

1919.
NEW ZEALAND.

KAURI-GUM INDUSTRY.

REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KAURI-GUM INDUSTRY AMENDMENT ACT, 1914,
TOGETHER WITH A STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1919.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 5 of the Kauri-gum Industry Amendment Act, 1914.

REPORT.

SIR,—
Office of the Government Kauri-gum Superintendent,
Auckland, 22nd October, 1919.

In submitting this, the fifth annual report of this Department, it is not deemed necessary to make any reference to the special circumstances which gave rise to the setting-up of the Department, beyond saying that the work of the Department, which was begun in November, 1914, has been continued during the present year, and has been beneficial to the gum-digger and the industry generally.

For part of the year in some districts the Department, owing to the lack of demand for kauri-gum abroad, was the only buyer. After careful consideration it was decided that the best policy to adopt was to continue buying in the two main gum-producing districts, with a proviso that we should buy direct from the diggers, and only the gum dug from month to month. It may be explained that it was necessary to adopt this course as in some districts large accumulations of gum were held by diggers, chiefly Dalmatians. These accumulations we did not touch.

SALES.

During the year kauri-gum to the value of £18,847 6s. 4d. has been purchased by the Department, while the sales amount to £14,226 8s. 6d. Up to the end of March all gum sold went to America, but since that date several shipments have been made to the United Kingdom.

Negotiations are now in progress for the appointment of a Government agent in London to handle all European business. When these arrangements are completed, and with ample shipping-space available, it is probable that a big export trade with the United Kingdom will be established.

Early in the year a partial embargo was put on the importation of all fossil resins into the United States of America. As in the previous year, America constituted practically our only market, and how hard this restriction hit the kauri-gum trade may be gauged by the fact that the total export for the year was only about one-half that of the previous year, and less than one-third of the pre-war yearly export.

Owing to so many gum-diggers being absent on active service, and owing to the fact that men of Austrian nationality had been to a great extent called up for service on public works under Government supervision, the output was not large; but even under these conditions it was found necessary in the interests of the gum-digger and those dependent on the industry to purchase 80 per cent. more gum than in the previous year, although our sales were only a little more than half those of that year.

Full details of the expenditure under the various headings are given in another part of the report. The Act of 1914 authorized the Minister to raise the sum of £50,000. Up to the present time a sum of £47,000 has been so raised. On the 31st March, 1918, the cash in the Public Account to the credit to the Kauri-gum Industry Account was £20,755 8s. 7d., and at the 31st March, 1919, the amount was £3,291 18s. 5d.