

found to be the case, after the swamp has been drained, the land should be dug or otherwise treated in a systematic manner, so that it will be left in a fit state for cultivation.

With regard to the treatment of a swamp area after it has been drained, it is very important in the first place that the greatest care should be taken to prevent damage by fires. It is necessary to see that burning is done only when the swamp is well saturated by the autumn rains, and when there is a good wind, so that the fire will travel rapidly over the area. During burning operations the drains should be blocked up, so as to ensure that the fire does not burn down into the peat. The land should be sown down immediately after the burning with a suitable mixture of grasses. For the peat swamps a mixture of *Lotus major*, soft meadow, and paspalum is recommended. On good swamp land a mixture of English grasses and clover should be sown, consisting of Italian rye, perennial rye, cocksfoot, timothy, red clover, colonial cow-grass, alsyke, and white clover.

We consider the lands in class 1 suitable for settlement on the "homestead system," under section 11 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1919. It is open to question, however, whether it would not be advisable to have the whole of the preliminary work of bringing a certain area of the land into cultivation done before the land is disposed of. This course was strongly advocated by Mr. Dibble, of the Department of Agriculture, when giving evidence. The wholesale breaking-in of the country by contract presents many advantages, and would probably result in the work being performed at a lesser cost and more efficiently than if done by individual settlers working independently with their own teams and plant. The method of disposal of these lands under the "homestead system" was given the fullest consideration. The provisional regulations drawn up under the above-mentioned enactment were fully discussed, and were thought to be quite suitable for the purpose for which they had been designed.

Assuming that the land is disposed of under the "homestead system" as provided by the regulations, the first work for the settler would be the building, under proper direction, of his house; then the clearing of the scrub and the filling-in of holes on an area of approximately 50 acres. The ploughing and treatment of the area should next be proceeded with, according to the methods above described. A small area near the site of the settler's house should be set apart and fenced off for home crops and garden, and the balance of the 50 acres should be laid down in temporary pasture, using a mixture of Italian rye, paspalum, *Lotus angustissimus*, and soft meadow. With the grass mixture it is recommended that manures to the value of about £2 10s. per acre be used, consisting of basic slag, or bone-dust and superphosphate, half and half, or other suitable mixtures, and lime if procurable at a reasonable cost.

While we are of opinion that the lands included in class 1 are suitable for settlement under the "homestead system" we think it is highly desirable that opportunity should be afforded to landowners not possessing unduly large areas to take up an area of these gum lands on easy terms, under proper and strict improvement conditions. By these means large areas of these lands could be successfully brought into profitable occupation. One of the greatest difficulties to be faced in dealing with these areas is the fact that there is no starting-off place for the new settler. He has no land on which he can run his teams, or from which he can obtain a livelihood while the holding is being brought into a productive state; whereas in the case of a farmer already established these difficulties do not exist.

We are pleased to note that there is now a disposition on the part of the gum-diggers to make permanent homes on the gumfields, and in several districts selections are being made by them under the liberal provisions of section 20 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1912. The conditions on which land can be taken up under the section of the Act referred to are briefly as follow: Allotments not exceeding 200 acres in area may be set apart for disposal to British subjects, either by way of license to occupy, with right of purchase, for a term of twenty-five years, under Part III of the Land Act, 1908, or by license to occupy on deferred payments for a term of fifteen years. No rent is payable during the first five years of the term under a license to occupy with right of purchase, and the first instalment under a deferred-payment license is not payable until commencement of the sixth year from the date of such license. Residence and improvements, which are compulsory, are prescribed by regulations issued under the above-quoted enactment.

Several of the gum-diggers working on the Lower Ruakaka Kauri-gum Reserve, in the Whangarei district, are very anxious to obtain building-sites where they can