

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

AUCKLAND, SATURDAY, 28TH MARCH, 1914.

THE Royal Commission appointed under the hand of His Excellency the Governor on the 20th March, 1914, assembled at the Minister's Room, Customhouse Buildings, Customs Street, Auckland, on Saturday, the 28th March, 1914, at 10 o'clock a.m.

There were present Mr. R. P. Greville, F.R.G.S. (Chairman), and Messrs. William Stewart (Kawakawa), Samuel Stafford (Waipu), Robert Hebden (Waihopo), John M. McKay (Waipu).

The Chairman announced the appointment by Government of Mr. W. J. Munro, of the Lands Department, as Secretary of the Commission.

The Secretary read the Governor's Warrant constituting the Commission and defining its duties.

On the motion of Mr. Stewart, seconded by Mr. Stafford, the following provisional itinerary of the Commission was agreed on: To commence the inspection and classification of the kauri-gum reserves in the Mangonui County, working from Houhora, thence southwards, traversing the country from west to east, proceeding in turn through Whangaroa County, Hokianga County, Bay of Islands County, Whangarei County, thence from Waipu to Dargaville and Kaihu, thence to Matakoho, Mangawhai, Wellsford, Warkworth, and Helensville.

The Commission then adjourned, to meet at Houhora on arrival of the steamer leaving Auckland on Monday, the 30th instant.

HOUHORA, WEDNESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 1914.

The adjourned meeting of the Commission was held at Houhora on Wednesday, the 1st April, at 11 a.m., all the members being present.

It was decided, on the motion of Mr. Stafford, seconded by Mr. McKay, to submit to the Colonial Analyst at Wellington a sample of kauri-swamp peat soil, with a request to have a chemical analysis made of the sample with a view to ascertaining whether it contains any by-products of economic value, as suggested in Parliamentary Paper C.—16 (1909), being the report of Mr. J. Graham Gow, Trade Representative, on the kauri-gum industry.

It was decided to hear any evidence tendered by diggers and settlers interested on Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m., and to intimate the same publicly.

The Commission then adjourned in order to make a personal inspection of the kauri-gum reserves in the immediate vicinity, the inspection to be continued on Thursday, the 2nd instant, as far north as the Otumaroki Kauri-gum Reserve.

HOUHORA, THURSDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1914.

A further adjourned meeting of the Commission was held at Houhora on Thursday, the 2nd April, at 8 p.m., to hear evidence of diggers and others in regard to the kauri-gum reserves in the district. All members of the Commission were present.

The following witnesses voluntarily offered evidence: Davis Lewis Calwell, police constable and Kauri-gum Ranger, of Houhora; Ralph Kenworthy, gum-digger, of Houhora; Frederick McGrath, gum-digger, of Houhora; Adam William Howsham, gum-digger, of Houhora; Robert Hetherington, gum-digger, of Houhora; Timothy Walsh, gum-digger, of Houhora; William Henry Evans, hotelkeeper, of Houhora; William Burke, gum-digger, of Waihopo; Samuel Wells, gum-digger, of Houhora; Thomas Collins, gum-digger, of Houhora; and George Akast, gum-digger, of Houhora.

The Commission adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

HOUHORA, FRIDAY, 3RD APRIL, 1914.

The Commission again met at Houhora on Friday, the 3rd April, 1914, at 9 a.m.

Otumaroki Kauri-gum Reserve: On the motion of Mr. Stafford, seconded by Mr. Hebden, it was decided that the lifting of the reservation over the Otumaroki Reserve be recommended, that the land may be freed for settlement purposes.

Houhora Foreshore Gum Reserves (three): On the motion of Mr. Stewart, seconded by Mr. McKay, it was decided to recommend the retention of the existing reservation over the three foreshore reserves at Houhora.

On the motion of Mr. Stafford, seconded by Mr. McKay, it was agreed to recommend Government to reserve the balance of the Crown land around the present Otumaroki Reserve as a kauri-gum reserve.

The Commission then adjourned, to meet at Waiharera at 7.30 p.m. to hear evidence.