

industrious person an integral part of their people.

BIG GAME IN ASSAM.

A PROPOSED RESERVE.

Two or three matters of general interest are noted in the resolution on the Assam Forest Report for 1902-3. Among these is the fact that the Chief Commissioner has under consideration a proposal to establish in the Bijni forest a reserve for big game, with special reference to the protection of rhinoceros, which are rapidly becoming extinct. It is probable, however, that even a special reserve will not long avail to preserve one of the most curious of nature's freaks. Formerly the Indian rhinoceros had a fairly wide range, but it is now found only in the Terai and the Upper Valley of the Brahmaputra. In view of the constantly increasing demands for rubber, remarks the "Pioneer," the careful cultivation of this valuable asset of the Assam forests is a matter of some importance. Rubber was yielded by the Charduar plantation to the extent of 6,462lbs., and apart from this the out-turn of home and foreign rubber was 1,307 maunds, against 837 maunds in the preceding year. But the increase was entirely due to the larger imports of rubber from forests not under the control of the Government, and there is every probability that in a short time these forests, with the high price now obtained for the extract, will be over-tapped as the Darrang rubber forests have been, and without skilled supervision the rubber-tappers may easily kill the goose that lays their golden eggs.

However, there is very little doubt that before long an artificial substitute for rubber will be manufactured, so the tappers may be wiser than they intend to be in making use of the present opportunity. The enormous increase in the use of rubber for various purposes threatens to exhaust the world's natural available supply at an early date, and in these circumstances it is most probable that the luck of some inventive genius will do for the natural rubber trade what artificial indigo is in a fair way to be doing for another industry. The Chief Commissioner believes that a considerable proportion of the Diphu and Nambor reserves might with advantage be disforested and thrown open to colonists. The Dhansiri river valley appears to possess considerable agricultural value, and the district is traversed by the Assam-Bengal Railway. Therefore in a country where jungle is as plentiful as it is in Assam, it seems undesirable to lock up agricultural land which grows little valuable timber. The agricultural capacity of the land will therefore be carefully investigated by an expert, and action will probably be taken according to his recommendations. It may be noted that the financial results of the year's working of the Forest Department show a surplus of Rs. 2,44,765.

Lord Methuen has arrived in town after spending a fortnight at Rothes, Elginshire, for