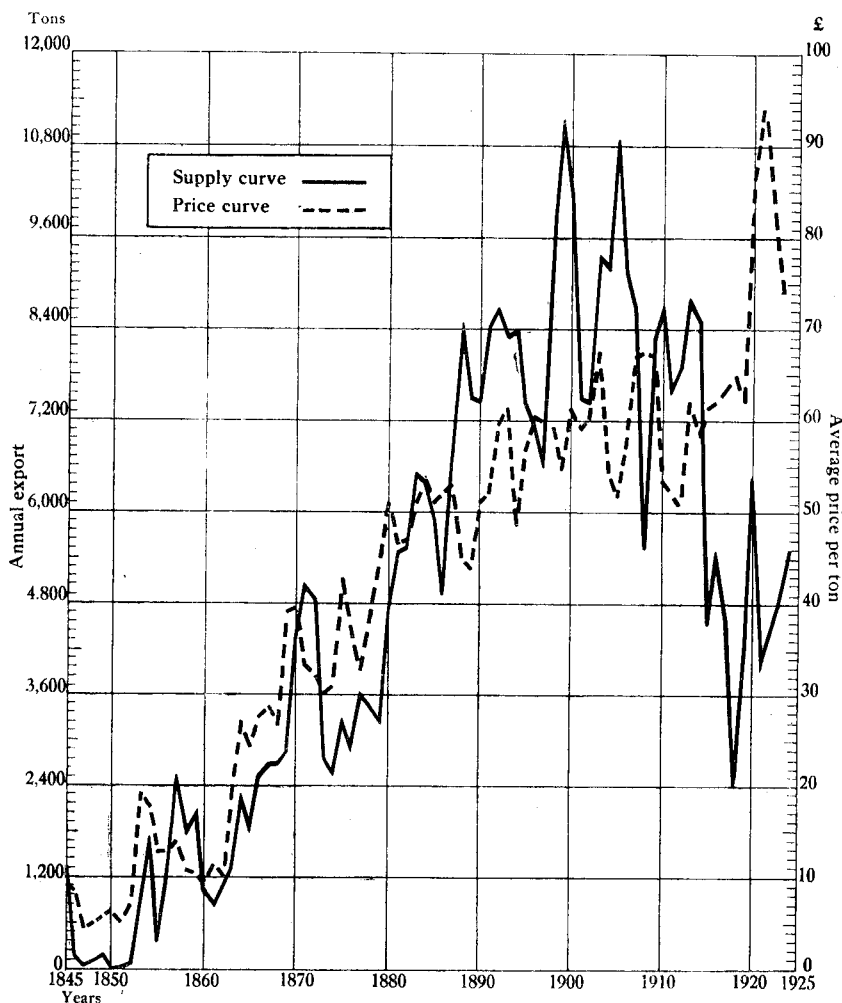


GUM PURCHASES DURING THE YEAR.

In previous reports it has been stated that the kauri-gum trade has been one of "ups and downs," and that Government participation in the industry has been by way of coming to the rescue of the gum-digger during periods of depression. In other more settled parts assistance during times of stress is provided by the commencement or pushing-on of road and railway formation and other works which call for unskilled labour. On the gumfields no such works were being carried on, and the better course seemed to be to help the digger out by purchasing a proportion of his gum when it was unsaleable in the ordinary markets. During the past year grants to the extent of £10,000 were made by the Government for the purchase of gum from diggers who were in distress. In several districts where committees of diggers existed purchases were made only on the recommendation of the committees, the diggers themselves being in a better position than any one else to know the genuine cases of hardship. In other districts small lots of gum were taken, and in many cases, instead of paying the whole of the purchase-money at one time, remittances of part of the total were made from time to time to provide for immediate requirements. Preference was given to married men with families and elderly men who are past navvying-work.

The following graph shows better than mere words can the irregular and extreme fluctuations in the prices and export of kauri from 1845 to 1925, and clearly indicates the difficult position in which those participating in the industry periodically find themselves.



LINOLEUM CHIPS AND DUST.

During the year the selling of linoleum gradings on a gum-content basis has been carried on to a good degree, and such sales appear to have given satisfaction both in New Zealand and abroad. One very pleasing feature is that there appears to be a tendency on the part of some manufacturers to buy on the soluble-resin content irrespective of size, taking chips, seeds, and dust gradings together so long as the shipment tests out the required percentage of resin. So far as grades around 65 per cent. are concerned, this is a great help to the exporters in New Zealand, and enables them to quote freely for larger quantities and to quote cheaper. Purchases of linoleum gradings are "piled" as received, and the pile is blended to the required gum content with a minimum of handling and expense, and the whole of the pile is sold as it stands, instead of the exporter having to pass the stock over a sizing-machine, and sell perhaps only the chips and be held up with the seeds and dust.

Shipments of chip gradings with guaranteed resin contents running as high as 80 per cent. and over have been freely made, and in good quantities. During the year very large quantities of "chalk" grades which were not saleable were crushed up and used as a "sweetner" for medium-grade chips.