

PROGRESS REPORT

OF

FOREST ADMINISTRATION

IN THE

PROVINCE OF ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1918-1919.

by F. H. Todd & A. W. Blunt



pp 1-29, 1-59, 1-3

SHILLONG :
PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRINTING OFFICE.

1919.

Price Re. 1.]

[Price 2s.

(c) *Miscellaneous works.*Western
Circle.

26. The expenditure on miscellaneous works was Rs. 1,452 for new works and Rs. 3,887 for repairs. Among new works Rs. 471 was spent on excavating tank at Sonai in Cachar. In Goalpara Rs. 286 was spent in trying to obtain water at the Sanfang camp on the Hel river; the permanent water table was not reached at a depth of 65 feet and it is doubtful whether it is possible to obtain permanent water. Rupees 472 was spent in damming up two new spill channels which had formed and drew off the water from the Garufela river making it too shallow for floating timber. The expedient was successful.

Eastern
Circle.

27. The expenditure on wells, up-keep and fencing of compounds and pay of chowkidars, etc., amounted to Rs. 3,489.

3.—PROTECTION OF FOREST.

Western
Circle.(a) *General Protection—(Form No. 13).*

28. The total number of new cases of Forest offences amounted to 528 as against 572 in the previous year. Of these 211 were taken into court, 307 were dealt with by Divisional Forest Officers and in 10 the offenders were not detected. The decrease is most marked in Sylhet, from 302 to 233, and in the Garo Hills from 65 to 33, while in Khasi and Jaintia Hills there is an increase from 28 to 66.

The Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet, does not offer any explanation of the decrease but it is probably due to the deterrent nature of punishments inflicted which are described as adequate. In the Garo Hills it is probable that the decrease in cases reported was due to the division being under the charge of the Divisional Forest Officer, Kamrup, who could not give the supervision necessary to keep subordinates up to the mark. In Khasi and Jaintia Hills the increase is due to cases of illicit grazing. An experiment was tried to test the effects of admitting a limited number of cattle to certain forests and apparently attempts were made to graze more cattle than the appointed number.

Of the 10 undetected cases, 3 were of setting fire to the forests in Khasi and Jaintia Hills and 7 of grazing in Goalpara in which the owners of the cattle could not be traced.

Of 202 cases involving 643 persons which were carried to a conclusion in court, convictions were obtained in 174 cases against 554 persons or in 86 per cent. of cases; 28 cases involving 89 persons were acquitted and 67 cases remained pending at the close of the year. The punishments inflicted by Magistrates are generally described as adequate.

In Goalpara a bull rhinoceros was shot by a member of a shikar party entertained by the Raja of Gauripur. On the latter reporting the fact to the Deputy Commissioner the latter ordered the payment of Rs. 300 as compensation while the trophy was confiscated and sold.

In Kamrup an elephant hunter was fined Rs. 1,000 by the Deputy Commissioner for catching a wild elephant by "mela shikar" which was not authorized in the mahal. On appeal to the Chief Commissioner the fine was reduced to Rs. 500 which is the limit permitted by the Elephant Preservation Act.

Eastern
Circle.

29. The total number of new cases during the year was 348 as compared with 415 in the previous year. Including the 58 cases pending from last year there were altogether 406 cases, of these 268 cases involving 606 persons were compounded, 4 were undetected, 52 were pending at the close of the year and 80 cases involving 229 persons were taken into court. Of the latter, conviction was obtained in 60 cases and 20 were acquitted, the percentage of acquittals to total cases was 25 per cent. The sentences inflicted are reported generally to have been adequate.

None of the cases presented any noteworthy features and the majority, *viz.*, 213 were in connection with unauthorized fellings, while illicit grazing accounted for 81 cases.

In the 268 cases involving 606 persons which were compounded, Rs. 3,912 were realized as compensation. These works out to Rs. 6-4-8 per person and Rs. 14-3-7 per case.

(b) *Protection from fire—(Forms Nos. 14 and 15).*Western
Circle.

30. Fire protection was again attempted only in the Krungmin and Langting-Mupa reserves in Cachar, where the forest consists largely of deciduous species, in the Shillong pine forests in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and in the Maliata Hill reserve of Kamrup.