

## OBITUARY

*Mr. J. W. A. Grieve, I.F.S.*

His many friends among the older generation of Indian foresters will have heard, with deep regret, of the death of James Wyndham Alleyn Grieve, on 10th April 1939, aged 67 years.

Grieve joined the Indian Forest Service in 1894 and was posted to Bengal, which in those days included what is now Bihar and Orissa, and he served in every part of that province as well as in the Andamans and, later, in Burma and the Punjab.

He married first Miss Belle Macdonald of Skye whose early death in 1913 cast a gloom over this part of his life but left unabated, or even increased, his energy and enthusiasm for his work. Probably few men have left behind them in India such a varied and extensive record in forests improved through their efforts as Grieve has done.

His early working plan for the hill forests of Darjeeling and Kurseong was a mistake—as he himself readily admitted. It aimed at re-stocking group fellings naturally or, if that failed, artificially. Natural regeneration did not come up to his expectations and he was left with a lot of very scattered planting to do; nevertheless the resulting forest is by no means a failure as those who know what are now called the “twelve-twenty plantations” can testify. I believe this was the only major silvicultural mistake in the career of one who would always take the bold line rather than play for safety.

In 1912, on his return to the northern *sal* forests after an absence of some years, he was at once struck by the evergreen undergrowth that had invaded them during that time. He realised that, unless we changed our methods, *sal* would disappear from lack of reproduction and perhaps the best work he did in Bengal was to lead a campaign, against considerable opposition from the older school, to break away from “selec-

tion-cum-improvement with cleanings." He and his followers started the series of experiments, some of them fantastic enough, which culminated in the adoption of *taungya*. His insistence brought a visit from the Silviculturist followed by the Inspector-General (Professor Troup and the late Sir George Hart respectively) and the preparation of a working plan based on clear-felling and sowing was ordered.

As Conservator he went to Burma in 1916 where he adapted himself to the country as few foresters transferred late in service have been able to do. He would probably have been a good Chief Conservator there but was transferred once more as Conservator in the Punjab where he also became Chief Conservator in 1921. He went there at an unfortunate time, as practically all touring had been stopped for military reasons, and this so disgusted him that he decided to retire early rather than submit to life in an office. In this way India lost a man who might well have become Inspector-General; a sound all-round forester, full of enterprise but free from fads and popular with all who met him.

On retirement he settled on the Border, not far from the old home where his family had farmed for many generations, and led a quiet life gardening, shooting and fishing. He married again and, as both he and his wife were fond of travelling—she was a mountaineer—they spent a good deal of time on the Continent, especially in Norway. Later they moved South, to Beech in Hampshire, where he died.

By letters and visits he never lost touch with his old friends of the Forest Service, whether active or retired, and he was often the means of keeping them in touch with one another.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his widow.

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