

PROGRESS REPORT

OF

FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1902-1903.

CHAPTER I.

EXTENSION AND CONSTITUTION OF STATE FORESTS.

(i) ALTERATION IN AREAS.

The following is an abstract of the changes made in the forest area of the circle during the year:

Class of forest.	Area on 1st July 1902.	Added during the year.	Excluded during the year.	Area on 30th June 1903.
1	2	3	4	5
	Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.
I. Reserved	3,707.56	70.30	...	3,777.86
II. Unclassed State	17,864.58	813.71	378.07	18,300.22
Total	21,572.14	884.01	378.07	22,078.08

2. Form No. 46 shows the details of alterations. Seventy square miles of new area was added to the reserves, *viz.*, 66 square miles in the Goalpara and about 4 square miles in the Garo Hills Division. The Kochugaon reserve (Goalpara) is not rich in tree growth and has been added primarily to establish forest villages therein, so as to form a labour supply for the forests. The Garo Hills additions were made chiefly to extend the area of existing *sāl* reserves along a line of export, as recommended in the Inspector General of Forests' note of 31st March 1896.

3. Appendix I to this report exhibits details of alterations made in the area of unclassified State forests consisting chiefly of leased areas relinquished and others given out on settlement, and in one case an addition of 613 square miles formerly omitted in the Lakhimpur district, the result being an actual increase of about 435 square miles to the Unclassed State forests.

(ii) FOREST SETTLEMENTS.

4. On the 70.30 square miles finally settled and notified as reserves during the year, a sum of Rs. 480 was spent for compensation for disturbance to two householders in the *sāl* forests added to the Songsac and Angratoli reserves.

There were 57 square miles of forests undergoing settlement during the year. A sum of Rs. 40 was paid to acquire 7 *bighas* of this area that was included in the Sildar Hill proposed reserve, Kamrup, which has been notified as a reserve since the close of the year.

Details of areas undergoing settlement are shown in the accompanying Form 47. Of these, the Pantan reserve is practically settled, but the Forest Settlement Officer and the Divisional Forest Officer have neglected to sufficiently define and illustrate by a map the boundaries as finally settled, hence the area has not yet been finally notified.

above area, 996.6 square miles were successfully protected, the proportion of failure being '22 per cent., against '33 of the previous year. The total area burnt was 2.2 square miles, against 3.3 square miles in 1901-1902.

27. The total expenditure on the areas for which special protective measures were adopted was Rs. 7,490, or Rs. 7-8-0 per square mile. The area successfully protected cost Rs. 7-8-3 per square mile, as compared with Rs. 8-4-7 per square mile in the preceding year.

28. Besides the areas attempted to be specially protected, partial protection was afforded to 196 square miles of the Bijni reserve separately shown in Form No. 53 attached to this report. Of this area, 17 square miles were burnt owing to a big fire which entered the reserve from the Bhutan frontier, the unprotected side. The protection of the whole area cost Rs. 384, or Rs. 2-2-4 per square mile of the area successfully protected, compared with Rs. 2-3-1 in 1901-1902. The percentage of failures was 8.7, against 14.8 in 1901-1902.

29. The following statement shows the origin of the fires and their number, together with the areas burnt in each case, during the year under report :—

Divisions.	A		B		C.—Fires beginning inside the reserve or fire traced areas.																Total A, B, C and columns 25 and 26.								
	Fires caused by accident or through carelessness in burning the forest.		Fires entering the forests by crossing adjacent fire lines.		Duing to carelessness or accident.								By intentional firing.																
	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.	Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt, in acres.											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26			
Goalpara	—	—	—	1	10,121	1	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14,972		
Kamrup	—	—	1	81	—	—	1	33	1	65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	166	
Darrang	—	—	—	—	192	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	192	
Nowrang	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	100
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	54	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	54	
Garo Hills	—	—	—	—	8	40	3	21	3	219	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	320	
Total	—	—	1	82	11,513	5	10	1	679	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13,127		

30. Form 53 shows that out of 639,242 acres of specially-protected forests, only 1,425 acres were burnt. This result is very satisfactory, and it is especially gratifying to note that our attempts to save valuable *sal* forests met with almost equal success in each division. Great credit is due to the Divisional Officers and the protective staff concerned for their commendable exertions which produced such good results, considering the fact that the season was very dry.

31. In the Goalpara Division, the only fire of any importance was the one which entered the Bijni reserve from Bhutan, burning 17 square miles of it. This danger cannot be overcome, as the graziers who set fire to grass lands in Bhutan near Bijni reserve are beyond the control of district authorities. On this side of the reserve too protection has not yet been given. It is under contemplation to fully protect this Bijni area. Any further expenditure, however, on its protection from a purely forest improvement point of view is open to serious argument on the score of expense. It is thought perhaps, however, that it may be undertaken in the interests of natural history, so as to form a large area protected from fire as a home for that fast decreasing but interesting animal the rhinoceros.

32. Of the 23 fires which occurred during the year, 8 were in the Garo Hills Division, burning 870 acres. One fire case was compounded on payment of Rs. 30. One case was sent up to court and disposed of during the year under report, whilst the

FORM No. 53.

FOREST DEPARTMENT, ASSAM.—AREA OF FOREST TRACTS PROTECTED FROM FIRE DURING THE FOREST YEAR 1902-1903.

Division.	Forest tracts.	Year in which protection commenced.	Area protected during 1901-1902.	Area attempted to be protected.	Failures.	Area actually protected.	Cost.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	<i>Area specially protected.</i>		Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Rs.	
Goalpara	Guma Range	1876-77 to 1892-93.	16,786	16,786	...	16,786	359	
	Western Range	1875-76 to 1892-93.	150,086	150,587	90	150,497	1,057	
	Eastern Range	1876-77 to 1900-1901.	167,077	168,469	...	168,469	1,101	
	Total	...	333,949	335,842	90	335,752	2,517	
Kamrup	Kulsi Range	1873-74 to 1886-87.	60,907	60,907	15	60,892	699	
	Rani Range	1873-74 to 1882-83.	11,035	11,035	...	11,035	135	
	Singra Range	1882-83 to 1889-90.	17,596	17,596	91	17,505	448	
	North-Eastern Range	1889-90	5,683	5,683	...	5,683	160	
Total	...	95,221	95,221	106	95,115	1,442		
Darrang	Central Range	1873-74 to 1878-79.	5,634	5,642	195	5,447	127	
	Western Range	1883-84	17,222	17,372	...	17,372	188	
	Total	...	22,856	23,014	195	22,819	315	
Nowgong	Western Range	1873-74 to 1888-89.	27,602	27,602	100	27,502	302	
	Central Range	1873-74 to 1889-90.	47,451	47,456	...	47,456	347	
	Eastern Range	1879-80 to 1889-90.	16,723	16,730	...	16,730	156	
	Total	...	91,776	91,788	100	91,688	705	
Khasi and Jaintia Hills.	Shillong Range—							
	Reserved Forests	1881-82	967	967	47	920	1,152	
	Unclassed State forests	1874-75	3,589	3,618	17	3,601		
Total	...	4,556	4,585	64	4,521	1,152		
Garo Hills	Northern Range	1887-88 to 1889-90.	46,099	46,914	530	46,384	860	
	Southern Range	1889-90	26,098	28,038	*	28,038	252	* Area burnt '037 acre.
	Western Range	1889-90	13,840	13,840	340	13,500	247	
	Total	...	86,037	88,792	870	87,922	1,359	
Total area specially protected.	...	634,395	639,742†	1,425	637,817	7,490	† Reserves 635,148 acres, unclassified State forests 4,094 acres.	
	<i>Area partially protected.</i>							
Goalpara	Eastern Range	1888-89 to	106,950	125,510	10,895	114,615	384	
	Bijni Reserve	1894-95.						
	Total	...	106,950	125,510	10,895	114,615	384	
Grand total	741,345	764,752‡	12,320	752,432	7,874	‡ Reserves 700,658 acres, unclassified State forests 4,094 acres.