

On Wednesday last I went to Mr. May's place at Hupara. I was agreeably surprised at the hay made from it. In the part of stack open it was all *Angustissimus*—no grass. The stalks were a bit coarse, but the leaves were cured beautifully, and it had a nice sweet smell and looked very palatable. I had a high opinion of it as a soil-improver on poor land, and after seeing the hay made from it I would say that it will do for northern gum lands and poor ground what lucerne has done for Marlborough.

I would suggest the following grasses for gum ground: Grasses for poor wet side lands—Yorkshire fog, *Microlaena stipoides*, *Lotus Angustissimus*, also brown-top; for dry hillsides—Danthonia, Waipu brown-top (*Poa Brownii*), *Microlaena stipoides*, *Lotus Angustissimus*.

Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR DAWSON.

The Chairman, Gum Commission.

SIR,—

Central Store, Mangawai, 5th June, 1914.

Herewith you will find the information required in reference to the gum bought. I have given you a fair estimate of same; as regards Hogan's Flat, which I leased, it would be a hard thing to average it per acre: I paid £75 an acre for it, and hope to do well by it. Hoping this will suffice,

Yours, &c.,

HERBERT POOLE.

The Commissioner of Gum Lands.

				Freehold.			Rodney.			Otamatea.		
				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1910	...	...	...	87	11	10	147	1	1½	249	16	3
1911	...	...	...	65	4	1	76	5	9	56	4	5
1912	...	...	...	142	14	8	185	15	9	380	5	8
1913	...	...	...	365	0	0	821	15	8	435	0	0
1914	...	...	...	75	0	0	502	16	0	156	7	0

GENTLEMEN,—

Whangapara, Great Barrier, 9th June, 1914.

Yours of 1st June to hand. *Re* the Government gum reserve of 890 acres at Great Barrier Island: The permanent diggers for the past five years on the reserve are three, and the present number is six. Their average earnings will probably be about £1 5s. per week. The settlers do a good bit of digging in their slack time and make good money. I should say about twelve of them dig occasionally, and earn from £2 to £5 per week, according to the strength and experience of the men. The men on the reserve are old and weak, and two of them only earn about 10s. per week.

There is a considerable area of gum land surrounding the reserve—about 4,000 acres—of privately owned land, and although some of this private land is worked by settlers and regular diggers the largest half is closed at present, and has been for some years.

I consider the reserve itself is a fairly well worked-out field, and a digger who was confined to the reserve alone would not make wages, although he could make enough to live on.

The quality of the land is about as poor as it well can be. The western half is coarse grey gravel with in some places a few inches of soil on top, the centre is hard red clay, and the eastern partly pipeclay; the whole covered with stunted tea-tree and fern; and, with the exception of a couple of hundred acres of undulating land in the centre, the rest is extremely precipitous.

If I can be of any further service please command me.

Yours faithfully,

D. N. McMILLAN.

The Royal Commission on Gum Lands, Auckland.

SIRS,—

Okonga, Great Barrier, 9th June, 1914.

Your letter of 4th June duly to hand. *Re* Government reserve: diggers number four at present moment. One of them digging there now is earning his £3 per week on the average, and two others average about £1 per week. There is one who has taken up a piece of land under the Gum-diggers Act: he is earning about £1 10s. per week.

Re buying gum: As I am not buying any, the diggers send their gum to Auckland, and I pack it for them. I have not bought any for the last four or five years. I am sorry I cannot tell you how many diggers there have been for the last five years, as the settlers come there for a month or two and take their gum with them.

As regards the quality of the gum, it is mixed—fair, good, and bad. There is gum on the reserve to last for ten years for ten or twenty men if they liked to work, and they would make good money at the same time.

As for the quality of the land, there are about 300 or 400 acres good land, and the rest is mostly all clay, and some a kind of brown clay, and the rest pipeclay and stony: no black loam soil at all.

This is the best news I can give you, hoping this will be satisfactory to you. I have been living on the reserve a good time, but the last eight years I have not been living on it, so I have told you the news about it.

I remain,

The Royal Commission on Gum Lands.

T. CARLSON.