

Mr. Speedy, in speaking of the results obtained, said that he regarded the experiments as most encouraging, and considered that the Government was quite justified in continuing. In regard to the settlement of such lands, he said it would require a man with considerable capital to take up such lands, and that he thought it was quite warrantable for the State to improve these lands with a view to their future settlement.

Referring to the lands which had been treated in the Albany district, Mr. Rowan speaks in no unqualified terms; he has absolutely no doubt of the success of such operations. He said that the area of the plot at Albany was 6 acres. He first cleared the land of scrub and then ploughed it. This was done late in the winter, and the land was left to fallow for about three months. It was then given a thorough good working-up, and oats were sown, and manured with basic slag, blood and bone, and lime. He had obtained a splendid crop of oats, and the grassing of the land had given most satisfactory results. Thirty-five different varieties of grass were sown, which are given in his evidence. He had arrived at the conclusion that if the gum lands were thoroughly worked they would grow anything. Lucerne grew splendidly. Some of it had been cut six times within the year. The last time the lucerne was cut was in February. Some of the lucerne had been planted last spring and some the year before. He further said that he had not travelled further north than Kaukapakapa, but what they had done at Albany could be done anywhere up north provided the land was thoroughly cultivated.

In addition to the tests that have been made by the Department, many farmers have also been successful in breaking in the gum lands. Among them may be mentioned Messrs. Wyatt, at Towai; Hawkins, near Hikurangi; D. Bowmar, Mangawai; Gillies and J. R. McKenzie, near Wellsford; Becroft, Port Albert; R. Hastie, of Mangawai; and Wilson, of Otaika; and many others.

From their inspection of the areas mentioned and from the valuable testimony given in evidence your Commissioners are firmly convinced that the greater part of the area of the Crown gum lands can eventually be brought into successful cultivation. The work of breaking in such lands is no longer an experiment, but merely a question of the judicious expenditure of so-much money per acre.

The evidence of Mr. Hawkins is worthy of careful consideration as to the methods pursued by him and the results achieved on his land at Marua, where the soil operated upon was the average pipeclay similar to that of the neighbouring gumfields and of the poorest description, and generally from the farming point of view was land of a very uninviting nature to operate upon. The land, after being thoroughly ploughed and fallowed, had two crops of oats taken off it and was then laid down in grass. This was about ten years ago. The first crop of oats was sown in winter and the crop was a good one. The manure used was chiefly bonedust; trial plots of potash and nitrogen did not prove satisfactory. The land lay in stubble with stock grazing thereon during the summer, and then it was again ploughed and another sowing of oats made. The second crop of oats was a poor one, as little or no manure was used and the seed was sown too late. The land was then ploughed for a depth of about 6 in., some of it being subsoiled, and was then laid down in grass. The manures used in this case were chiefly bonedust and basic slag, the grasses sown being *Paspalum dilatatum*, *Agrostis stolonifera*, and *Triodia decumbens*; and recently the land was given a top-dressing of basic slag, and still, after the lapse of ten years, carries a splendid sward of grass.

Mr. D. Bowmar, of Mangawai, has broken in about 300 acres, within the last twelve months, of the poorest gum land with great success. This land is now in grass and turnips and carrying sheep, and when your Commissioners inspected it it certainly had a most encouraging appearance.

Mr. Gillies, who it may be noted is an experienced farmer, formerly of the Waikato, and now residing at Wayby, near Wellsford, stated that he had recently brought under cultivation an area of 30 acres of gum land. He had ploughed the land in the autumn, let it lie fallow for six months, and then had