

WALTER COOMBES, Resident of Red Hill, about five miles from Te Kopuru.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He knew all the reserves between his place and the river. He knew the Tatarariki reserves. Speaking generally in regard to these gum reserves, he thought a good living could be made by gum-diggers. He had heard Mr. Powell give his evidence in regard to swamp lands, and agreed with him in what he had said. He owned gum land himself, but all of it had been dug over. He knew a couple of education reserves out his way. The lessee of one of the reserves was a Mr. Millar. Two sections (one on each side of the road, Nos. 80 and 65) were let for digging. The land had not been fenced. Potholes had been dug all over and not filled in. He knew of no portions of reserves out there which he would regard as non-gum-bearing. He was not able to form any opinion as to the number of men working there last year, but he knew there were about twenty-five or thirty residents round the hill working on them. Some of the settlers and farmers also worked on them—the majority of them were residents. He regarded these reserves as a good standby for casual workers. He did not know the provisions of the Land Act himself, and he was speaking the other day to some of them and they knew nothing about it.

*To Mr. Hebden.*] He knew Te Kopuru Reserve. There was a large camp there. He believed that in that part of Te Kopuru past the Austrian's store there were thirty men digging. All the men he knew, and, with the exception of four or five, they camped in the district. He thought that they would be making £6 per week, or perhaps even £4 for three days, but thought it safe to say an average of £4 per week. He had only been on his farm about twelve months, and dug gum in his spare time. There were a lot of men who were working at the sawmill, but he did not know what wages they were getting.

MATI FRANICH, local Gum-buyer, with a place of business at Mangawhare.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He had been seven years in Dargaville. He bought gum in the country extending from Kaihu to Tikiui. He bought a lot of gum from the Aratapu fields. From December to March the earnings of one camp of seven men at Aratapu were £350. Another man at Aratapu named Martinovich had bought as much gum as he had from the same camp. He also bought gum from Red Hill and Scarrott's. He had bought in fifteen months' time £38,000 worth of gum, his operations extending from Kaihu to Tikiui. He went wherever there was gum to be bought.

STATEMENT OF KAURI-GUM LICENSES issued by Sergeant J. C. GRIFFITHS, Ranger in Hobson and Hokianga Counties.

I beg to advise that the following kauri-gum licenses have been issued by me during the past twelve months ending 30th May, 1914:—Hobson County: 179 ordinary licenses at £2 each, £358; 312 special licenses at 5s. each, £78; fifteen gum-buyers' licenses at £1 each, £15; thirteen residential licenses at 1s. each, 13s: total, £451 13s. Hokianga County: Eight ordinary licenses at £2 each, £16; twenty-eight special licenses at 5s. each, £7: total, £23: totals, Hobson and Hokianga Counties, £474 13s.

HELENSVILLE, THURSDAY, 11TH JUNE, 1914.

FREDERICK HERBERT DE COURCY POWER, Gum-digger, of Kaukapakapa.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He had lived at Kaukapakapa for eighteen years and a half, during which time he had been engaged in gum-digging. He could not say exactly how many gum-diggers there would be on the Kaukapakapa Reserve, because they lived such distances apart that he did not always see them, but probably twenty at the present time. There were 570 acres in the reserve. It was not really a summer field, although, of course, there were places that could only be dug in summer, but in both summer and winter he could always find places to dig. A fair average digger could make about £2 10s. per week on the field. He considered himself a fair average digger; some could make more, some less. He himself had made £33 in twelve weeks, and in proof of this statement witness handed in his sale-slips, as follows: £13 1s. 7d.; £9 9s. 5d.; £10 9s. 5d. He knew another digger, a Mr. Bright, who for the last four weeks had earned £16 4s. His average for two years was £3 per week. Twenty average men, if fairly good, could make £2 10s., provided they understood the work. Some, of course, said there was some of it barren ground; he got a lot of gum in that sort of land that others would not dig, and it was about the best sort of gum that goes into Auckland. He was a married man with no family. He was not aware of the provisions of the Land Act, 1912, that would enable him to take up 25 acres of land on the reserves, but he thought 25 acres would not be of much use to any one.

*To Mr. Stafford.*] The Wayby Reserve was generally known to the diggers as Outhwaite's. This reserve was taken up originally by a man named Drinnan, who eventually threw up the land, and when witness first came to Kaukapakapa he paid a royalty of 1s. per week to dig on it. The deepest he had got gum on this reserve was 10 ft., but a little while ago two of the men mentioned on the statement handed in had sunk 16 ft. through solid clay in the swamp. He had never found any brown gum. It was quite true that he made just as much money now as he did years ago.

*To Mr. Greville.*] He was before the Commission in a representative capacity, authorized by seven of the diggers signing the joint letter which he produced.

"Kaukapakapa, 10th June, 1914.—We, the undersigned, who are engaged in digging gum in the Kaukapakapa district, hereby appoint and authorize the holder of this, Mr. Frederick