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"Colonialism and Professionalism: A German Forester in India"

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Professional German foresters played an important role in shaping the course of forest management in India during the last century. It is to Sir Dietrich Brandis that the credit for the introduction of scientific methods of management is given. Brandis introduced seriousness and professionalism into Indian forest administration. But in general for Brandis German forestry served as a model for the establishment of systematic forest management in India. When the above is viewed in the light of the further fact that in Brandis' time the knowledge of tropical forests was extremely limited in Germany, a number of problematic issues emerge. The paper explores Brandis' relation with the British government. From the evidence available, it appears that Brandis often felt constrained by the 'narrow mindedness' and the 'prejudice and ignorance' of the government. It is argued that the systematic forestry introduced in India by Brandis was along the lines of forestry developed in very different social and ecological conditions, and that its development was greatly constrained by colonial interests. All rights reserved. © 1996 The White Horse Press

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