

purposes. This process consists of separating the gum and foreign matter by flotation. It is a test of the real gum content only, and does not take into account the resinous content of the organic matter other than gum, such as wood, charcoal, fibre, &c. The exporter using this process would undoubtedly test each line of any considerable amount when purchased, and he would thus know just what he was adding to his stock and how it stood. As the stock increased he would buy good or poor chips to keep it at the proper standard. When sufficient stock was on hand to fill an order, the exporter would know, without the necessity of making further tests, that his stock was right up to sample according to the gum content.

#### PRODUCTION OF KAURI-GUM.

No actual figures are available as to the production of gum during any particular period, and estimates vary a good deal. The only definite information is a record of the quantity of gum arriving at Auckland from the gumfields. Much of the gum received in any one month may, of course, be old stock that has been held for a lengthy period.

The gum received at Auckland for the past three years is shown, month by month, in the following table :—

					1920-21.	1921-22.	1922-23.
					Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
April	..	..	..	..	612	191	543
May..	..	..	..	..	532	331	514
June	..	..	..	..	370	358	654
July	..	..	..	..	434	404	548
August	..	..	..	..	376	368	689
September	..	..	..	..	577	508	781
October	..	..	..	..	447	420	601
November	..	..	..	..	371	482	601
December	..	..	..	..	339	285	667
January	..	..	..	..	289	331	590
February	..	..	..	..	301	466	658
March	..	..	..	..	359	608	700
Totals	..	..	..	..	5,007	4,752	7,546

For the purpose of making a comparison with the quantity of gum exported these figures must be considerably discounted. No weights are taken. The tonnage is arrived at by allowing 1 ton for every twelve sacks or ten cases. Practically all the gum comes forward in sacks, and twelve sacks to the ton is a little on the high side. A comparison of the weights of some thousands of sacks received in our store goes to show that a reduction of pretty well 5 per cent. should be made to approximate the correct weight. After being received at Auckland by the exporter there is a further very considerable wastage in sieving and working up, together with a shrinkage in weight of most grades. To compare the weight given of gum received in Auckland with that exported the former figures should be reduced by at least 10 per cent.

A comparison of the so-called production of gum with the export will make it clear that, notwithstanding the regular supplies received during the year, little remains for sale at this end. So far as can be ascertained, most of the accumulations of gum worked up since the boom in 1920 have been sent in. Since the 31st March the shipments abroad have exceeded the gum arriving at Auckland, so that any small surplus on hand at the end of March has been mostly shipped.

The gum received and the export for the first three months of the new financial year are :—

					Gum received.	Gum exported.	
					Tons.	Tons.	Value.
							£
April	..	..	..	..	480	685	66,367
May	..	..	..	..	613	717	65,553
June	..	..	..	..	459	736	70,063
					1,552	2,138	£201,983

The increase in the gum received during this year as compared with the previous year is not so much due to the fact that a fair demand existed, but more as a result of a larger number of men going on the gumfields. The number of diggers' licenses issued this year shows an increase of over 60 per cent. on the figures for the previous two years. The shipping of accumulated gum also helped to swell the total. As stated in my report last year, it is exceedingly unlikely that the output, apart from that of low-grade "rubbed" chips, can equal pre-war figures, no matter what the demand may be.

#### EXPORT OF KAURI-GUM.

For the year ended 31st March, 1923, the export amounted to 6,080 tons, of the value of £520,409, an average price per ton of over £85. This average is £13 per ton lower than that of last year, when better gradings were mostly in demand. The outputs for the present year and for the year ended 31st March, 1921, are almost identical. The tonnage this year is within 51 tons of that of 1921, and the average price in each case is £85 per ton. Until business on a pre-war scale is done with the