

the roots, and when it is sufficiently long the sheep eat it off again, and so on. Thus, no grubbing or ploughing is necessary for the continuance of the grazing. It is only at first that ploughing is necessary. The only thing that is required after furze is once properly established is a firestick and the sheep. In some places surface-sowing on "burns" has succeeded as well as on the ploughed land, but in others it has not succeeded at all. The reason for this I am unable to account for. As far as my experiments have gone, I think it will be better to sow the furze in rows than to sow it broadcast; one special consideration being, when it was found necessary to burn it off in fields where furze has been sown broadcast, the fire sometimes does not overtake the whole of the bushes, and a clean burn can therefore not be obtained without a good deal of labour. We have only experimented so far with the common furze (*Ulex europæus*), but we have a variety which we call the "prickless furze" (not knowing the botanical name). If this furze is preserved by being closed during the spring and summer the sheep can in the winter eat the whole of the spring and summer growth, and thus derive a large amount of nourishment at a time when feed is most scarce. They will eat it right down to the bare stump; and next year it springs up into a similar bush again, and the process can be repeated. This furze has to be propagated by slips, and is therefore very much more expensive, on account of the labour of planting. Experience alone will show whether it will pay. There is another variety; I obtained it from Mr. Webster, of Hokianga. I wrote to Sutton, asking him specially if he could give me any particulars about it. He replied that it was not exactly prickless, but was very much less so than the common furze. He called it a French furze. The advantages are that it seeds. The price of it was 8s. 6d. per pound, and the common furze is about 1s. per pound. I obtain the seed of the latter from Home, as I can get it cheaper than in the colony. We housed twelve sheep at Kerikeri, and fed them on common furze, put through an ordinary chaff-cutter, giving them at the rate of 4 lb. per sheep per day. They were kept in for eight weeks. The sheep were in the usual store condition when the experiment began; at the close of it some were quite fat, and the others ranged down degrees of fatness to fair stores. In watching the sheep feeding we noticed that the fattest were the strongest sheep in the mob, and presumably fatter by getting more feed, by keeping the others away from the trough. That is the only experiment we have made with regard to putting the furze through the chaff-cutter. We are putting in a large block, 100 acres or more, with the object of trying chaff-cutting on a large scale. We purchased a crusher from Ireland, but we found it required too much power to work it, and therefore made it too expensive for practical use. The ordinary chaff-cutter puts through far more stuff, and requires much less power to drive it. It is my opinion that what are called gum-lands can be utilised by growing furze thereon. We have an example on a gum-hill close to Kerikeri where furze is standing thick, and if fenced would no doubt carry a number of sheep. Furze seedlings are very delicate. I do not think that furze will thrive as well on clay lands as on friable lands.

MANGAWHAI, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1898.

Charles Edward Hogan: I have been a freeholder in this district all my life. I have 190 acres, and have been told by diggers that it is the richest gumfield in New Zealand. I should think there are fully three hundred Austrians on this side of the river (Mangawhai). This is the third summer they have come in anything like numbers. The first lot were very industrious people, and law-abiding; since then some rough men have come here, and they drink a good deal. They work in parties, and make a clean sweep of the fields. There are no leased fields this side of the river, and the Austrians work, to the best of my knowledge, on Crown lands, or lands of absentees. The settlers at Mangawhai have complained, and rightly in my opinion, because the Austrians invaded private property in their search for gum. My brother and I had a case against them for invading our property and digging inside our fences. The police arrested the culprit, and he was tried next day and fined £5 16s. It was a long time before we could catch them; we let them off before; complaints were all round the district about the same thing. When the Austrian was caught, and he found that he could not get away, he turned on us with his spade. When the gum is taken out of the Crown lands the people who have not private property will have to go. There are plenty of people in the north who have made little homes for themselves, and have kept them going, by the money earned by digging a little gum now and then. The Austrians seem to me to come here with the avowed intention of making a certain amount of money and then going to Australia or elsewhere, where they can grow crops, &c. The Austrians are making a lot of money. I have been told at the post-office here that it is astonishing the amount of money they send away. They work long hours, from sunrise to sunset. This is a proof that the Austrians do not intend to settle here, as they do not have their women with them. There is not one case of a man having his wife with him on this field. The gum and timber cut the roads up here severely, and there is no return from this traffic. We settlers have to keep these same roads in repair. At the rate the Austrians are working now, two summers more and the Britishers will find the fields exhausted. They dig differently from Britishers; they dig in batches. If they come to a big tree they call on all hands to come and turn it right up, so as to get the gum underneath. I am of opinion that the Government should try and get the Austrians out of the country, if they go quietly without bringing the two nations to war. If this cannot be done, put a tax of £1 upon all diggers, and spend the money so realised in the district where it was collected. We have had an offer of £2,000 for our swamp from the Austrians, but we declined to have anything to do with them. There are practically no British diggers on this field, with the exception of a few elderly men squatting on Crown lands, outside the settlers in the district. I should think that about five hundred pounds' worth of gum is removed from Mangawhai every week.