

LAND IN MINING DISTRICTS.

There have been many inquiries from men engaged in gold-mining as to the possibility of taking up for agricultural or pastoral purposes land in mining districts which is not required for mining. There are large areas of such land in different parts of New Zealand; for instance, on the Coromandel Peninsula alone it is estimated that there are 250,000 acres of land which would be readily taken up by settlers if opened for settlement with reasonable security of tenure. The Lands Department has been instructed to prepare and submit to the Government a scheme for the more satisfactory settlement of such lands in small areas, and we believe that in several places the two great industries of agriculture and mining can work side by side to the advantage of both and the benefit of the Dominion.

SETTLEMENT OF GUM LANDS.

For many years gum-digging has been one of our most important industries, though outside the Auckland Provincial District it has attracted little attention. Some idea of the importance of this industry may be gathered from the fact that for the last two years the exports of kauri-gum from New Zealand were valued at £1,017,106. The gum is, however, becoming exhausted, and if nothing is done to attach them to the soil many of the diggers will probably leave the country—some of them have already done so. The Government has reason to believe that many of these men would be willing to become permanent settlers if sufficient inducements were offered them to do so. Gum lands are mostly of poor quality, but capable of great improvement, and in numerous instances they have been proved to be particularly suitable for fruitgrowing. It is proposed to have a number of sections surveyed in areas, say, of 25 acres each, a digger to have the opportunity of taking up one or more sections according to the size of his family, if any, and to his ability to work the land. This privilege must, of course, be limited to British subjects. The terms will be made exceptionally easy, and the land offered at a nominal value. No rent will be required from the settlers for five years from the date of occupation; after that, if in the way of improvements and residence they are able to give proof of having become permanent settlers, they will be allowed to purchase, if they feel so inclined, the freehold of their sections, either by instalments or otherwise. One advantage the new settlers will have is in the fact that until their holdings become sufficiently productive they will be able to add to their income by gum-digging. It is hoped in this way to utilize land which is at present unoccupied, and at the same time to give an opportunity to industrious men to make homes for themselves.

SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

As the prosperity of the Dominion depends very largely upon the successful settlement and subdivision of its land, it is intended both by legislation and energetic administration to do everything possible to provide land for all who desire to occupy and use it, thereby increasing the number of our producers and consequently the value of our exports. With that object instructions have been given to the responsible officers of the Departments concerned to prepare returns of the Crown land available and suitable for settlement in each county of the Dominion, showing separately ordinary Crown land and land set apart as national endowments.

These returns show that there should be available 2,809,098 acres of ordinary Crown land and 1,524,927 acres of endowment lands. As it is necessary and in the interests of the Dominion that all lands at present unoccupied should be made productive at the earliest possible date, surveys will be pushed on and everything done to expedite the opening of such lands to industrious *bona fide* settlers, so helping to meet the demand which undoubtedly exists, and making it unnecessary for young New Zealanders to leave the country of their birth in their search for land on which to settle and make homes for themselves.

EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

It is intended practically to reorganize the Fields and Experimental Farms Division of the Agricultural Department. The Government is of opinion that the experimental farms can be made much more useful to the agricultural community than has been the case up to the present, and special attention will be given to the training of young men in scientific and practical agriculture. For this pur-