



PROGRESS REPORT  
OF  
FOREST ADMINISTRATION  
IN THE  
PROVINCE OF ASSAM

FOR THE YEAR

1931-32

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SHILLONG

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21. The anti-poaching campaign in Goalpara and Kamrup continued during the year. Mr. M. C. Jacob, Assistant Conservator of Forests, was in charge of the campaign in Goalpara up to the end of January 1933 when he proceeded on leave. Mr. M. M. Srinivasan, Assistant Conservator of Forests, took charge of the campaign up to the close of the year.

In Goalpara there were altogether 10 poaching cases included in figures above. Four of these, involving 48 persons, were compounded for Rs 659 or Rs 13-12-0 per head. The other 6 cases involving 14 persons are being tried under the Indian Arms Act. Two of them have resulted in conviction and 4 are pending. In the two cases convicted one accused was sentenced to 1 year's rigorous imprisonment and one to a fine of Rs. 100. In both cases, the guns were confiscated.

Absolute prevention of poaching within the vast area of reserves with the present inadequate staff is hardly possible but it is reported to have been reduced. The effect of sending a detachment of the Assam Rifles in the previous year and the presence of patrols, certainly had a deterrent effect and made it more difficult to indulge in wholesale slaughter of animals.

25. In order to stop smuggling of both Rhino horn, which is extremely valuable, and ivory, the question of classification of these two articles as forest produce wherever found, is under consideration.

Section 24 of the Assam Forest Regulation has been amended and any person who now kills a Rhinoceros in a reserved forest is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with a fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or both.

26. In Sibsagar, however, a case of Rhino shooting in the Kaziranga Reserve was detected where the accused persons were caught red handed. In spite of this the accused persons were acquitted. The guns were, however, confiscated and the horn was sold in auction for Rs. 1,230. The Divisional Forest Officer appealed to the Deputy Commissioner for a retrial of the case on the grounds that the Magistrate's decision was not in accordance with the evidence of the case but Government ruled that no appeal could be filed. This is a very good instance of how lightly some Magistrates are apt to regard cases of poaching of this nature. Unless something can be done to ensure that when the few cases of this sort which are discovered will receive a proper trial and adequate sentences will be passed, our efforts at protection of Rhino are bound to fail.

For the protection of two horned Rhinoceros in Cachar, special steps have been taken to patrol the country where these animals are supposed to live.

Rhino are fond of lowlying country covered with tall thatch and *ekra* through which they roam about and wallow in the mud but with the gradual opening out of such places to cultivation, we have ourselves tended to make existence of these animals precarious.

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

27. In Goalpara, of 1,478 acres of the natural and artificial regeneration areas under protection 1,350 acres were actually protected during the year. Controlled burning was done in the rest of the forests as far as possible as prescribed in the Working Plan.

In Kamrup, attempts to protect 5,970 acres from fire were very successful. In Khasi and Jaintia Hills, failures occurred in the case of 190 acres but the damage done was not great.

(c) *Protection from cattle—(Form No. 16.)*

28. A cattle breeding experiment has been started within the Manas Reserve in Goalpara by the Live-Stock and Dairy Expert who visited this area to demonstrate the process of machine-castration and to reduce the number of useless bulls. He also selected and branded two of the best local young bulls for the purpose of breeding. The cattle owners are co-operating and every effort is being made to make the experiment a success.