

BURMA GAZETTEER

AKYAB

DISTRICT

VOLUME A

COMPILED BY

**MR. R. B. SMART
(DY. COMMISSIONER), SETTLEMENT OFFICER, AKYAB**

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RANGOON**

hardly equal to the demand. The price in Akyab town is nearly double the normal. Other bamboos occur in very small quantities and are usually confined to the banks of streams.

They are *Mraw* a new species of *Schizostachyum*. *Madé-Gigantochloa macrostaehya*. *Prauklin Cephalostachyum pergracile*.

Kyakat. *Bambusa arundinaea* only known in cultivation.

Other products

The only other product likely to be extracted on a large scale is plantain fibre. A small packet of fibre from wild plantains from Kaladan was sent to London in 1914 and divided into qualities valued at £19 to £ 24 per ton."

Fauna

Mr. W. S. Thom, Deputy Commissioner, Hill District of Arakan, has contributed the following regarding the Fauna of the Akyab district :

Animals

"The commonest varieties of wild animals met with practically all over the Akyab district are pig, sambur (*Cervus unicolor*), hog, barking deer (*Cervus percinus* and *Cervus munjac*), leopard, tiger, several species of wild cat and the jackal. In the out of the way uninhabited hilly and thickly wooded portions of the Minbya, Myohaung, Pauk-taw and Maungdaw townships, where they abut on unadministered territory, the Arakan Hill Tracts and Chittagong, large game, such as gaur (*Bos gaurus*), elephant, and two species of rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus* and *Rhinoceros Sumatrensis*), are occasionally met with. Leopard and tiger often appear where they are least expected and prey upon either the people or their cattle, doing sometimes a deal of damage. The rhinoceros is however a difficult animal for the European sportsman to come up with at any time unless discovered wallowing in pools of mud, as they often cover miles of country over steep hills and impenetrable bamboo jungle, whilst they invariably feed and travel at night or during the small hours of the morning. *R. Sumatrensis* is the smallest and most hairy of all known living rhinoceroses. These animals are much sought after for the sake of their blood and horns. The former is said to be worth its weight in silver, whilst a horn of, say, 12 inches, which is a little beyond the average length of the horns of both species, would realize about Rs. 200. The Chinese, in particular, and the Burmans value these commodities which are said to possess valuable properties, when taken internally, both as an aphrodisiac and from a medicinal point of view. When an animal is shot the stomach is cut open as soon as possible in order that all the blood may be collected in bamboos before

it cools. The blood as it gushes straight from the arteries of the heart is considered to be the most precious and efficacious. The open end of the bamboo is then plugged up with leaves, after which it is smoked over a slow fire until the contents are partly cooked, the bamboo being more or less charred in the process. This is done to preserve the blood which would otherwise putrefy. The result is that these animals are ruthlessly hunted down and shot by native hunters and will become extinct in the near future if not preserved. A Chin or Burman hunter, with a small bag of rice, will follow and sleep on the tracks of a rhino for days together until he comes up with it either asleep or in its wallow. The hilly impenetrable bamboo covered stretches of Northern Arakan are among the few localities in Burma where the rhinoceros is still fairly plentiful. Bears are not plentiful anywhere in Arakan but there are two species of these animals to be found in the densely wooded and rocky parts of the northern, western and eastern portions of Arakan proper. These are the Malay bear (*Ursus Malayanus*) and the Himalayan black bear (*Ursus terquatus*). Some damage used to be done by these animals to the fruit gardens situated along the banks of the Lemyo river in the vicinity of the Lehnyindaung. The red Arakan serow, the law seik and law. myin of the Burmans, the rha of the Arakanese and the Burmese goat, antelope and ' *Nomerhoedus Sumatrensis* ' of naturalists, are more plentiful in Northern Arakan and the Chin Hills than in the Akyab district. They are nevertheless found in some parts of the district, such as for instance the rocky precipitous range of hills known as the Mawdôk range which runs into the Kyauktaw township parallel with and to the west of the Pe chaung. Indeed they are to be met with on any bold, high, well wooded, rocky, precipitous hill provided there are no human habitations in the near vicinity. The red serow is as a rule solitary, and is seldom seen in pairs except during the breeding season in March, April or May. They are shy, keensighted, retiring creatures, and may sometimes be seen resting under the shade of a stunted tree down a precipitous slope in the mornings or evenings lying stretched out at full length, and it is astonishing to see how, when alarmed, they plunge away and disappear from the face of what appears to be an almost sheer cliff, after uttering their loud, weird, whistling, hoarse bark or call of alarm. The goral does not exist in the Akyab district although it is found in the adjacent district of Northern Arakan.

The netting of game, such as pig, barking deer and sambur, is carried on throughout the district, wherever the