not like that, because deer groups do specifically adhere to certain home ranges. So stalking stopped on one the north of Scotland's largest estates as a result of the fact that the net revenue from stalking is not terribly great.

The deer are an enormous resource. Part of the whole process of this conservation planting which has received European funding is also in line with putting in animal watching shelters, putting up footpaths and information boards, because this is seen as being what visitors to Scotland want. It is receiving, primarily, European funding in order to promote this. So I think there is very much a conservation argument, in areas

which people tend to think of as areas where deer have been managed as a resource.

I think things are changing in this respect, and this is one example. I am now going to pass you over to David Coulthred for some comments as well.

MR COULTHREAD: Thank you. One of the facts about the deer population in the West Country is that they are basically culled by shooting in the first place.

Of the deer population, about 1000 have to be culled every year in order to maintain the current population levels, and about 100, possibly less, taken over by hunting. So if there was an increase in culling by shooting in the order of about 10 per cent, which overall would not be a significant increase in the number of deer culled, for which reason we do not believe that stalking would be economically viable in any case.

As regards it being a cost to the public purse, it would be if an increase of 10 per cent culling takes place. That will be undertaken by a number of groups, such as local farmers, the National Trust and organisations such as that; so that it should not incur any additional expenditure on the public purse. The League, as has already been reported, is actually looking into ways of attracting people to our wildlife sanctuaries. We have quite a lot down in the West Country. We believe that, if we can see local wildlife as an economic resource, and certainly an increasing number of farmers are making money from activities such as badger watchers, it may be a way forward for a number

of farmers who have previously seen deer in one particular way, and perhaps should be seen as an economic resource. We would certainly ask them to encourage them to see it in that way, in much the way people around the globe have actually come to see other animals.

The obvious example being Jack and his fishermen, who now see dolphins, for instance, as a tourist attraction. They take people out whale-watching, but that is an example.

As regards proper involvement, the model we would certainly advance is the deer initiative, which is an organisation the League is involved with. We have given a supply of the Deer Initiative's Policy Programme as part of our appendixes.

They certainly believe that the humane management of the deer stocks is viable. They do propose shooting as the humane alternative, but I would like to stress will only involve an increase of about 10 per cent, which counts for about 100 deer. Economically, there really would be very little to be gained from introducing stalking in any case.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: If we could pick up one or two other topics, certainly without exhausting any of this. You will have heard discussion, and contributed to it, about the role of the hunt in relation to fallen stock. There are problems about that in any case.

It would be very helpful if you could give us your view about how that aspect of the rural economy would be operating, and also, perhaps, while you are talking

about that, pick up the question of what do we do about fallen animals.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Sir John.

Basically, you have read the RSPCA submission, which is an overview of the industry. One thing that is very difficult to do is to apportion significance. I will give you a brief example on that, in that most of the larger knacker's yards will deal primarily in cattle carcasses, which are larger, require much more effort to dispose of, and also have a higher ongoing process requirement to remove the ultimate waste and specify material to the BSE legislation.

So it has always been customary in the industry to tot up not in heritage but in livestock units. So a cow is considered to be three livestock units, a sheep is one livestock unit. This relates to the effort in processing.

That is the way the industry normally computes its figures. On that basis, the industry, as represented by the Licenced Slaughters Association, its latest estimate is that it deals with somewhere in the region of high 80s to low 90s of the total United Kingdom disposal of livestock waste, but that is their figures.

I cannot vouch for those, and I cannot give them any sort of credence. They are just the figures they are prepared to give to me. I certainly would not think they are too far off the mark, but neither would I believe they are entirely accurate. The difficulty is that you have local significance, and some hunt kennels do.

Indeed, the figures that they quote, the operative word

in that quotation was "may" because the Ministry of Agriculture did indicate that kennels may dispose of figures as high as those which they quoted.

Indeed, I would agree that they can play a very important part in some areas. I think in areas like the West Country, Leicestershire, and one or two other spots where there is not good coverage, they have a role that nobody would deny.

But the problem that I have is in terms of capacity. Their capacity to process livestock waste is severely limited. In this respect, what tends to happen is they are used, much to their annoyance, sometimes as dumping grounds.

Indeed, in the West Country, I was talking to one of the veterinary staff down there, who now tells me that they have had to put CCT cameras on the hunt kennels to actually see which farmers are dumping dead livestock on them. They are having dumped on them more than they can actually manage to cope with. What actually happens to the dumped livestock is that it goes on a skip and is taken off to a rendering plant.

Now, in terms of significance, there are one or two, a few, which do have local significance. Indeed, I think there is the possibility that, in these areas, there is almost the potential there for a standalone, small knacker's yard, given that the industry was more economic.

But the difficulty with that is that the industry is not currently economic. It is facing even worse crisis at the moment because it is having hoisted on it

a European Directive of change, which is going to require a major upgrade on the facilities.

So even the large licensed knackers are not looking good, with any degree of confidence. For the smaller hunt kennels, it will be annihilation. If the Directive comes through, I am afraid it will. It is going to come through as a regulation. Although I sympathise with the industry's concerns about this, I think it will happen.

Now, on that basis, I do not think the hunt kennels have a role to play as primary processing plants. They may have a role to play in a wider context of acting as transfer sites, but not as part of a hunt kennels, perhaps as a separate business, as a standalone business. I think, in this respect, there is the potential in the long-term for some employment there.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: If I could just follow up on that, you mentioned in your introduction -- and indeed on page 39 of the IFAW submission -- about the possibility of actually increasing agricultural employment through those sorts of changes.

But you do recognise now that, economically, it does not stack up in terms of most farmers' gross margins not being able to actually pay for disposal, and in the respect that the hunt kennels are wanting a free service, are you therefore saying that it will have to be a public subsidy for that extra industry to get going?

MR SWANN: Dr Edwards, I will make the point, first of all, that most of the kennels now do have to show their

ongoing costs. We have to compare like with like. Although they may not charge the same degree for the actual collection of fallen livestock, they will still have to pass on out-of-pocket expenses which are involved in paying the renderer's charges, which are where the waste goes to after the kennels have done what it does with it. So there is an expense involved there. At the moment, there are consultations going on between the industry as it is represented by the Licenced Slaughters Association and Mr Rook administered it. These consultations have come to the point of producing a consultative document, which does spell out what I have been talking about; a wider role in farm waste disposal. This will include things like plastics and twine, and all the empty cans and drums and these sort of things.

So we are looking at if it is possible for the industry to be directed down this road, then this is an area that it is up to Government to decide whether it chooses to subsidise it. But if it chooses to subsidise it, or if the agricultural industry is required to pay for it -- which under European law it may be required to do -- either way, there is the potential there for creation of new jobs. So the new jobs are not airy-fairy jobs. If this goes through, then, yes, jobs will be created.

But you are enquiring at an unfortunate point in that in terms of how this matter is being resolved, then we would have much more information on it in another 12 months time.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: One other possible scenario is that, because of the extra cost, the agricultural community contracts rather than has to leave the legislation, if there is not a public subsidy. Would you agree with that?

MR SWANN: Sorry, I did not catch the first part of your question.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: With regard to dealing with fallen stock under the new regulations which imposed the conditions you describe, you said that the agricultural industry would have to meet them, and then it is up to the Government whether they subsidise or not.

If there was no Government subsidy, presumably the alternative scenario is the agricultural industry contracts because it cannot pay.

MR SWANN: There are other alternatives, Dr Edwards, in disposal of livestock, and these are ones the Ministry of Agriculture is not that keen on promoting; and this is burial.

Throughout the greater part of Scotland, there is no livestock or collection service. We are dealing with sheep lying areas. Normally, sheep are buried on farms. There are hilly areas of England and Wales where the same would apply. This is not a healthy trend in many people's view. I certainly think it is not a course that should be pursued.

So I think if the agricultural industry does not have an economic base, where it can afford to pay for proper waste disposal, and if that proper waste disposal is a requirement of European legislation, then I fail to

see what the alternatives are; either a subsidy or farmers will have to pay by whatever means they have available to them.

This is the nub of the problem, and this is why discussions are taking place, because the industry does not feel that the agricultural sector can stand this additional cost.

We are back down to the same arguments. This is primarily aimed at the spin-off of the BSE problems; that all this type of thing has come in. The whole meat industry has faced this entire problem of having imposed upon it costs which its economic structure does not permit it to pay.

This will be a knock on down into the Licenced Knackers Association as well, but as to how the eventual outcome will be at this point in time, we are not able to precisely say.

LORD SOULSBY: On page 14 of the League Against Cruel Sports discussing fallen stock, there is a strong recommendation that all carcasses need to be subject to veterinary inspection, similar to licensed abattoirs. Does the Deadline 2000 support that recommendation?

MR SWANN: I think, Lord Soulsby, we need to clarify between fallen stock and casualty stock. I think one thing that the panel will be aware of, in dealing with the knackering industry, is that we are dealing with animals which have no future in the food industry.

With a casualty animal, we are dealing with an animal which may have a future in the food chain. So this will be diverted to a specialist casualty

slaughterhouse, or a slaughterhouse with special casualty facilities.

The only time that that will not happen is if that animal cannot qualify for a veterinary certificate. So I think in this respect -- and I apologise for the lack of clarity -- the situation is that, with regard to fallen livestock, we are not advocating veterinary inspection of all carcasses but, in terms of casualty livestock, then, as is currently the law, we state that, as is now the case, veterinary inspection is mandatory.

LORD SOULSBY: Yes, I am fully aware of the casualty animal situation. As you stated, I not only understand it but agree with it. It does say here quite clearly, but I take it from what you are saying that you do not really, that the League Against Cruel Sports did not really mean to say in the case where animals disposed of may be used as hound food the process should be subject to all the regulations that currently apply to licensed abattoirs.

MR SWANN: Lord Soulsby, the intent of that statement, I am sure, was to imply that these facilities have the same degree of regulation as any other operating in the same way, and was not intended to imply that they should be subject to any additional veterinary supervision, which as you and I know is not the case.

LORD SOULSBY: Difficult enough with food animals, let alone these animals. Anyway, I take it that you do not mean what you say?

MR SWANN: No.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I kick off on the social questions. Really, we have a ring of what the Countryside

Alliance was saying. The line of questioning from this side of the room is very much to do with the extent of social cohesion and that sort of thing.

Your line, of course, is that hunting can damage community spirit, distressing and isolating any rural dwellers. Hunt social events are divisive, and they have a deleterious effect on the quality and quantity of rural social life. What I would really like you to explain to us is what is the evidence of this, and try to go beyond anecdotal cases to firm evidence about the nature of rural, social life, and where hunting has ceased deleterious and social impacts on socialising in this country.

MR SWANN: John Rolls will answer that question.

MR ROLLS: I think, in our submission, we presented thirty cases which indicated hunt havoc, trespass and killing of domestic animals.

The point has been made that this is the tip of the iceberg. In consumer service studies, it is often the case that, if you receive a written complaint, there may well be 15 or fewer, 10 to 15 others who have not made the actual formal complaint. So I think, on that basis, we are indicating the tip of the iceberg in those thirty cases, which are very distressing. We believe that those are indicative of the impact that hunting has on the rural communities.

I would like to just further say that much has been made in this debate of civil liberties. My point is that, surely, the civil liberties of those people who have been trespassed against, and who had their animals

killed, should be respected as much as those of anyone else.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I just pursue that a bit further. With regards to the tip of the iceberg, we have no way of knowing. I think we have to accept that we do not know. It would be nice if we had some social survey evidence that gave some more weight to that.

Let me just push you a little further. Your average rural community, whether it be in Devon or the Midlands, you are saying that that rural community, pick a rural community at random, is socially divided by this issue. You go into that community, and you can find people who find this issue taxing; that it causes genuine friction; that it is seriously damaging to the community cohesion; is that what you are telling us?

MR ROLLS: I think there are instances in the examples given where that is the case. We have heard a lot of evidence here about the cohesiveness of the hunting community, but that is not the whole community. It leaves out a significant number of people who feel unable to object because of pressure being put on to them for the reasons that we have heard about economics and employment. We believe that that is very significant. The letters we have received across the board indicate that that is the case.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Can I pursue, if you like, another mechanical aspect of this discussion, which is that it is quite clear from the evidence we have received that, in association with hunting, a substantial number of other activities of a broadly

social nature take place, and that those activities do contribute to the life of these communities, even if they do not necessarily contribute to the life of every person in those communities.

Now, if hunting were to be banned, would there be any replacement for this; and who would be the people who would make it happen?

MR ROLLS: The reason that many people use the hunt as a vehicle for social activity is because the hunt club framework was already in existence. There is no evidence the clubs of this type would cease to exist if the hunt were disbanded.

Comparisons can be drawn to Young Farmers Clubs, in areas where there are now few young farmers. These clubs remain as social introduction clubs for young people. I believe that was included in the NFU submission. In areas of the country where hunting has not traditionally been carried out, there exists similar social frameworks, revolving around activities such as sheep dog trials, for example, in South Yorkshire, or pony clubs. So we believe that the structures would survive, but without the cruelty that is associated with hunting.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: Could I press you a little bit further on that. It seems to me quite clear that a major reason for making the effort to organise activities was to raise funds for the hunt. If the hunt no longer exists, then, in a sense, that part of the motive for going to the trouble of doing all these things seems to disappear.

So is it perhaps a little overoptimistic to assume that the same people would continue to do the same things in the absence of the hunt?

MR SWANN: John Rolls will speak for us on that, and then Mike Baker would like to say a word.

MR ROLLS: I believe we live in a changing world. The speed of change is getting greater and greater. I think we will have to accept that the old values, the old structures, will not support in the future the societies that we live in. Therefore, the structures that exist will adapt and change.

If you look into the Countryside Alliance's submission, there was almost an agenda for new activities that were those activities associated with the hunt. Why not go and be innovative and entrepreneurial, and develop those things which are not associated with cruel sports? Would that not be a better way of demonstrating the civilisation in this country?

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I raise the issue about one or two of the points you made, that were made in the League's evidence. It says in most cases these events, such as point-to-point, are developed to the extent they are, essentially, independent of hunting.

It has been put to us that in fact the basic organisation of all of this is rather heavily dependent upon hunting; much of this is done by voluntary people; people who are engaged in hunting; the farmers who are engaged in hunting, who provide the land on which the point to point takes place; and that the essential voluntary nature of this would be difficult to reproduce

in the absence of hunting.

I find it difficult to square that argument with the way that it is put in the League's evidence, and I would be interested to know your association on that.

MR SWANN: I will have first shot at that, Lord Burns.

I think, with point-to-point, the important point is the qualification which has to be through the hunt, but can equally be through a drag hunt. A Master of drag hunts can issue a certificate of competency in just the same way as can a Master of fox hounds. So the survival of point-to-point is not dependent on live quarry hunting.

If there was sufficient interest -- and I believe there would be in point-to-point because point-to-point is just one example in the hunter hierarchy -- if you are going to look at a hunter's horse as being potentially suitable for further development, even up to national racing level, point-to-point is a pretty fundamental step in measuring that horse's performance. People who wish to pursue this aspect of the sport are not going to be put off because the live quarry hunt route has gone. I am quite sure they will go down the drag hunt route, and not least because it is less expensive as well.

THE CHAIRMAN: But it does depend upon the people who get involved in drag hunts taking up the whole of the organisation of the activity, as well as providing the certificates of competence and, in a sense, the passport, having participated in seven hunts, or whatever it is, they also have to take up the whole

infrastructure of organising the point-to-point and making it happen, providing the land, et cetera, and that is obviously heavily dependent upon the statement of how far drag hunting would substitute for quarry hunting.

MR SWANN: I think, Lord Burns, this is basically fundamental to some of the arguments that were put forward. There is so much structure there that it seems most unlikely that it would be abandoned. Because there is this amount of structure, that people would find ways of keeping it going because it is point-to-point, is quite well-supported.

I think in terms of land availability -- and this point is also relevant at drag hunting as well -- if you were to look at the take, and the actual amount of money coming into a drag hunt, if part of that were made available to land owners, not only have you actual movement of money through the different layers in the countryside, but you are also ensuring that the sport will continue in a way that is likely to be supported by land owners.

We feel with drag hunting, and with point-to-point, that these structures will survive. People will continue to do them just because there is such a complex structure there, and because they are so well-supported.

PROFESSOR WINTER: Can I just change the tack a little bit. In IFAW's evidence you talk about rural housing, and you talk about a significant number of subscribers owning second homes in prestigious hunt areas, and obviously

suggesting that those make an impact on communities, particularly with regard to housing as a consequence. Again, my question is the evidence for this; how firm is your evidence? What is your evidence for this, please?

MR SWANN: David Coulthred.

MR COULTHREAD: I do not wish to speak on behalf of IFAW, as I work for the League Against Cruel Sports, but you do have as one piece of evidence reports instituted by the Conservative Anti-hunt Council, an organisation based in rural Somerset.

In there, there was a quote from a hunter, or a hunter who actually works with one of the hunts based in Exmouth. He, himself, is quoted as saying that one of the possible positive effects of a ban on hunting will be that house prices would fall, and that locals would actually be in a better position to look forward to live there. So they, themselves, were on record as saying there may actually be economic benefits in terms of, in that particular area, a fall on house prices, and perhaps locals being able to afford to live nearby.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I just say there is a stock and flow issue here, and to try to persuade people that there are great economic benefits in falling house prices is not something I found easy in my previous life.

DR VICTORIA EDWARDS: Could I return to the social cohesion arguments, the changing rural economy and the changing world.

There could be a counter argument that, because of the changing rural economy, and particularly the migrants to the rural areas of new types of workers,

teleworkers, the tourism industry, there is an even greater need to retain things like the hunt for the social cohesion of those left in those areas.

Do you want to respond to that?

MR SWANN: Dr Edwards, I would like to pass your question to Douglas Batchelor.

MR BATCHELOR: The data on the attitudes to hunting in the countryside is that the majority of people are actually against hunting.

I would like to bring in a slightly more practical level to this, in that I have actually lived in the middle of Exmoor. I have chaired in Simonsbath, and lived right in the middle of one of these communities. I was known to be against hunting. My employer was very pro-hunting. As long as we understood each other's position, that was okay, but when you came to the social activities, we are taking a very narrow view of what is a social activity.

Major towns, Barnstaple, Taunton and Minehead -- and that is where people would go for their entertainment, public transport permitting. This idea that somehow the hunting fraternity is the whole of the social activity is very much in rural areas.

I would go further than that. If you look at some of the funding issues, in effect, the Exmoor Sheep Dog Trials was run as a nonprofit thing. I remember having a long discussion in the Committee once as to whether we should give our marginal service, which I think was 19 pounds in 1970-something, to the hunt or the Guide Dogs for the Blind. We compromised and they had half each.

I do not think it was a significant contribution to what was going on; it was simply that, like some other events, it was simply run for a small surplus, and that was donated for something that meets local interests, or a variety of local interests as happened in that case.

The same thing happened in midWales. I have lived in midWales in the middle of a farming area, managed farms there. The social activity was around the NFU, the farm management association, the various discussion groups who were involved and the local towns, which in that case was the new town of Shrewsbury for a lot of the activities.

So this view, somehow, that the hunt ball, or the hunt whist drive, is the totality of the social cohesion in the rural area is a myth. It is part of it, but it is a minority part of it. I think it is very important that this Inquiry gets to that view of what is actually socially happening in those areas, and seeks a balance between that which is important to a minority of people, for people in those areas, as opposed to the interests of the pursuits of the majority of people who live and work in the countryside.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have finished on that. I am very grateful again for your evidence. We will meet again on Monday when we reverse the battle.

A number of topics that we have touched on today, of course, are going to come up on Monday. I very much look forward to seeing you again. If there are any comments -- I say this, in a sense, to both sets of

contributors -- any points about the process and how we conduct these sessions which could improve them, then of course we are very interested to hear them.

Again, I make the point that if you wish to write to us, either to clarify your own evidence or to comment on anybody else's evidence, then we will be very interested to hear from you.

Thank you very much.

(The hearing adjourned)