

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Arthur William de Brito Savile, Earl of Liverpool, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the Commissioners appointed by Your Excellency on the 20th day of March, 1914, for the purpose of inspecting the kauri-gum reserves in the Land District of Auckland, have now the honour to submit the following report and recommendations for Your Excellency's consideration:—

The members of your Commission assembled in Auckland on the 28th day of March, 1914, and held their first meeting. It was then found that the requirements of the Commission would involve the inspection of 160 kauri-gum reserves, representing a total area of 228,000 acres, scattered over a wide expanse of country extending from Te Kao, near the North Cape, as far south as Katikati, in the Bay of Plenty.

After careful consideration it was deemed advisable to commence the work of the Commission on the most northern area that had to be inspected. Accordingly your Commissioners left Auckland on the 30th of the month for the north, and arrived at Hohoura on the 1st April, and at once proceeded with their inspection and investigations. After a stay of two days at Hohoura and holding a meeting there your Commissioners journeyed on through Waiharera, Waipapakauri, Ahipara, Awanui, and thence steadily southward, working from coast to coast and traversing in turn the nine counties of Mangonui, Whangaroa, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, Whangarei, Otamatea, Rodney, Hobson, Waitemata, and so on, to Auckland City. Subsequently reserves in the Manukau, Coromandel, and Tauranga Counties were visited.

Apart from the considerable distances travelled by brake, coach, train, steamer, and launch, a distance of over two thousand miles was covered on horseback. The fact that many of the reserves were difficult of access and that the season was so far advanced before the work was put in hand added to the difficulty of the task.

Besides the inspection of the various reserves, meetings were held at all the main centres visited. These meetings were almost invariably held at night at places where the Commission had to stay in the course of their journeys. Altogether thirty-three meetings were held, and 189 witnesses were examined. Full details of the evidence taken and of the Commission's itinerary are appended hereto.

THE KAURI-GUM LANDS OF NEW ZEALAND.

The whole of the Northern Peninsula from Tom Bowling's Bay near the North Cape extending southward to a line drawn from the west coast near Kawhia to a point on the east coast near Tauranga has peculiarities quite unique, inasmuch as it is the region which has produced several generations of the majestic and valuable kauri forest. The remnants of the last generation are still to be met with in various localities within the limits mentioned, but these are now within measurable distance of disappearing altogether, with the exception perhaps of a few selected areas that have been wisely set apart for scenic and forest preservation purposes.

Each successive generation of the kauri-tree shed from its branches, trunks, and roots a valuable resin known as kauri-gum. It is somewhat remarkable that over the wide region referred to there are volcanic areas of land, varying in extent, adjoining and often surrounded by gum-bearing lands. It is quite unusual to find kauri-trees growing on the volcanic land or to find any deposits of kauri-gum there. Isolated trees, however, are to be found, and in some cases traces of gum, but on all that large extent of country extending from near