

# PROGRESS REPORT

ON

# FOREST ADMINISTRATION

IN THE

## PROVINCE OF ASSAM.

FOR THE YEAR

1912-13.



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190. Twelve logs of timber species likely to prove useful as furniture woods are being seasoned. A technical school with a carpentry section has been opened by the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara at Tipkai and it is hoped that its assistance may be obtained in working up some of the more promising timbers. Arrangements have been made to treat 200 sleepers of *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, one of the commonest hard woods of the deciduous and *sal* forests, with preservatives to test the value of this timber for railway sleepers.

191. In connection with the botanical work being undertaken by Rai Bahadur Upendra Nath Kanjilal opportunity is being taken to revise and add to the list of reserved trees; it appears that there are several as yet unreserved timbers quite as valuable as those already included.

192. The utilisation of grasses for the manufacture of pulp has been under consideration during the year. No very definite schemes have yet been formulated by intending concessionists, possibly as the true commercial value of the grass has not yet been demonstrated. The Local Administration has, however, announced that it is prepared to grant concessions for cutting grasses over defined areas, provided that grazing, cultivation and the cutting of grasses and reeds for domestic consumption and for sale for other purposes than manufacture into pulp are not interfered with. It rests with Syndicates financially in a position to work a concession, to ascertain the value of the pulp and to indicate definite areas required.

Meanwhile, in order to test the value of one of the commonest grasses, 520 maunds of *nal* grass were despatched to the Titagarh Paper Mills; the report received was unfavourable, but it is believed that the causes for the want of success (the season of cutting and the plant used for digesting) can be removed. The chief difficulty will probably lie in obtaining sufficient labour to cut the grass during the short season in which it must be harvested.

193. An experiment in the tapping of *sal* for resin in the Garo Hills yielded negligible results.

194. It has been proposed that arrangements be made for tapping of the Khasia pine which is known to yield resin of a superior quality. In order that the operations may be profitable, a large area of forest in an accessible locality should be sown up with pine. Enquiries are being made with a view to the afforestation of part of the open downs below Borpani. The introduction of *Eucalyptus* as a preventive of malaria is also under consideration; possibly a mixture of pine and *Eucalyptus* may be found convenient.

195. The protection of catchment areas in the Khasi Hills where the rainfall is excessive is also under consideration.

196. The working of the *sal* forests of the Khasi States bordering on the Nowgong and Kamrup districts has been discussed during the year. Fellings are already in progress in Khyrim and a lease has been approved in Mylliem after inspection by an Imperial Officer, while Jirang and Nongkhla forests among others are to be inspected during the coming winter.

197. A cubic foot selling rate of royalty for green *sal* and timber of other reserved trees has been introduced in the Garo Hills in place of a tree rate and a new schedule of royalties has been drawn up approximating the rates more nearly to the market values as obtained elsewhere. The increasing value of agar, the resin exuded by *Aquilaria Agallocha*, has led to the imposition of an *ad valorem* royalty of 12½ per cent. and 6½ per cent. on exports from the Unclassed State Forests and the Siems' territories, respectively, of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

198. The question of experimental borings to obtain water for fire watchers and thus to assist in the fire protection of the Aie and Bijni forests of Goalpara has not materially advanced. The great importance attaching the solution of this problem is alluded to in paragraph 58 above.

199. Negotiations are still proceeding with the Darrang Game Association with a view to its obtaining a lease of the sporting rights in the reserved forests of that district and thus incidentally assisting the Department in the prevention of poaching. Two additions to the reserved forests in Darrang and one in Nowgong with a view to the protection of big game are in progress, while a set of close seasons has been prescribed under Act VIII of 1912 and is being re-issued under the Assam Forest Regulation for reserved and unclassed forests. The shooting of rhinoceros has been prohibited throughout the province.

200. A small labour force of 400 Hazaribagh coolies were imported to carry out extensive road and tramway works in the Goalpara Division. The labour, though expensive, was indispensable.