

be fertilized by earthworms, and he had tried experiments in that direction on part of his own land, and the results were encouraging and cost very little. Little colonies of the worms had been established by him in various places on his land, and he was of opinion, speaking from a knowledge extending over fifteen years in the district, that if the worms could be got all over lands of the same quality it would be the making of them. He had seen from thirty to forty men digging on the Mangawai No. 2 field at one time, but the numbers varied month in and month out. The depth of the gum on the hilly land in the reserve ran from the surface to 2 ft., and in the narrow gullies it would be deeper. The flat adjoining Section 306 he considered rich gum land, and it was occupied by several diggers at the present time, the quality of the gum obtained being good. The ground had been potholed and dug over twice already, and diggers still did pretty well there. He had dug gum himself, and spoke as a practical man. He was satisfied that any good worker could make good wages on the reserve adjoining his (Hastie's) land, and was of opinion that while the gumfields remained there should be no unemployed about.

FREDERICK GILPIN, Farmer, of Mangawai.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He had resided in the district about twelve years, and farmed 550 acres close to the Pakiri Reserve. He had about 150 acres in grass, and went in mainly for cattle-grazing and pig-raising. He knew the Pakiri Reserve well. It consisted of flats and hills. There were three men camped on the field at the present time, and the numbers so far as he knew had not varied for the past six years. He quite confirmed Mr. Black's evidence in regard to the three neighbouring farmer-diggers who owned fairly large areas but neglected them in order to follow up gum-digging for a livelihood.

CHARLES ROBERT DUKE, Police Constable and Kauri-gum Ranger, of Mangawai.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He was Gum Ranger for the district, and had issued 134 diggers' licenses for the past year. He always made careful inquiries as to the naturalization of Austrians before issuing any licenses. The Lands Department allowed him a commission of 10 per cent. for collecting the license fees.

MANGAWAI, SATURDAY, 23RD MAY, 1914.

RIZMONDO LUPIS, Gum-digger, of Mangawai.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He had been digging on the Coal Hill Reserve for the past eight or nine years, and had made good wages. He had spent last summer working about the swamp near Black's drain. He and other Austrians had cut the drain along Black's boundary. It was from 4 ft. to 5 ft. deep. They did not spear for gum in the drain, but had tested Black's property in other places. They had struck colour in several places, and considered that black gum was contained in the land. He thought the big swamp on the lower side of the reserve was worth digging in the summer. He and others had speared in a good many places over the swamp, and had found gum in pockets. He knew two or three places about 2 chains from the bank where plenty of gum had been taken, and one party secured £24 worth from near the centre of the swamp. He considered it would pay to drain the swamp for gum-digging. The ground could easily be tested by spearing 16 ft., and it could be thoroughly tested all over by six men in two weeks or less. As the gum would only be got in patches he hardly thought it would pay to dig the swamp on the face. Any drain through it would have to be fairly deep in order to get sufficient fall. The quality of the swamp was good peat soil that would make good farming-land in time. He considered the land would be worth from £15 to £20 per acre when drained and put in grass after the gum had been taken out of it.

JOHN BUNCUGA, Gum-digger, of Mangawai.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He farmed his own land, and was also a gum-digger. He had dug on the flat (Coal Hill Reserve) adjoining Hogan's, and got good returns. He considered a lot of gum could be obtained in the dry summer months, and he knew of twenty men who did very well on that particular ground before the wet weather set in. He was of opinion that it would not pay to "face" the swamp on account of the quantity of timber in it, but if drained by Government he thought the diggers would fill in holes so that the land could be farmed afterwards. So far as his knowledge went there was gum all over the flat, and men could make good wages on it.

*To Mr. Stafford.*] He had dug on the swamp (Coal Hill Reserve) close to Black's boundary as deep as 11 ft., and was quite sure the gum would pay if the land was drained. It would make good farming-land afterwards. He knew gum had been struck all over the swamp, and there was plenty in it still.

*To Mr. Greville.*] A party of thirty men had paid a premium of £10 per head to dig for two years on Coate's run, Pukekaroro, about 1,000 acres in extent. Some of them had done very well. On Hogan's flat (Coal Hill) a premium of from £60 to £80 an acre was paid for gum-digging rights over an area of 12 or 13 acres. Poole was the lessee of the land, and he farmed out the digging-rights.

GEORGE HOGAN, Farmer, of Mangawai.

*To Mr. Greville.*] His property, known as "Hogan's flat," comprised 195 acres, and joined the Coal Hill Gum Reserve. Forty acres of it were gum-bearing, and valued by Government for taxation purposes as such at £60 per acre. The balance of the section, he considered, con-