

SESSION II.
1923.
NEW ZEALAND.

KAURI-GUM INDUSTRY

(REPORT ON THE) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1923.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 5 of the Kauri-gum Industry Amendment Act, 1914.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 2nd August, 1923.

I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report under the Kauri-gum Industry Amendment Act, 1914, for the year ended 31st March, 1923.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. D. H. Guthrie, Minister of Lands.

REPORT OF THE KAURI-GUM SUPERINTENDENT.

PURCHASES AND SALES.

As related in my former reports, the Department came into existence in the interests of the producers on the gumfields at the outbreak of war in 1914. At this period the Auckland gum-merchants closed down, and credit was refused the storekeepers on the gumfields by the Auckland wholesalers. Elderly people, men with large families, and the Maoris were unable to leave the gumfields and look for other employment. No other work was available, and they were unable to sell their gum and could not obtain stores on credit. No doubt, at the time, State aid appeared the only solution. Immediately operations by the Government Department commenced private gum-buyers resumed purchasing, and some competition existed. Since that time it has frequently happened that the Department has exercised a stabilizing influence, and has bought freely when no outside demand existed and when gum was almost unsaleable. Conditions such as these have not, however, prevailed during the past year, for although the number of diggers materially increased during the year, and a fairly large output resulted, the demand generally was equal to the supply, and sales were made freely throughout the greater part of the year. The result has been that buying by the Department has eased off a good deal.

During the year kauri-gum to the amount of £20,883 11s. 9d. was purchased by this Department, being only a little more than half the amount expended on purchases the previous year, when the demand was not nearly so good. Sales for the year amounted to £32,814 9s. 9d., an increase on last year's figure of over £10,000.

STANDARD GRADINGS OF KAURI-GUM.

On more than one occasion reference has been made in my annual reports to the advisability of inaugurating a Government grading of kauri-gum, such as has been adopted in connection with frozen meat, dairy-produce, and the phormium industry. That this would benefit the producers of kauri-gum is beyond question. It would also appear to be of equal benefit to the users at the other end of the world.