

## On 'the hunted'

I AM a regular reader of your paper, feeling the need to be broadly informed - also on issues and events which are often neglected or distorted by other papers.

I was quite shocked though, when being confronted with your article 'Trophies and the Hunted' by M Verbaan and the editorial 'A threatened lifestyle' (Both in The Namibian of October 16).

These two contributions to the topic of Bushmanland appear so superficial and without any background knowledge by the writers that I feel obliged to comment. The only purpose of the said contributions seems to be one of sensationalism and propagandism aimed at belittling and degrading the interim government - at the cost of sound reporting on the Bushmans' plight and the different possible and realistic alternatives.

Though I share your views on the illegitimacy of the interim government and on soonest implementation of internationally recognised independence, I do not think that this warrants bad journalism aiming at political gain - especially on a subject as important for part of the Namibian nation as this one.

In my opinion, the main statement is a positive one, namely, that the region will *not be proclaimed a game reserve*. This is what the argument was going on about and what concerned people had feared would happen. Your statement "the Cabinet are obviously going to have to lure the prime trophy animals such as lion and elephant into Bushmanland" is quite ridiculous. The "game such as lion and elephant" are NOT "going to flock to the area" as M Verbaan states, because these species are already abundantly present in Bushmanland.

This is exactly the problem the Bushman are faced with all the time! The only possible solution would thus seem a reduction in numbers by hunting. Possibly a very small percentage could be lured out into Koudom game reserve by additional water holes there.

Now to the trophy-hunting; this certainly does NOT imply "rifle-toting hunters" flooding the area every season, or the "region to be inundated by foreigners armed with highpowered rifles, searchlights, jeeps and landrovers".

Trophy-hunting is a very sophisticated form of hunting involv-

# Letters to the Editor



ing highly-skilled professional hunters, trackers and camp staff, as well as skinners - all usually well-paid and good jobs, certainly not to be sneered at the way you did in the editorial.

The "season" for trophy-hunting comprises virtually the whole year, no flood of rifle-toting hunters is involved as is possible during our two month "biltong-hunting season" and no spotlights are used whatsoever, as is the case during the night-culling operations.

This very individualised, exclusive trophy-hunting results in the highest income per hunted animal, while the hunting operation itself is the best paid tourist activity in the country - and all this in foreign currency.

I am stating these facts after nine years' experience as a professional hunting guide. I have also, at the beginning of this month, visited Bushmanland for six days - NOT to get a hunting concession, but to inform myself.

During a conversation with Mr Marshall of the Bushman Foundation, he himself calculated that the income for one trophy elephant would pay for the installation of a complete cattle drinking point - IF the income goes to the benefit of the Bushmen. And this, I believe, is the point where work has to be done - namely to ensure proper distribution of the income generated, so as to benefit the Bushman population.

As far as I know, Mr Hartung, he too would see this matter in the same light, and I would in general agree with you that - if so little consultation with the population and the experts has taken place - this is not acceptable, though this does not at the same time make the decision taken a bad one.

It certainly is a better solution than the practice in the 'good old days' when one of the present day interim government ministers took it upon

himself to "free the population of such problem animals" on taxpayers' expense by shooting from an army helicopter.

ANTON VON WIETERSHEIM  
FARM GRAS  
KALKRAND

## Proud of police

I WAS so confident that you and I have agreed to be honest and serious in our relationship with each other. I had no reason to doubt your intentions to communicate with me in a mature manner. I however intend to keep to our bargain and refrain from being personal and cynical.

1. You can stop being presumptuous. My promotion had nothing whatsoever to do with our relationship or with my correspondence with The Namibian.

2. I am not the Security Police, but I am proud to be a member of that Branch.

3. You will be surprised to learn that my colleagues and I have had an avid interest in the compound system for more than 12 years. We have been deliberating and negotiating with numerous instances and governments to abolish this system. The main reasons amongst others, were to ensure that those people who worked and lived far from their home and their families should be given the chance to live in peace and tranquility and should not be controlled by Swapo's henchmen through intimidation and victimisation. Secondly, we were convinced that the majority of those workers were honest people who desired to be employed and to earn enough money to support their families, but that they inevitably became, directly or indirectly, involved in the conflict between criminals and the police.

4. If you or anybody else is seriously interested to find out what it means to live in a compound, I will be glad to ar-