

# PROGRESS REPORT

OF

## FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN ASSAM,

FOR THE YEAR

### 1901-1902.

BY

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### EXTENSION AND CONSTITUTION OF STATE FORESTS.

##### (i) ALTERATION IN AREAS.

The following figures give a summary of the changes :

Class of forest.	Area on 1st July 1901.	Added during the year.	Excluded during the year.	Area on 30th June 1902.
1	2	3	4	5
	Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.
I. Reserved ... ..	3,609	99	1	3,707
II. Unclassed State ... ..	17,239	976	350	17,865

2. In reserved forests the additions are due to further reservation by law and rectification of the area of the Langai reserve in the Sylhet division, and the exclusions to disforestation and alienation of reserves in favour of tea and ordinary cultivation, and, as regards 7 acres, for a railway line diversion of the Assam-Bengal Railway.

3. In the unclassified State forests, changes are due partly to the formation of reserves and partly to usual annual relinquishment, and leasing of waste lands and corrections in the area of the district. The 99 square miles of new reserves, with the exception of 477 acres, did not alter the unclassified State forest area, as they were formerly included under the head of "Areas of the district about which no information is available." (See Appendix I.)

##### (ii) FOREST SETTLEMENT.

4. The expenditure during the year was Rs. 1,385 in the Cachar division on account of compensation paid to villagers for alienation of their rights in the Barail reserved forest. Form 47 shows that 99 square miles were notified as reserves, whilst 13 square miles were undergoing settlement at the close of the year.

##### (iii) DEMARCATATION.

5. Demarcation cost Rs. 2,945, of which new work cost Rs. 94, repairs Rs. 2,838, and internal compartment lines Rs. 13. Twelve miles of artificial boundary were newly demarcated, *vis.*, 9 miles in the Cachar division, one mile in the Kamrup and two miles in the Sibsagar division. The cost of new work in Cachar was charged to roads. A length of 1,143 miles of artificial boundary was repaired. In the Sibsagar division, the length of artificial boundary was reduced by one mile owing to recomputation. The total length of natural boundaries not requiring artificial marks increased from 1,450 to 1,491 miles owing to the reservation of 99 square miles during the year under report. The usual system of clearing boundary lines from 8 to 14 feet broad, and the erection of earthen mounds with a strong wooden post in the centre at important points, was followed. Four permanent masonry pillars were erected on the four corners of compartments 16 and 17 of the Charduar plantation.

Division.	C.—Fires beginning inside the reserve or fire-traced areas —concl'd.										Causes unknown.	Total A, B, C and columns 22 and 23.		
	By intentional firing.						Total C.							
	In order to obtain new grass.		In order to turn out game or to reduce cover.		Maliciously fired.									
	Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.	Number of fires,	Area burnt, in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.			Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
Goalpara	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	500	1	9,600	7	20,453		
Darrang	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	158		
Nowgong	...	...	...	...	2	7	2	7	...	...	3	12		
Khasi and Jaintia Hills.	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3	1	26	3	29		
Garò Hills	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	*		
Total	...	...	...	...	2	7	5	510	2	9,626	17	20,652		

\*Area burnt = '004 acre.

27. It is very satisfactory to report that no fire occurred in the Kamrup division, and that the fire which occurred in the Jinari reserve of the Garò Hills division, due to accident when burning the boundary line, burnt only a very small area ('004 acre) and did no damage to the forest.

28. The main results as exhibited in Form 52 and the above statement show that attempts to protect these forests were very successful. This is no doubt due partly to commendable exertions made by the protective staff, as well as to the season being favourable. The rains which fell in March and April contributed a great deal to diminish the chance of a fire occurring in the protected area.

29. Of the two fires which occurred in the Bijni reserve—the partially protected area—the first one, covering an area of 9,600 acres, is attributed to *shikaris* who, it is thought, intentionally set fire to it in order to destroy cover which might have formed a harbour for game that was being hunted on the other side of the Manas river by means of one of those gigantic drives organised by His Highness the Maharaja of Kuch Behar. Large fires in this reserve are always synchronous with the advent of this large shooting party within its vicinity or within the very area itself. Such large beats always involve fires, no matter how careful himself and strict in his instructions to his *shikaris* His Highness may be. It is hoped, too, they will no more be permitted within the reserve.

The second fire was caused by fire crossing from the Bhutan territory on the north-west corner—an unprotected portion of the reserve.

30. One of the two fires in the Suang reserve of the Nowgong division was due to incendiarism. The offender was prosecuted and, on conviction, sentenced to three months' imprisonment. The other fires call for no special remarks.