

BRITISH INDIA TO DOUBLE FOREST ACREAGE

British India's area of 100,000 square miles of forests (from which the Army is now being supplied with a million tons of timber yearly) is to be doubled.

This item in the Government of India's post-war reconstruction plans was disclosed by Sir Jogendra Singh, Member for Education, Health, and Lands, in a speech at Dehra Dun, says a New Delhi message.

Speaking at a joint Convocation of the Indian Forest College and the Indian Forest Rangers' College, Sir Jogendra said a larger number of students will be trained at these two colleges to meet the future demand for trained men with the requisite scientific knowledge to carry out the Government's plans for increased afforestation.

This forest, he said, would be created at the villagers' doorstep and the first return of fuel would come from thinnings within five years of planting. Cow dung (now used by villagers as fuel) thus saved for the land, would manure 72,000,000 acres, or 30 per cent of our sown area, and he estimated that this would increase the total food production of India by about 50 per cent.

Sir Jogendra paid tribute to the Forest Research Institute for its research work connected with the war. He said that the more important among the problems which faced the Institute were, firstly, to bring existing reserved forests back to their pre-war position, and to produce the maximum sustained yield of which the soil is capable; secondly the problem of run off floods and erosion, and its consequence; the problem of areas that are becoming dry and unproductive - enormous tracts of land crying out for afforestation; thirdly, the urgent problem of bringing forests to the help of agriculture.

"The problem of run off floods and subsequent erosion," he said, "is perhaps the most important single problem facing India, nay, the whole world, to-day."

Earlier, Sir Herbert Howard, Inspector-General of Forests, said: "In a country such as India the planning of agriculture must go hand in hand with the planning of forestry. Because that fact has not always been sufficiently recognised in the past, India to-day suffers so greatly from poverty and the insufficient production of food for its many millions of inhabitants."

Sir Herbert said that the Forest Services of India were supplying the Army with something like 1,000,000 tons of timber yearly, or enough, placed end to end, to make a track 10 feet wide round the world at the equator.

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