

R. 76-77.

Rules for the regulation of sport in reserved forests.

taking up as reserved forest a sufficient area of suitable land, and he would be glad to learn from you your opinion on this idea, and to receive any suggestions you may be able to give in regard to the locality and the area which should be selected. It would not be desirable that the formation of the reserve should prejudice the development of cultivation, but there must be extensive areas suitable as habitats for the rhinoceros which are quite unculturable.

No. 77.

Dated Jowai, the 28th August 1903.

From—J. C. ARBUTHNOTT, Esq., C.I.E., I.C.S.,

To—The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

In reply to your No. 2160 Misc.—9628G., dated the 18th December 1902, on the subject of establishing an asylum for the rhinoceros by taking up as reserved forest a sufficient area of suitable land, I have the honour to forward in original a trace showing the area in North-west Kamrup which has been proposed by Major Gurdon as a reserve.

Major Gurdon gives the following description of this tract.—“All along the foot of the hills there is a strip of Khair and Karai forest varying in breadth from about 4 miles to about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile with some swamp, near Oosla and Lahapara. The whole area does not contain a single village, for people will not live there for fear of the Bhutias. The Kacharis have no rights in the proposed reserve, but they go up sometimes to fish and also to shoot.”

Major Gurdon suggests that, if the reserve is constituted, the Deputy Commissioner should be made responsible for it and be given the authority to issue shooting licenses only on certain conditions.

As regards the district of Goalpara, the existing forest reserves afford the rhinoceros a certain amount of protection. I would, however, observe that if, as in the past, shooting parties from Bengal or elsewhere are allowed to enter those forests, it is absolutely necessary to place a limit on the game to be shot and to discourage the unsportsmanlike practice of indiscriminate shooting to swell the bag. Government officials who have special opportunities will welcome a limit if it is rigorously enforced in all cases.

In Nowgong I recommend the formation of a reserve to the west of Laokhowa and north of Juria between the Leterijan and the Brahmaputra river and in the Golaghat subdivision of Sibsagar in the vicinity of Kaziranga. The rhinoceros is not now found elsewhere on the south bank of the Brahmaputra between Dibrugarh and Dhubri. It has been exterminated within recent years in North Lakhimpur and in the country between the Dikhu and Jhanjimukh and Disang and Dehingmukh.

Individuals maintain a precarious existence in Eastern Tezpur so that no time should be lost in forming small reserves near Kaziranga and near Laokhowa in Nowgong. At both places a suitable area of uncultivated and uncultivable waste, destitute of inhabitants, can be reserved without prejudice to cultivation. If desired, I can indicate the tracts on the map and roughly describe the boundaries.