so it seems to us.

THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

THE ANNUAL REPORT of the National Rifle Association affords, as usual, a large store of information to the rifle shot, to whom it is the summary of a year's successes and failures. The statistical information concerning the various competitions is very complete, and many useful deductions can be obtained as a result of careful examination of the figures relevant to the point at issue. There is every opportunity of examining the scores that can be made with the various rival systems of shooting at the shorter distances, such as would be the sole resource of a rifle club finding it impossible to secure a range certified as safe for use with the service rifle and ammunition. The Morris tube fixed to the service rifle, the breech adapter similarly fitted, and the various kinds of miniature rifle can all be passed under review and their performances compared with those of the service rifle. On examining the records of the Morris tube competition it will be found that 692 entries were received, that of these no fewer than fifty-five, or 7.9 per cent., made a score of not less than 32 out of a possible 35. Considering that the Morris tube cartridge is a very weak specimen of ammunition, and has not been subjected to the improvements brought about by modern developments in explosives, the performance stands out in very marked fashion. It should be remembered that the shooting for the Morris competition is done over 200 yards at an Sin. buil; at least, that is our recollection of the size, but the figures cannot be confirmed from the report, as they are not quoted. It is possible, however, in fact probable, that the bull was last year 7in. in diameter, to correspond with the reduction of the third class target. A score of 32 out of seven shots is equivalent to four bulls and three inners, shooting by no means to be grumbled at even if obtained with the full size service cartridge. For instance, there were 1637 entries for the King's Prize, unquestionably by the pick of the volunteer marksmen of the country. The 500 who made the best scores at the first stage were in the ordinary course allowed to continue their shooting, and at the same time became winners of not less than £1. The first stages in the King's consists of seven shots at 200, 500, and 600 yards respectively, and it is, therefore, possible to deal with the scores at 200 yards made by the 500 out of 1637 competitors who recorded the best scores at the shorter distances. Some 214 of them were unsuccessful in scoring 32 or over, so that the remaining 286, 57 per cent. of the 500, made scores over 32. The position may, therefore, be summarised in the following manner: Scores of 32 or over were made by 43 per cent. of those making the 500 best scores in the first stage of the King's, they themselves representing the best 30 per cent, of the total number entering, and the competitors as a body being the chosen marksmen of the whole volunteer force. The comparison cannot be carried much further, but the figures available at least serve to show that at 200 yards the Morris tube cartridge cannot be much behind the service cartridge for accuracy. This does not entirely accord with our own experience, but it at least goes to show that there is very little, if any, need to use the expensive service cartridge when a miniature production at a third the cost seems its equal for accuracy, which is the main requirement for club work. When to this consideration is added the fact that the accuracy of the cartridge must be considerably greater when fired from an ordinary rifle, as distinguished from the use of the tube screwed into a service arm, the case for miniature rifles for the shorter distances stands proved, at least

Many other competitions have an interest of their own, apart from the details which were available at the time when our report appeared after the termination of the meeting. In the Greener event, for instance, the statistics show that the National Rifle Association netted a matter of £56. 6s. 3d., did not find a penny of Association netted a matter of 2.50, 68; 3.0, did not into a penny of the 2.30 prize money that attracted the entries, and so cleared a handsome profit even after making allowance for ammunition, target and a share of the range expenses. In the 'Miniature' a private firm similarly found the prize money, but the amount we smaller. The conditions were less popular, and only 2.16. 2s. smaller. The controls were less popular, and only 200, 23, gross profit resulted. These two competitions, practically the only two appealing to miniature rife shooters, do not appear to be conceived in a very liberal spirit, and it is to be hoped that the opening for improvement during the present year will not be lost sight of. Among the successful rifles in the miniature competition it is pleasing to note that four out of ten are of English origin, a result due in part to the increasing enterprise of our home firms in this line of business, and, secondly, to the modified rates for the maximum price of ammunition eligible for use in the competition. At first the miniature competition was originated to encourage the production of a rifle selling retail for not more than £3. 10s., and firing ammunition not costing more than 3s. per 100, both retail list prices The value fixed for the rifle was undoubtedly well conceived, for subsequent experience has

THE PRESERVATION OF GAME IN BURMA.

WE ARE INDEBTED to Capt. A. G. Stuart, hon. sec. of the Burma Game Preservation Association, for a copy of a memorial which has been presented to the Viceroy and Governor-General of Inlia, Lord Curzon of Kedleston, and of the reply which has been made to it. The memorialists pointed out that the Association has been formed to check the wanton slaughter of game in Burma, and to encourage legitimate sport. The brow-antlered deer (or Thamin) and the hog deer (or Day) were in special need of protection. In some districts of Lower Burma the former animal was practically exterminated, and in many parts of Upper Burma had become very scarce. The same might be said of hog deer. This was in some manner due to the increase of population and the extension of cultivation, but the main cause was the wholesale destruction, especially in times of flood, carried on by villagers in Lower Burma, who, besides shooting on their own account, lent their guns on hire to Burmans. It was suggested that the power to prohibit the possession and sale of venison during the breeding season in municipal to the state of the palities and cantonments might be extended so as to enable the ocal government to enforce such prohibition in any district or area

were there was dauger of total or partial extermination. The Viceroy, replying to a deputation of the memorialists, said that the question of game preservation in India was one that appealed not merely to the sportsman but to the naturalist. Some persons doubted the progressive diminution of wild life in India, bersons doubted the progressive diministration of when his missions but he thought they were wrong. The facts seemed to point entirely in the opposite direction. Until the time of the Mutiny Hons were shot in Central India; they were now confined to an ever-narrowing patch of forest in Kathiawar. Except in native states, the Terai, and forest reserves, tigers were undoubtedly diminishing. This perhaps was not to be regretted. The rhinoceros was all but exterminated save in Assam. Bison were not so numerous or so easy to obtain as they once were. Elephants not so numerous or so easy to obtain as they once were. Elephanics had already to be protected in many parts. Above all deer were rapidly diminishing in numbers; every man's hand appeared to be against them. Finally, many beautiful birds were pursued for the sake of their plumage, which was required to minister to the heedless vanity of European fashion. The causes of this diminution in the wild fauna of India were in some cases natural and inevitable, in others they were capable of being arrested. Among the preventable causes he would name the great increase in the number of persons who use firearms, the immense improvement in the mechanism and range of the weapons themselves, the unchecked depredations of native hunters and poachers, and in some cases, he regretted to say, native nunters and poachers, and in some cases, he regreted as a lowering of the standard of sport, leading to the shooting of immature animals and the slaughter of females. The result of all these agencies could not fail to be a continuous reduction in the wild game of India. He could not say that the Government of India had hitherto shown much boldness in dealing with the matter; but there was good reason for proceeding cautiously. He could not attach much value to the consideration that wild animal life should not be unduly fostered at the expense of the crops of the people. Where depredations were committed upon crops, or flocks and herds, the cultivator should not be denied, within reasonable limits, the means of self-protection. Similarly it was very important that any restrictions that were placed upon the destruction of game should not be worked in a manner that might be oppressive or harassing to his interests. Among the suggestions which were deserving of consideration were greater restriction, by the charge of fees or otherwise, tion were greater restriction, by the charge of lees or otherwise, upon the issue of gun licences, the more strict enforcement of a close season for certain animals, the prohibition of the possession or sale of flesh during the breeding season, penalties for netting and snaring during the same period, restrictions of the facilities given to strangers to shoot on unlimited quantity of game, and upon the sale and expert of skins and trophics would be, if possible, to frame some direct of spirits, should be missive and elastic nature, the provisions of which should be applied to the various provinces of India in so far only as they were adapted to the local conditions. The question of native states somewhat complicated the matter, but he did not doubt that the Government of India would, where required, meet with the willing co-operation of the chiefs, many of whom were keen sportsmen The subject was one that could not be hastily taken up or quickly decided; but he might say that if the Government of India finds itself able, after further investigation, to proceed with the matter, an opportunity would be afforded to those interested in each province to record their opinions.

THE CASE OF A BULGED BARREL.

An interesting case where a barrel became bulged was submitted to us recently in the hope that we should be able to discover the cause. It seems that the owner had not noticed anything wrong with the gun in spite of the fact that the left barrel had bulged so as to increase the internal diameter by about one-tenth of an inch; in

AFTER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE IN IRELAND.

THE ABODE OF THESE GEESE in the district I visited was an undulating tract of red mountain bog, with coarse grasses growing out of the peat-practically no heather, and not a tree on the horizon. In some parts were large grey boulders, and here and there rocks scattered in profusion, whilst elsewhere for many square miles there was nothing to relieve the eye but innumerable lakes and tarns. Now these sheets of water, which are conspicuous on all sides, afford the one advantage that the gunner has over the goose, for these birds seldom feed out in the open in either a stalkable or drivable position, though occasionally in a strong wind, if previously located, they may be circumvented even there. Every evening at dusk, however, these geese regularly wend their way with loud cries to one of the lakes. If the night is calm they will pitch in the middle of the water, perhaps 200 yards from the shore, and probably will not swim towards the bank till dark, to pull up the grass which grows on the shallows at the edge. If, however, the lake which they are visiting should be but a narrow stretch of water, any portion of which is within range of a point on shore, then the presence of wind is not of such vital importance, and a shot or two may be obtained on a still evening provided there be no moon. But the night of all others for this sport is when the sky is dark and a strong wind-the stronger the better-is blowing, no matter from what quarter. The gaggles will then pitch within thirty or forty yards of the sheltered shore, and the exact spot can often be determined by previous examination of the bank and a knowledge of the habits of the bird. If the wind has blown from the same quarter the previous night the shot should be a certainty, for, though it may take most of the day to discover which bit of water is at that time attracting them, the spot on which they will alight is easily found by the feathers and droppings of the previous evening. Feathers, it is true, may drift about for some time, but the droppings become absorbed into the water, and when no longer fresh are usually invisible.

native advice, we went to some pools about four miles away, where native acrice, we went to some poors about four filles away, where the geese were said to be "pushing each other off the water," but did not see one. The following day we started early for a chain of lakes five or six miles off. On the way my companion O. spied eight geese about 500 yards away, and, although actually pointed out to me, it was a considerable time hefore I could make them out, so exactly did their colours blend with the ground. A fresh breeze was blowing, and we arranged to try a drive. Accordingly I crawled behind a rock about 200 yards upwind of them, mgy I crawted benind a rock about 200 yards dipwind of inten-whilst the keeper got round to their rear, O. remaining in the background out of sight. Upon the keeper showing himself they headed for me, fairly low, and I thought I should get a shot, but they turned off after going about 100 yards and flew out of sight. O. and I then started to examine one of the lakes, whilst the keeper had a look at another. We found evidence of their having been on the water the night before, whilst the keeper on joining us reported no traces of them, but produced a freshly killed goose, which he found near the bank, probably a pricked bird of the which he found hear the bank, probably a pricked bird of the previous day that had dropped in its tracks. It was interesting to me to handle this bird, for my experience thus far had been limited to the contemplation of stuffed specimens through glass cases. The black bars on its breast were well developed, and it had the appearance of being an adult. Needless to say, my desire to secure a couple for myself was now more intensified than ever.

The first night, unfortunately, was wasted, for, relying upon

secure a couple for myself was now more measured and verification. The aftermoon being well spent, and having selected the best place for me to lie in wait, we soon rigged up an effective blind made of the rank grass which grows all round, thus exactly harmonising with the colour of the ground, Behind this I or the ground bank at my bank, extremely snug, and quite sheltered from the wind. O., with the retriever, went off to another stretch of water about half a mile away. 44.40 p.m., for I look at my watch, whilst it was yet light, I heard loud cries approaching nearer and nearer, and a moment later about fifty approaching leaster and reacted, and an approach geese came into view, skimming the surface of the lake and making straight for my shelter. My heart was beating like a steam hammer as my right thumb slid along to make sure that the safety bolt was pushed forward. Not a muscle did I move, but when sixty yards off they turned at right angles and pitched under the bank, 150 yards down the lake. They could not have seen me, or they would not have remained in the vicinity at all. I could only sit still and feast my eyes upon them. At ten minutes past five about thirty more came in, and with a heavy splash plumped down into the water right in front of me. It was now fairly dark, and I judged them to be not further than fifty yards from me, so, having a heavy 12-bore with a 3in, cartridge loaded with No. 2, I got three in a line and pulled the right barrel. To my utter dis-