

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
ON
FOREST ADMINISTRATION IN THE PRESIDENCY
OF BENGAL.
FOR THE YEAR 1922-23.

CHAPTER I.—CONSTITUTION OF STATE FORESTS.

1.—Alteration in Area (Form No. 7).

1. The area of Reserved Forests was increased by 17 square miles and rose from 4,910 square miles at the commencement of the year to 4,927 square miles at its close. The increase was chiefly due to additions to the Khairbari forests in the Jalpaiguri Division amounting to 3,000 acres, the extension of the Rydak reserved forest by 6,000 acres, and the Chilapata extension to the South Borojhar Reserve by 1,344 acres, both in the Buxa Division, and the extension of the Teknaf Reserve by 501 acres in the Cox's Bazar Division.

2. The Protected Forests were diminished by 2,561 acres in the Jalpaiguri Division, which were created reserved forests.

3. The area of the Unclassed State Forests remained unaltered during the year.

4. The total area at the close of the year stood as follows :—

	Square miles.	Percentage of the total area of the province (78,668 square miles).
Reserved Forests	4,927	6.26
Protected Forests	1,752	2.23
Unclassed State Forests	4,030	5.12

2.—Forest Settlements (Form No. 8).

5. At the beginning of the year 42 square miles were under settlement and further areas aggregating 137 square miles were taken in hand during the year. The areas finally settled totalled 28 square miles, but of this 11 square miles, though finally notified as reserved forest, have been shown under settlement as the reservation took effect after the close of the year. The area undergoing settlement at the end of the year was therefore 161 square miles. The details are as follows :—

(a) Areas which have been declared as reserved forest but have not been shown in Form No. 7 :—

	Sq. miles.
Jalpaiguri ... Ramshai extension to Lower Tondu and Daina	8.98
Other Divisions	1.79

(b) Areas the settlement of which was not completed during the year—

	Sq. miles.
Buxa ... Torsa Reserve	13.08
Other Divisions	.40
Compensation for jotes included in the Torsa Reserve has been paid and a notification under section 19 is all that remains to be done to complete the reservation of this area.	

(c) Areas for which preliminary notifications with a view to settlement as reserved forest of forest lands were issued :—

	Sq. miles.
Chittagong Hill Tracts ... 3 areas	136.00
Other Divisions	1.18

The *tun* twig borer (*Magiria robusta*) is universal. In the Pankasari Range (Kalimpong) where the tree grows to magnificent dimensions much young *tun* has been planted, but owing to the pest the mixture of *utis* and *pipli* has been substituted, at least temporarily.

Similarly the teak and *gambari* plantations of Chittagong and the Hill Tracts have to be watched for the attacks of the borer *Haplohammus Cervinus*. This appeared somewhat seriously in the new 1921-22 plantations of *gambari* at Hazarikhil (Chittagong) but were less noticeable than usual in the Kaptai areas.

Wild animals.—Sambur played havoc among the *mandani* which had come in naturally in the rather unsuccessful unfenced Minglass (Kalimpong) plantations, bending over the taller stems to browse them. They treated numbers of *gambari* at Kaptai similarly and also browsed *tun* and *chikrasi*; they are real pests in such places and a good many were shot off all over the circle. Elephants were less troublesome; their numbers have been much reduced in the Duars.

Rhinoceros constantly break the wire-wove fences in a few places and at Mendabari pig got in through the gaps and up-rooted the *sal* seedlings in the lines of the 1921 plantation. On the whole however the fencing of plantations with combined barbed wire and wove-wire (Hercules) fencing is completely justified, more especially as the cost of the material has been greatly reduced in the last two years.

Fungi.—There is nothing new to say about the *sal* root-fungus (*Polyporus shorea*). The observation plots were maintained.

A large number of walnut poles and *buk* saplings are being killed by a root-fungus in the Batasi (Darjeeling) plantation. Specimens of the attack were sent to Dehra Dun but the fungus has not been identified yet.

Climbers and weeds.—These are especially bad in the evergreen forests of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and in the Chittagong forests in which their reduction is a problem owing to the difficulty of getting labour and its high cost. The Divisional Forest Officer, Kalimpong, also complains of the scarcity of labour for this work in the foot-hills of that division where creepers are exceptionally bad in some of the forests of miscellaneous species. Climbers were cut according to the working plan prescriptions in the *sal* forests, but *Mucuna pruriens* (locally called *kowchu*), a creeper of extremely rapid growth, has appeared as a serious pest in some of the Buxa *sal* plantations, especially at Nimati, where patches of the plants have been covered and killed. The climber is capable of killing *sal* six years old and 18 feet high. Drastic steps have been taken to deal with it.

Erosion and silting.—In the Buxa Division the Divisional Forest Officer writes that the Torsa River continues to cut eastward and may spill into the Molangi. More serious is the continued movement of the Sankos river westwards, some of the water of which is now finding its way into the Golangi stream. Some protective works have been undertaken by the Sankos Tea Company to protect its land, but it is doubtful whether they will check erosion in the Bholka forest some miles lower down.

The silting up of the Karnafuli undoubtedly needs attention over a period of years. The water was so low above Rangamati during the winter that for many days even sungrass rafts which draw very little water were detained between the latter place and Kasalongmukh.

CHAPTER III.—SILVICULTURE.

(a) Natural Reproduction.

(1) State of existing reproduction.

45. Divisional Forest Officers report as follows regarding the seed crop of 1922 but, with so many forest types as there are in Bengal and many species in each, it is impossible to name more than a few of the more important trees :—

Darjeeling—Good, *safed champ*, *buk*, *arupati*, *utis*, *Cryptomeria Japonica* fair, *kapasi*; bad, *pipli*, *kawlas*.