

The speakers who took part in the ceremony. From left to right: Sir Alfred Vincent, Chairman of the Trustees; Sir Patrick Renison, Governor of Kenya; and Jason Ole Sein, Vice-Chairman of the Kajiado A.D.C., seen speaking

**B**EFORE reading this article, will you please look at the colour centre spread which shows the magnificent setting of Amboseli. The impressive ceremony which marked the formal handing over of the National Reserve to the Masai was held under the yellow thorn trees outside the camp at Ol Tukai—a scene familiar to thousands of tourists all over the world.

This, then, is the priceless heritage which has been entrusted to the Masai and if they continue to adopt their policy of "live and let live" there is no cause for worry.

The speeches of His Excellency the Governor of Kenya, Sir Patrick Renison, the Vice-Chairman of the Kajiado African District Council, Mr. Jason Ole Sein, and the Chairman of the National Parks of Kenya, Sir Alfred Vincent, are reproduced verbatim on the following pages and express the views of the Government of Kenya, the Masai of the Kajiado District and of the Royal National Parks of Kenya.

N. G. H.

# MASAI TRIBES AMBOSELI

## *Formal handing-over*

The Chairman of the Trustees of the Royal National Parks of Kenya, Sir Alfred Vincent, said:

**I** AM glad to have this opportunity of addressing some remarks to members of the Kajiado African District Council and of the local Section Council in the distinguished presence of Your Excellency and senior members of the Kenya Government.

Amboseli has been under the care of the trustees of the Royal National Parks of Kenya since 1948. When we first accepted certain responsibilities for the preservation of wild animals in this area there was some confusion and misunderstanding as to what we intended to do. Some local Masai thought it was the first step towards taking some of their land away.

It is now obvious how incorrect this was. Others thought that it would mean the prohibition of any cattle in Ol Tukai. It must also now be clear how false were these fears.

On the other hand, what the trustees of the National Parks have endeavoured to do is to show the Masai how to preserve the wild life of this area, how to protect the vegetation and grazing, and how to show it to people from all over the world. In the process of doing so, some people gained the impression, perhaps, that we were inclined to be unnecessarily restrictive, especially in times of severe drought when cattle had little to eat or drink.

We have now arrived at the position where Amboseli, as it is generally called, is known to thousands, perhaps millions of people in many countries of the world as one of the most spectacular game areas anywhere in Africa.

# TAKES OVER GAME RESERVE

*ceremony at Ol Tukai*

It has attracted visitors and tourists from far and near, and the wild animals have been photographed many thousands of times.

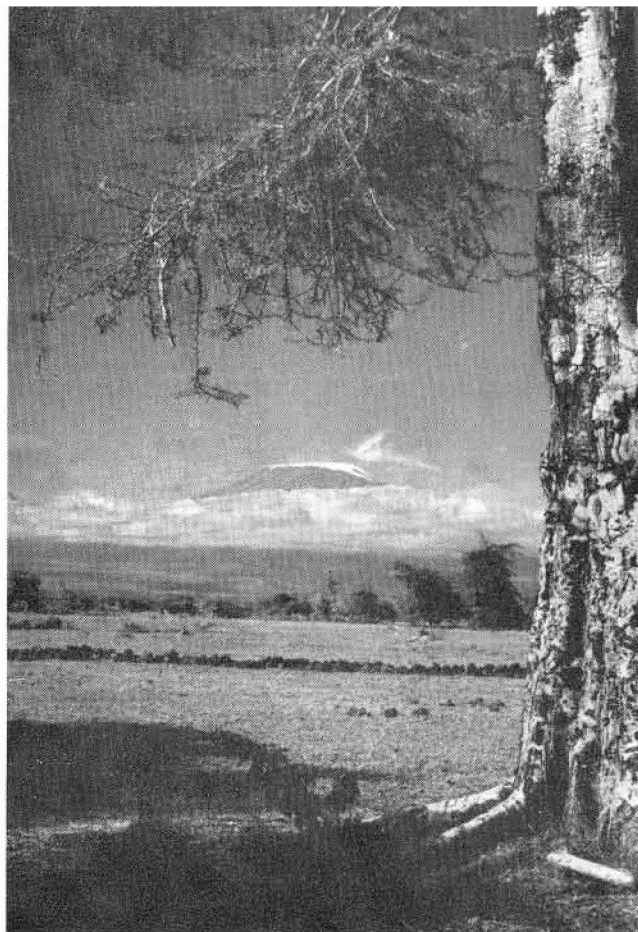
All these visitors spend a great deal of money in Kenya; in shops and hotels, with travel operators, and in buying souvenirs. This money is not paid to the National Parks, but it is a very important factor in bringing money to Kenya. In other words, the Masai have here an asset of very great value and we are proud of the part the National Parks organisation has played in bringing it to its present stage.

We have always passed on to the Kajiado African District Council some of the revenue derived directly from people visiting Amboseli. Over the period of our control, we have paid a total of 110,900 shillings or the equivalent of about 1,100 cattle.

Moreover, the Government, and even some private people, have contributed money and services which have enabled us to provide the buildings, roads and the additional watering points which are now being taken over by the Masai as part of the great asset that has been created during the past twelve years.

I want to thank the Masai for their co-operation and support, which in recent years has been so evident, particularly through the District Council and Section Council and in matters of management, through the committee of elders appointed by the Warden. I am glad that you have recognised Major Taberer's great ability, knowledge and enthusiasm, by asking to have the benefit of his services by continuing as Warden.

I am sure everyone will agree with me in paying tribute to Major Taberer for his very successful management of Amboseli in face of considerable difficulties, which has resulted in



*Kilimanjaro with its foothills, rises, snowcapped and majestic, out of the plains as part of the eternal background to the Game Reserve*

such a fine achievement. The control of Amboseli is being handed over to the African District Council today.

I know that the committee in charge will encounter many problems, as we have in the past, and it will find that the control of a wild life area requires great patience, skill and technical knowledge. I trust that the African District Council will readily accept their responsibilities and that they will direct their policy with wisdom and caution.

I would like to assure the Masai that the trustees and their officers will be very willing to give advice whenever it may be required, and should the Masai at some later stage, decide that Amboseli could derive more security from official international recognition, the trustees will be willing to assist in obtaining such recognition.

It now only remains for me to thank you, Sir, for being present here today, and to thank the Masai for their co-operation over the years, and finally to wish them all success in the management of one of the most important big game and tourist attractions in the world.

His Excellency the Governor of Kenya, Sir Patrick Renison, said:

I AM very pleased to have been asked to take part in this important ceremony today of the handing over of the Amboseli National Reserve by the trustees of the Royal National Parks to the Kajiado African District Council. I am more particularly pleased because ever since I arrived in Kenya I have personally taken a great interest in the preservation of game and in the policy of encouraging Africans to care for and profit by the game in their areas.

I should like to recall to you something which I said when I addressed you in full baraza in July a year ago. I said then that I was pleased to hear that your African District Council desired a closer interest in game and I assured you that I would continue discussions with the Minister for Tourism, Forests and Wild Life to find ways whereby we could show the Masai that game could be as valuable as herds of cattle and in addition be of greater benefit to the country as a whole.

I should like to congratulate you on the fact that only one year later we are able to meet here today to hand over to your care this immensely valuable game area.

The chairman of the trustees, Sir Alfred Vincent, has told you of the work which the Royal National Parks have done here since 1948 and I should like to congratulate the trustees and to thank them and their officers on behalf of the Government for their great achievements. I should also like to associate myself with his remarks regarding Major Taberer and I am pleased to learn that you will be having the advantage of his continued service as Warden.

### Amboseli's world renown

Sir Alfred also mentioned the position of world renown which Amboseli has now reached and how it has become almost a household word because of films and television. Other African District Councils are setting up Game Reserves which will be of benefit both to themselves and to the Colony as a whole; but these other Councils are starting from the beginning whereas you are taking over a concern which is not only running and thriving but which is known throughout the world.

But you are doing more than taking over a thriving concern: it is a kind of trust, since the world at large as well as the people of Kenya will anxiously watch the future management

and progress of Amboseli. I feel sure that you are aware of this great responsibility and that you are willing and able to follow the splendid example which the trustees and their officers have shown you.

I must, however, sound a word of warning. Amboseli's world renown is based on two main assets—its game and the splendour of this mountain, Kilimanjaro. Of its game the rhinos are, perhaps, the most important because of their tameness and willingness to be photographed.

But there is a danger that one of these assets, the rhinos, may disappear. I have been informed that this year very many of them have been illegally killed for their horns. If these rhinos disappeared entirely Amboseli would lose much of its attraction for tourists.

### 'Take stern measures . . .'

Each animal therefore is worth many thousands of shillings to you and to your Council if it remains alive: but dead it is worth only a few shillings to the selfish and miserable poachers who killed it. I hope therefore that you will take the sternest measures to prevent and stamp out this illegal theft of your assets.

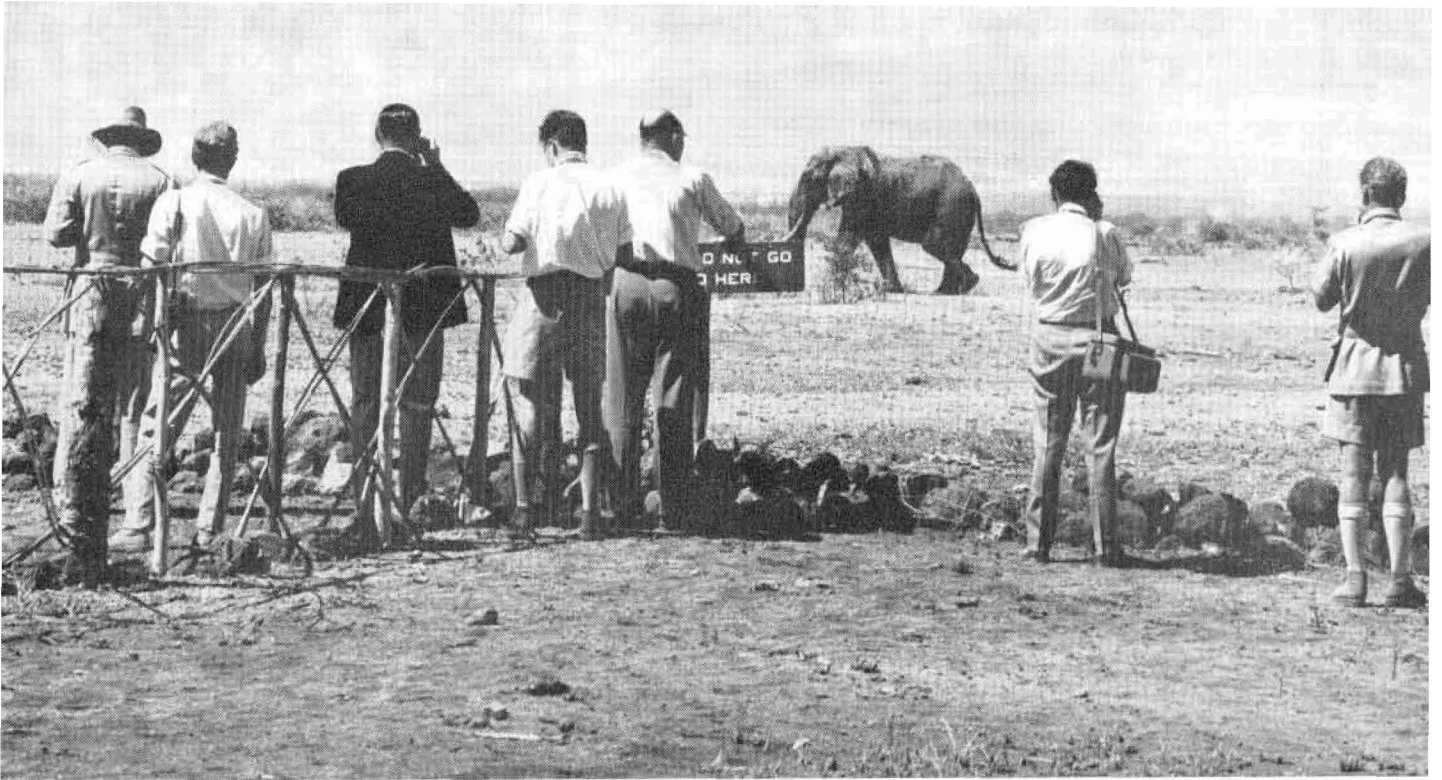
I would also like to make known your wisdom and co-operation in passing by-laws to conserve game in the West Chyulu and Kitengela areas. The former is a game reservoir for your own Reserve of Amboseli and the latter is a vital reservoir for the Royal Nairobi National Park, one of the modern wonders of the world.

This park is as famous as your Amboseli and gives pleasure to thousands and thousands of people of all races because of its unique position within a few minutes' ride of the centre of the city of Nairobi. But this park has the smallest area of any game park in Africa and is therefore entirely dependent on the Athi and Kapiti Plains for pasture to help its grazing herds of game.

Your co-operation in passing by-laws to preserve the *status quo* of these plains is very greatly appreciated by everyone.

It remains for me now to hand over to you the safe-keeping and future development of the Masai Amboseli Game Reserve as it is to be called. We are all anxious that it will continue to prosper and you can be assured that the Government will help and advise you in any way it can.





*The attraction of Amboseli largely centres round the ease with which it is possible to photograph some of the really big game. Here tourists photograph an obliging elephant*

The Vice-Chairman of the Kajiado African District Council said:

I WOULD first of all like to welcome you all today to Masailand and to say how pleased I am you have come to the inauguration of the Masai Amboseli Game Reserve, the management of which has been handed over to the Kajiado African District Council today.

On behalf of the African District Council I would like to express our thanks to the trustees, director and staff of the Royal National Parks for the way they have built up this Reserve to give it the world-wide reputation it has today. We have not always seen eye to eye with them but we always discussed our differences amicably and we always did our best to co-operate in the conservation of game.

We also appreciate the work done by Major Taberer as Warden and appreciate his help in providing cattle watering points and for the personal services such as medical attention he gave to local Masai. We are pleased and grateful he is to be permitted to continue as Warden of the Reserve.

We are grateful, too, to your Excellency, for carrying out your promise to us last July to discuss means with the Minister whereby we, the Masai, could derive a greater financial benefit from the game which we have always

lived alongside in our district, sharing our grazing and our watering points, although the game has sometimes re-acted unkindly in stealing the occasional cow or goat. We are grateful to you and to the Ministry for this opportunity, not only to benefit financially but to show that we always have adopted the policy of "live and let live" so far as game is concerned and that we mean to continue this policy and even, if possible, improve on it.

We can see that in game and tourism we have a valuable addition to our District revenue and, in a year such as this, when so many of our cattle have died and when famine is abroad and when we are in desperate need of revenue for our day-to-day expenses, we appreciate every cent we can obtain.

We realise, too, that the Royal National Park of Nairobi is complementary to the Amboseli Reserve and that tourists coming to visit the one will also visit the other. We have therefore co-operated in giving grazing access to the plains game which migrates between the Athi and Kapiti Plains and the Nairobi Park.

On the other hand, we are a cattle people and cannot live entirely on the proceeds of tourism. We want to leave suitable areas for game but to develop suitable areas as ranches. It is important

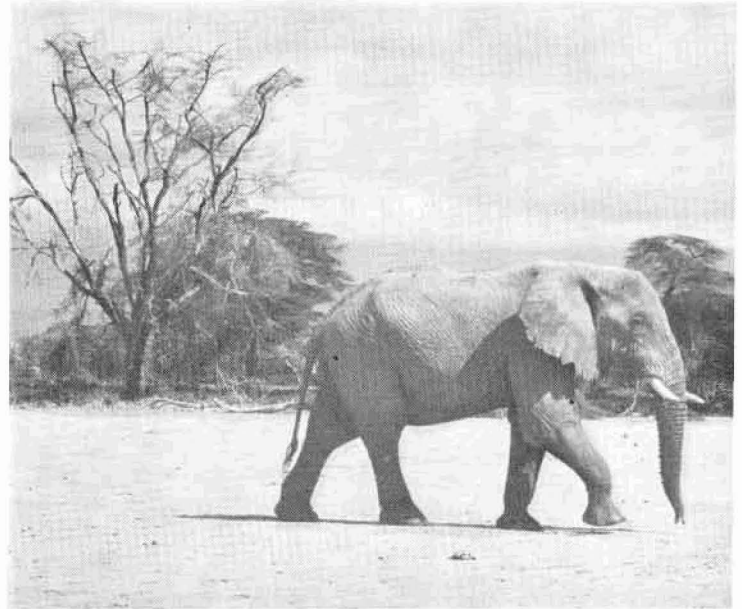
that we provide grazing and water for our people in suitable areas so that we can begin to show them that they should settle down in family groups instead of the nomadic life they now follow which brings disaster in time of drought. Only, too, in this way can we educate our people to care for the land and prevent large-scale erosion.

But to carry out this programme needs money. We do not require a lot of money for agricultural development, as little of our land is suitable for cultivation but we do require large sums to reclaim grazing pasture and instal water supplies, and to set up ranches. We think we can succeed in running Amboseli and in developing it further but we realise that we shall require Government's advice and financial help for a considerable time to come.

It will be one of our first aims to put permanent roads in the area as the present dusty tracks are scarcely tolerable to the vegetation, the game and, most important, the paying visitors.

We need financial help, too, for education. We will have to train our young men to run Amboseli, but how can we do this if we have not the men available with the education necessary to undertake this training?

We want educated Masai youth, too, to go on for further education in the branches of science which make a study of flora and fauna. All this needs cash and our coffers have been sadly depleted by drought. We hope the Government will keep this very much in mind, as only a satisfied, prosperous people will happily and



wholeheartedly care for the game which is so important for attracting foreign visitors.

We want to help with game. We need the Government's help for ourselves and then we can all live happily together.

Again I thank Your Excellency for coming here today to inaugurate this important venture. We hope we can keep faith with the trustees and carry on the legacy they are handing over to us. We shall always welcome their help and advice.

*Rhino (below) and elephant (above) might almost be described as 'domestic' at Amboseli, so common and co-operative are they if never harmed*

