

Rhinos Come to Swaziland

THE FPS has presented to the Mlilwane Game Sanctuary, in Swaziland, two square-lipped (white) rhinos brought from the Umfolozi National Park in Natal. Mlilwane is the only reserve, and these are the only white rhinos, in Swaziland. The reserve is the enterprising private venture of Mr. Terence Reilly, who is trying to develop it, with government blessing, into a microcosm of Swaziland's former wildlife. The Umfolozi Park has a surplus of square-lipped rhinos, thanks to careful conservation measures in recent years under Colonel J. Vincent and his able staff. The two rhinos were collected on February 9th in two 6-ton lorries, one loaned for the occasion and driven by Mr. Nigel Maughn-Brown. The fuel for the lorries was given by the Shell Co. of South Africa. The rhinos travelled well, said Mr. Reilly, and were settling down satisfactorily in a cabled 2-acre paddock in which they were being acclimatised.

Mlilwane is open to visitors and Mr. Reilly has built a rest camp to accommodate sixteen people. The species he has collected include kudu, zebra, waterbuck, blesbok, impala, oribi, serval, and genet. He is now anxious to expand the reserve and, if he can raise the necessary money, buy 350 acres of virginal land on the western boundary. This would extend the reserve up to the mountain on that side and ensure that no farming operations were started on the edge of the sanctuary.

THE FIRST RHINO CALVES BORN IN THE KRUGER

THE Kruger National Park has been taking square-lipped rhinos from the Umfolozi Park for the past three years. Mr. C. J. Venter, the assistant liaison officer of the National Parks Board, reports that eighty-six rhinos have now been transferred, most of them between November, 1963, and October, 1964. In November, 1964, came the exciting discovery of the birth of a calf, which was seen by four rangers—the first calf to be born in the park—and since then two more have been seen. The square-lipped rhino had become extinct before the park was declared, and for thirty-five years the authorities have been trying to get animals to build up a population. Two things made this possible in 1961: the Umfolozi surplus and the great improvement in immobilising techniques and drugs, largely the work of Dr. A. M. Harthoorn of the University College of East Africa in Nairobi. The first animals offered by the Natal Parks Board were taken in 1961. The cost of transport was borne by Messrs. Total Oil Products.

Later the procedure was greatly simplified: once a week a ranger and a mechanic from the Kruger National Park drove a large truck and trailer with two empty crates to the Umfolozi Park. Next morning a game ranger there hunted down and immobilised two rhino which were crated immediately; by nightfall they were on their way to the Kruger.

The birth of the calf is most encouraging, and another incident that the authorities regard as showing that the rhinos have settled down was when a bull rhino charged a pride of lions and sent one male lion clean through the strong boundary fence.