

GRAZING GROUNDS.

(Extract from "The Hindu" dated the 8th June 1927).

In order No. 569, Revenue of 13th July 1897, Paragraph 7, the Government has in a lengthy manner and under different heads suggested means of improving the grazing in forests, and in the paper recorded with G. O. No. 285 of 23rd June 1896 it will be seen that the Conservator Central Circle has recorded his opinion that the successful management of grazing areas will be the most important feature in forest administration. The same papers show that the other Conservators are no less alive to the importance of the question, and anxious to dispose of it in the manner most acceptable to the people, so far as is compatible with such production as is absolutely necessary to prevent deterioration of forests and grazing areas.

The Legislative Council has also been and it is thought is still aware of the importance of grazing grounds, for in the Madras Council's Proceedings of 3rd August 1921 the question was again brought up for discussion and decision was in the following manner:

(a) That the plotting of grazing grounds be so made that there are drinking water facilities in every block and that where there are no water ponds in any block water ponds be constructed.

(b) That the improvement and development of the grazing grounds be done systematically by clearing them of shrubs, jungle etc., planting suitable trees and such arrangements so as to make the plot support as many cattle as possible and

(c) That systematic attempts should be made to prevent the inundations of the grazing grounds and a fixed proportion of the income from grazing grounds be set apart for the purpose of providing suitable grazing grounds and for the purpose of improving those in existence.

The Home Member strenuously opposed the measure proposed on the ground of expense, but the council was not to be denied and pushed the proposals to the vote and succeeded with a large majority of 32 to pass them.

So far so good, everything in the garden looks lovely; for the last 30 years proposals have been made, but has anything been achieved and a beginning made on a suitable scale to even complete the scheme in the next 20 years? Have the Forest Department even started working plans on the grazing problem which should be their first aim so as to have regular systematic work carried out, otherwise the subject is surely to be forgotten as the grazing problem is the most important one to the Indian cultivator, even more important than improving his methods, as he must first depend upon the well being of his cattle before he can do anything in furthering his prospects otherwise. The present season which has been a very trying one for pasture and drinking water has accounted for a big death roll of cattle and reduced those living to such a weakened condition that they will not be fit for much work or supply of milk.

In August 1922 this question was discussed in the papers and the Government replied that measures were already under enquiry in one district. It will be gratifying to learn that measures have been continued and enlarged on a suitable scale so that some good has resulted.

This is such a vital question that a detailed enquiry should be made and determined, steps taken to see that it is properly and systematically carried out.

Yelagiris, }
June 4th 1927. }

W. R. McCay.

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