

Statement of Accounts (as required by Section 5 of the Kauri-gum Industry Amendment Act, 1914) for the Year ended 31st March, 1915.

1915.	Receipts.	£	s.	d.	1915.	Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
March 31.	To Debentures raised under the Kauri-gum Industry Amendment Act, 1914 ..	14,000	0	0	March 31.	By Wages paid to workmen engaged upon face diggings (including bonuses, £86 14s. 3d.) ..	1,992	7	3
						Wages of overseers and gum-buyers ..	306	13	0
						Machinery, plant, &c., procured for face diggings ..	382	13	4
						Advances to gum-diggers ..	1,952	18	10
						Travelling expenses of Superintendent, gum-buyers, and overseers ..	134	1	4
						Office expenses, administration, &c. ..	121	17	6
						Freights, &c. ..	101	19	1
						New Zealand Loans Act, 1908—Charges and expenses ..	0	3	6
						Balance—			
						Cash in Public Account ..	8,978	10	2
						Imprest advances outstanding ..	28	16	0
							9,007	6	2
							£14,000	0	0

Loan Account.

1915.				1915.			
March 31. To Balance		£	s. d.	March 31. By Debentures raised under the Kauri-gum Industry Amendment Act, 1914 ..		£	s. d.
		14,000	0 0			14,000	0 0
		£14,000	0 0			£14,000	0 0

JAMES MACKENZIE,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

J. H. O'DONNELL,

Chief Accountant,

Department of Lands and Survey.

Examined and found correct.

ROBERT J. COLLINS, Controller and Auditor-General.

[NOTE.—These figures represent the amounts charged up in the Treasury books at 31st March, but do not include all commitments entered into, as some had not been brought to charge at that date.]

REPORT OF THE KAURI-GUM SUPERINTENDENT.

SIR,—

Auckland, 10th May, 1915.

In submitting the first annual report of the operations in connection with the kauri-gum industry, I think it is fitting and proper that I should make some reference to the special circumstances which gave rise to the important developments which have taken place in connection with the kauri-gum industry during the past twelve months.

It will be remembered that shortly after the commencement of the war strong representations were made both in Parliament and to you officially by various petitioners as to the distress likely to be caused to the workers engaged in the kauri-gum industry owing to the dislocation of the kauri-gum market caused by the war, and strong appeals were made that assistance should be given by the Government. At your request a full report on the question was made to the Minister. Preparatory to making the report a hurried tour was made of the northern gum-fields, and meetings of persons interested were held at all the main centres of the industry.

SLUMP IN GUM TRADE.

As the result of the inquiries made I reported that the then condition of the gum industry was a serious one, and that it was necessary that some measures should be taken to help the workers engaged therein during the continuance of the war. At that time kauri-gum was practically unsaleable on the gumfields, although, as it was pointed out, there were a few speculators operating on some grades of gum at prices considerably less than those ruling before the war. It was ascertained at that time, as evidence of the serious slump in kauri-gum, that soon after the declaration of war nearly 90 per cent. of the gum-sorters employed in Auckland City had been thrown out of employment, while on the gumfields themselves business was in a very depressed state. Some of the storekeepers had altogether stopped buying gum, and had ceased to give credit to the diggers. The depression was being keenly felt on all the gumfields, especially by married men with families, and by the large numbers of Maoris engaged in gum-digging. The position, however, was most acute in the far North, for in all that large district lying to the north of Lake Ohia and Waipapakauri, and extending nearly to the North Cape, gum-digging is almost the only avenue of employment, and there it was that the great bulk of the gum-digging population were then carrying on their operations. In some of the southern districts there was a prospect of other employment when there was a slump in gum, but in the far northern region referred to there was no alternative employment. The position as far as the working-man was concerned was that he either had to engage in gum-digging or to migrate.

Attention was drawn to the fact in the report that there was an almost unanimous feeling prevailing among the gum-diggers, and strongly manifested at all the meetings, in favour of