

We recommend—

- (a.) That the fees for a special and an ordinary license shall remain as at present, and that the form of license now in use in both cases be adhered to.
- (b.) That every man engaged in bleeding or tapping the kauri-tree for gum shall be required to take out a license, the fees to be the same as in the case of a special or ordinary license; but the holder of such license shall not be entitled by virtue thereof to bleed the kauri-tree, either on private or Crown lands, without the consent of the owner or owners of such land being first had and obtained in writing.
- (c.) That the gum-buyer's license fee and form of license shall remain as at present, subject to the necessary amendments arising out of the recommendations made below.
- (d.) That the gum-broker's license fee be increased to £10, and it should be a condition in such license that it shall be operative only in the kauri-gum district in which it is taken out.

During recent years a class of itinerant brokers or dealers in kauri-gum has come into existence. The practices resorted to by some of these so-called gum-brokers in the conduct of their businesses are having a very detrimental effect on the kauri-gum trade, and it is necessary in the interests of the industry that measures should be taken to put an end to the practices referred to. We strongly urge that a gum-broker's license be issued only to men of good standing and repute, and that it be made a condition precedent to the issue of such license that the applicant be required to enter into a bond to the amount of £500 as a guarantee of good faith. Some of the gum-brokers do a turnover of from £20,000 to £30,000 a year, and handle vast sums of trust-money. Furthermore, it is essential that there should be a condition in each gum-broker's license that the holder shall carry on the legitimate business of a broker—viz., the selling of gum on commission. By imposing such a condition the itinerant broker who is part broker, part buyer, and part dealer in gum would be put out of business.

With regard to the gum-buyer's license, we recommend that the provisions of the Act restricting the operations of such license to one kauri-gum district be strictly enforced, and that in cases where a gum-buyer desires to carry on business in more than one kauri-gum district he shall be required to take out a separate license for each district. We further recommend that such licenses be issued only to men of good standing and repute, who should be required to enter into a bond of £100 as a guarantee of good faith.

The provision of the Act referred to above, making it incumbent upon a landowner to take out a separate license for every person employed by him to dig gum on his land, is considered by many landowners as very inequitable. Now that many landowners are erecting costly gum-producing plants on their lands, and employing a great deal of labour, this license fee, particularly in the case of an alien gum-digger, who has to pay a £5 fee, presses very heavily, and we are of opinion that an amendment of the Act is necessary, and that a new form of license should be issued, which might be called a "landowner's license," and would entitle the holder to sell gum obtained from his own land without any further restriction in regard to taking out a license for each man employed, the fee for such license to be, say, £1 per annum.

(8.) *The best means of preventing damage to kauri-gum lands by fires.*

The best means of preventing damage to the gum lands by fire is to prohibit the lighting of scrub fires during the dry months of the year, and to appoint sufficient rangers to enforce this prohibition. The gum-diggers, and everybody connected or associated with the gumfields, recognize the irreparable damage that has been done by fires in past years, and the loss of wealth that has resulted, and every one is now anxious that effective means should be taken to prevent further damage.

We recommend that it be made illegal to light fires on the kauri-gum reserves for the purpose of burning off the scrub except during the months of May, June, July, August, and September, and that sufficient rangers, as indicated above, should be appointed as soon as possible. The duties of the rangers should be not only to prosecute persons lighting fires in the drier months, but also to take prompt action to put out any fires as soon as they are discovered.