

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT  
ON  
**FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN THE PRESIDENCY  
OF BENGAL**  
FOR THE YEAR 1920-21.

CHAPTER I.—CONSTITUTION OF STATE FORESTS.

1.—Alteration in Area (Form No. 7).

1. The area of Reserved Forests decreased by 2 square miles to 4,906 square miles. In connection with the development of Kalimpong as a hill station 1,101 acres were disforested in Lolegaon block in order to accommodate dispossessed *khas mahal* tenants, and strips of land along the Darjeeling-Himalayan line amounting to 136 acres in the Darjeeling Division and 148 acres in Kurseong which had been temporarily made over to the Railway Company were finally excluded from the reserves.

A number of small areas in northern Bengal were transferred temporarily to the Public Works Department for quarries and other purposes, as usual.

2. In the Protected Forests the only change was an exclusion of 3 square miles in the Sundarbans Division owing to the disforestation of the third portion of lot No. 123 which was leased in 1901.

No changes occurred in the Unclassed State Forests.

3. The total areas at the end of the year were :—

	Square miles.	Percentage of the total area of the Province (78,836 square miles).
Reserved Forests ...	4,906	6.22
Protected Forests ...	1,762	2.23
Unclassed State Forests ...	4,030	5.11

2.—Forest Settlements (Form No. 8).

4. No settlement was completed during the year. A reference to Form No. 8 shows that the areas under settlement are small, in fact they are chiefly proposed additions to existing reserves or small outlying areas and most of them are situated in North Bengal.

Delay in the final settlement of the larger areas may be due to acquisition proceedings or to funds not being available to pay the compensation assessed on private property. The compensation for the Ramshai extension was paid during the year but the final notification both of it and of the Torsa reserve still hangs fire.

5. Among the areas taken in hand during the year are two small forests each of  $\frac{1}{2}$  square mile in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which have been proposed in order to help the supplies to bazars. Their control will be vested in the Deputy Commissioner. No progress was made with the proposals for the larger areas in the same Division which were mentioned in last year's report; opinion is not unanimous as to the advisability of constituting them forest reserves.

3.—Demarcation (Form No. 9).

6. While there was practically no increase in the total length of boundaries the length still requiring to be artificially demarcated was reduced by 12 miles and this part of demarcation is considered to be complete in all Divisions except Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

the reserved forests. The percentage of success was 98·7 in comparison with 99·4 in 1919-20. The cost of protection was Rs. 3-7 per square mile protected but this cannot be compared with the figures of other years for the reasons given already.

The supposed origin of the fires is stated in Form No. 15.

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

31. The distribution of the reserved forests open and closed to grazing during the year was as follows :—

Closed to all animals for the whole year	...	...	85 per cent.
Open to browsers for the whole year	...	...	12 "
Open to all animals except browsers for the whole year	...	...	2 "
Open to all animals except browsers for part of the year	...	...	1 "

The two Divisions in which none of the reserves are open to grazing are the Sundarbans and Chittagong Hill Tracts.

32. The prescriptions of the revised Working Plan for the Darjeeling forests make the control of grazing much easier. Fences are erected round the closed areas wherever they are needed. The construction of the Government *bathans* for stall feeding is progressing. There were 4 in use, one will be opened in a few months and two more next year when the grazing grounds attached to the sheds are ready stocked with grass. In addition the sites for 5 more have been cleared and these will be ready next year if funds are found for building the sheds.

33. In the plains as the regeneration areas are constantly patrolled the injury done by grazing during the year was not great. In Chittagong and Cox's Bazar however the intensity of grazing in some of the reserves is much greater than in the northern forests; in these two Divisions passes were issued for 20,604 animals in the nine months and there can be no doubt that as cultivation increases and the number of buffaloes with it the grazing question will acquire more importance.

Allowing for the shorter period under review there seem to have been rather fewer animals impounded for illicit grazing than usual, the number being 3,147 as compared with 5,057 last year. Decidedly fewer were sent to the pound in Buxa and Jalpaiguri.

(d) **Protection against injuries from natural causes.**

34. Nature is very prolific in Bengal in her gift of fast-growing species of valuable timber trees, but the balance is kept by their numerous enemies and sources of damage which call for more careful and expensive measures of protection than in the cooler and drier and less luxuriant provinces of northern India.

35. *Insects.*—In the plantations of *tun* in Kalimpong and Jalpaiguri the Twig borer (*Magiria Robusta*) continues to be troublesome and in the former Division the *panisaj* (*Terminalia myriocarpa*) is attacked in a similar manner. The Divisional Forest Officer, Buxa, again notes the occurrence of the longicorn *Hoplocerambyx Spinicornis* in the *sal* in the clear fellings of Rajabhatkhawa compartments 16 and 18.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts the defoliation of Teak is only not reported because the period of this report does not cover the months of the attack, but in that Division some damage was caused by a Twig borer to the leading shoots of *gambari* (*Gmelina arborea*) planted in pure patches. Teak attacked by the borer (*Haplohammus Cervinus*) in young plantations were cut out.

*Wild Animals.*—In Darjeeling the bases of the stems and the leading shoots of planted species especially *champ* (*Michelia excelsa*) are severely nibbled by deer; the best form of protection seems to be the making of living fences of *asari* (*Mussaenda frondosa*) round each stem. At all elevations both in the hills and plains almost every species except Teak is seriously damaged by game unless fenced in a very careful and, in the plains, solid fashion. Occasional elephants and in parts of Buxa rhinoceros break through the strongest fences. Pigs and porcupines caused much loss