

gum-producers representing Companies, 8 ; gum-merchants, 10 ; gum-brokers, 6 ; gum-buyers, 12 ; gum-diggers, 25 ; gum sorters and graders, 3 ; gum-bleeders, 2 ; farmers, 20 ; police constables, 3 ; engineers, 3 ; editor, 1 ; biologist and instructors in agriculture, 3 ; member of Parliament, 1.

Dealing with the various questions submitted to us for inquiry, and taking them in the order set out in your Commission, we beg to submit for Your Excellency's consideration the results of our investigations.

(1.) *The present export trade in kauri-gum, and especially in respect to the particular grades of gum exported, the countries to which exported, and the industrial uses to which kauri-gum is put.*

There are about twelve regular exporters of kauri-gum, but the bulk of the export trade is confined to about six firms. Included amongst the largest exporters are firms who are merely agents of foreign buyers. Each exporter grades and packs the gum according to the requirements of the buyers, most of it being sold against samples. The greater part of the gum exported by each firm is graded in probably not more than thirty grades. These grades have been built up to suit the special requirements of individual customers, as the result of years of training. Some firms deal principally in the higher-grade gums, while others confine their businesses almost altogether to the poorer grades. We have found it difficult to obtain any exact information with regard to the particular grades put up by each exporter, on account of the reluctance of the firms to divulge the inner workings of their businesses.

With regard to the countries to which kauri-gum is exported, this information is published in a concise form year by year in the annual report of the Kauri-gum Department (C.-12), the export for the previous twelve years being given in each report. From information taken from this source it is found that for the past ten years the export has been as follows :—

Country to which exported.	Tons.	Value. £
United States of America	28,812	2,107,975
United Kingdom	17,088	854,871
Canada	4,310	286,687
Germany	2,259	82,037
Australia	320	24,165
Belgium	283	11,727
France	129	11,061
Russia	129	7,692
Austria-Hungary	285	7,557
Netherlands	110	4,133
Sweden	70	1,932
Italy	47	1,565
Japan	12	628
Hong Kong	8	539
Total	53,862	£3,402,569

Thus the average export per annum has been 5,386 tons, and the average value £63 per ton.

The figures for the year ending 31st March, 1921, are as follow :—

Country to which exported.	Tons.	Value. £
United States of America	3,224	345,992
United Kingdom	2,544	149,422
Canada	314	24,481
Australia	49	4,802
Japan	4
Total	6,131	£524,701

The average value for this period was £85 11s. 7d. per ton.