

tively, near Mangawai; the Uretiti Swamp, of 1,000 acres, near Waipu; Gray's swamp, near Akerama; the Tikinui and Te Kuri Swamps, in the Northern Wairoa district; and Marsden Point Swamp, of 2,300 acres. Such lands in their present condition are useless either for gum-digging or settlement purposes.

A PRACTICAL SOLUTION OF THE "UNEMPLOYED" DIFFICULTY.

In fact, your Commissioners are firmly of opinion that the proper development of the gum lands of the Crown under judicious management presents a practicable solution of the "unemployed" difficulty for many years to come, and in coming to such a conclusion are fortified by their personal knowledge and experience as well as by the careful consideration given to the matter during the course of their investigations.

In regard to those large areas of flat land which have been riddled with potholes to such an extent as to make them practically useless in their present condition, special treatment is required.

There are several thousand acres of such lands north of Mangonui, a great portion of which can be gradually reclaimed and eventually brought into profitable occupation. It is suggested that areas of, say, 100 acres of such land should be successively taken in hand and dealt with in a systematic manner. A beginning might be made on some of the large flats in the neighbourhood of Waiharera. Men should be put on to dig the land "on a face," all timber thrown up on the surface, and the land left in a suitable condition for subsequent cultivation and settlement. The digging could either be done by day-labour, with a bonus to the digger on the amount of gum recovered, or let in small contracts, as might be found expedient. In whatever way the work was done it would, under prudent management, prove self-supporting. By dealing with these areas piecemeal it would in no way interfere with the ordinary gum-digger, many of whom would no doubt be glad to take the employment offered by this work of development.

In regard to many of what are called the shallow fields—which are usually on the higher lands—it is generally acknowledged that such lands have in a measure ceased to be very profitable to the gum-digger operating in the old way with the spear and spade. Many of such fields, however, offer special facilities for profitable treatment by the State. Your Commissioners recommend that all such lands should be broken in and improved by the State, and converted into grass lands, before they are disposed of for settlement purposes.

It is suggested that the land should be ploughed deeply, men being put on to follow the plough so as to procure all the gum that is easily obtainable. Before the ploughing is done any small basins or gullies should be drained and dug over "on a face," and all the deep holes filled in. The land should then be allowed to lie fallow for about a year, and then again broken up and the grass-seed sown.

Your Commissioners feel assured that such work would be in a large measure self-supporting, as there would be enough gum saved from the land to pay for a considerable portion of, if not the whole of, the expense incurred. At the same time employment would be provided for a large number of men.

THE SETTLEMENT OF GUM LANDS.

During recent years many areas of the poorest gum lands have been brought into successful cultivation. Several plots have been taken in hand by the Department of Agriculture for the purpose of testing the suitability of the land for farming purposes. Three such plots were near Whangarei, and another in the Albany district, within ten miles of Auckland City. The lands operated upon near Whangarei were at Akerama, Poroti, and Otaika, and comprised a total area of 116 acres. Mr. Speedy, the officer in charge of the work, said in regard to the areas chosen that in each case they represented the fair average quality of the lands in the locality; indeed, in regard to the plot selected at Akerama he said that the Department had chosen probably the poorest piece of land on the kauri-gum reserve in order to show what could be done with land of that character.