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Progress Report of Forest Administration in the State of Assam for the year 1949-50

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CHAPTER VIII

The Preservation of Wild Life and Elephant Control**I. The Preservation of Wild Life**

142. All Wild Life Sancturaries in the State were maintained during the year under report. Constitution of two more Reserves, *viz.*, Laokhowah in Nowgong and Lalli in Sadiya into full fledged Wild Life Sancturaries is still under Government's consideration. The Kaziranga and North Kamrup Wild Life Sancturaries continue to attract visitors, and attempts are being made to improve the conditions and amenities so as to attract more visitors from inside and outside the State. His Excellency the Governor of Assam, Shri Sri Prakasa visited the North Kamrup Wild Life Sancturary and camped at Phuluguri for two nights. The Central Water Irrigation and Navigation Corporation have taken up survey of the Beki and Manas rivers and collecting of data for the proposed Hydro-Electric Projects at Manas and Beki rivers and as their work is based on Mathurguri which is adjacent to the Sancturary, a certain amount of disturbance to Wild Life is anticipated. The Kaziranga Wild Life Sancturary was also visited by the Hon'ble Minister of Forests and Revenue during the year under report and suggestions to improve the Sancturary were given. Unfortunately there is no provision so far for extra funds for these purposes.

143. The report of the Bombay Natural History Society Party of Naturalists on the Wild Life Sancturaries of Assam was received during the year under report, and is receiving the attention of Government. It has been estimated that a large sum of money running into several lakhs will be required to thoroughly improve Assam's Wild Life Sancturaries in such a manner as to both provide protection for the animals and to attract visitors, and assistance will certainly have to be sought from the Government of India. The film made by the Party is in the course of preparation and compilation.

144. Sancturaries should be sacrosanct for animals and it is a matter of regret that in the North Kamrup Sancturary a Forest Village has been instituted, where its presence will certainly provide a threat to one of the best localities for Rhinoceros, and that revenue operation in the shape of Khoir Mahal fellings was allowed.

145. In the Kazirang Sancturary the Fishery Mahal was terminated and efforts are being made to minimise, if not exclude altogether, grazing by domestic cattle.

146. Considerable poaching in Wild Life Sancturaries is suspected but unless local people living around the Sancturaries co-operate in assisting the apprehension of culprits not much progress can be made. Every possible steps is being taken but due to paucity of staff it is difficult to cope with the problem. Several offences were detected by the protective staff. Offenders were properly dealt with in the Court.

147. Two Rhinos which were captured in 1948-49 from famous Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary were sold to the Cairo Zoo at Rs. 20,000, i. e. Rs. 10,000 each, during the year. Two Rhinoceros were reported killed in Sona-Rupa Sanctuary of which one was subsequently found to be a natural death. One Rhinoceros migrated from Darrang to Kamrup and took shelter in village areas and was killed by one of the villagers for causing injury to a man. One Rhino was proclaimed in Golaghat Town for killing a boy, and was killed by Srijut Protap Chandra Barua, under Orders of the Government during the year.

148 There was a serious out-break of Anthrax in the North Cachar Hills during the year under report and it is estimated that nearly 150 elephants died and also some Bison and Buffalo. It is suspected that the disease spread from the domestic cattle which contracted Anthrax during June 1949 in a village up the Langting river. In the same area carcasses of bison and wild buffaloes were also seen. The Veterinary Department has been requested to give periodical prophylactic inoculation of village cattle in and around the North Cachar Hills, so that the epidemic may not spread any more. In this connection the interest displayed by the Honorary Forest Officer Shri J. N. Goswami of Nowgong, who visited the North Cachar Hills in the winter following the epidemic and gave a report, is much appreciated.

II. Elephant Control

(a) *Kheddah and Mela Shikar*

149. Reports of crop damage continue to be received from the public during the year under report and Kheddah and Mela Shikar Mohals had to be opened in the areas where there were depredations. The following table gives the names of districts where Mohals were opened and the result of the operations.