

On the 18th March, accompanied by Mr. V. Trounson, County Chairman, and Councillors A. E. Harding and L. P. Pateman, of the Hobson County Council, we inspected the national Kauri Park, situated about twenty-five miles north of Dargaville. The park comprises an area of about 65 acres of magnificent kauri forest.

On the 19th March we returned to Auckland, and held a meeting to arrange the itinerary for the districts of the far North.

On the 21st March we proceeded to the Thames by steamer, and thence by motor-cars to Coromandel. On the following morning we continued our journey across the Coromandel Peninsula to Whitianga (Mercury Bay), where a short sitting was held and evidence taken. On the evening of the same day we held a sitting at Gumbtown, and examined witnesses. On the 23rd March we returned to Coromandel, where we took evidence in the morning, and on the evening of the same day evidence was taken at Thames. On the following day we returned to Auckland.

On the 29th March, after the Easter holidays, we proceeded from Auckland by steamer to Houhora, where we held a sitting on the evening of the 30th March, and took evidence. Further evidence was taken at sittings held at Waiharara and Waipapakauri on the 31st March and 1st April respectively. While in these localities, workings on gumfields situated at Kaingaroa, Sweetwater, Waipapakauri, and other places were inspected.

On the 2nd April we arrived at Kaitaia, the most important town in the far North, where a well-attended meeting was held and a great deal of evidence taken.

On Sunday, the 3rd April, we proceeded to Te Paki, near the Parenga Gumfields, and inspected the country situated between Te Paki and Spirits Bay.

On the following day the important gum-workings of the Parenga Oil Company were inspected, and in the evening a sitting, attended by a large number of Maoris, was held at Te Hapua. Here, after receiving a hearty welcome from the chief of the Aupouri Murupaenga Rewiri, the evidence of Maori gum-diggers and local gum-buyers was taken.

On the following day, the 5th April, we returned, via Te Paki and the Ninety-mile Beach, to Kaitaia, and on the next day proceeded via Lake Ohia to Mangonui, where evidence was taken the same evening. We proceeded thence, on the 7th, via Russell, to Whangarei, where a well-attended meeting was held on the evening of the 8th April, and evidence was heard. In the afternoon of the same day an inspection was made of the experimental farm carried on by the Department of Agriculture at Puwera, for the purpose of ascertaining the best methods of treating poor gum lands.

On the 9th April we returned to Auckland. For various reasons it was found necessary to suspend further business until the 18th April, on which date we left Auckland for Mangawai and Ruakaka, where the evidence of a large number of gum-diggers was taken on the 18th and 19th April respectively. The well-known gumfields at Mangawai and Ruakaka were inspected.

We returned to Auckland on the morning of the 21st April, via Paparoa, where farming operations on gum lands were inspected. Sittings were held in Auckland on the 22nd, 23rd, 26th, and 27th April, when thirty-six witnesses, representing every interest connected with the kauri-gum industry, were examined.

On the 28th April we visited the Government gum-store in Auckland, and saw in operation the Maclaurin salt vacuum process of separating gum from dirt and other foreign matter. We also visited Messrs. E. Mitchelson and Co.'s gum-store, and inspected their methods of cleaning gum.

In order to allow time for transcription of the large amount of evidence taken in the course of the inquiry, our work was then suspended until the 16th May, on which date we reassembled at Auckland for the purposes of deliberating and making further necessary investigations preliminary to the drafting of our report. The final report, which in the meantime was revised by a small committee, was finally adopted on the 10th June.

In the course of our investigations we have travelled a distance of about 1,600 miles, and held eighteen public sittings. With the exception of the sittings at Auckland most of the evidence was taken at night, the days being occupied by travelling and inspections of gumfields. The number of witnesses examined was 108. They may be classified as follows: Representatives of public bodies, 11;