

is sold, which is generally when the digger wishes to sell it. We give a start to men sometimes, and sometimes we refuse it. It sometimes happens that a man keeps his gum for four months, and occasionally we may give credit for that time. . . . I know nothing of how the Austrians have come here, or of any contract or arrangement made by any person to bring them out. Our firm has never had anything to do with such a transaction, nor have I ever persuaded or advised any Austrians, who are steady and industrious. I consider them a desirable class of settler if they would bring their families. I am not aware of any quarrels between them and the other diggers; they are very orderly. I know of eight who returned Home a week or two ago. I have no idea what money they took with them. I think they went Home to complete their military service. I think the earnings of the Austrians on our ground would be close on £2 a week, and the cost of their living 10s. or 11s. a week. I should put the average of other diggers, including the aged, at about £1 15s. The Austrians are mostly young and strong men, but amongst the other diggers are many who come merely because they do not know what else to turn to. A license-fee for digging on private lands would operate in this way: The land is taxed on the basis of the value of the gum, which governs the rent, and then the digger would be taxed for getting the same gum which is already paying tax; and if he were lucky enough to make an income from the gum of more than £300 he would again have to pay income-tax on it. Moreover, the land is already rated for county purposes, and I consider that the diggers are paying those rates. I am not in favour of an export duty, because I believe it would fall on the digger. The price paid to him would be less. I have ascertained for the information of the Commission the amount of cash paid at our stores for gum over and above stores supplied for three months ending 31st May, 1893. The number of men was 557, including 121 Maoris, which latter number includes women and children. The Maoris work about four to six months a year. The total sum so paid during the above three months was £7,589 0s. 9d. I also produce a statement showing wages earned by some of the best men during various periods: one Austrian in twelve months earned an average of £4 19s. 2d. per week; another £2 13s. 6d. A British digger for twelve months (including three weeks' holiday), £3 10s. 6d.; another, four months, £3 12s. per week; another, in ten months (one month of which was holiday), £3 9s. 6d.; another, nine months, £2 10s. 1d."

STATEMENTS and RETURNS put in by Mr. R. Mitchelson in his Evidence.

A.

AVERAGE EARNINGS PER WEEK OF MEN WORKING ON E. MITCHELSON AND BROTHERS' LEASES.

Names.	From	To	Cash received for Gum.	Goods Account: Advances on account Gum.	Total Earnings.	Weeks.	Average per Week.
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
<i>Babylon Store.</i>							
British—							
Cannard, C. . .	Mar. 1, 1897	Jan. 11, 1898	80 18 3	21 19 2	102 17 5	44	2 6 9
Barandon, J. . .	Feb. 9, "	Nov. 24, 1897	43 18 10	28 10 7	72 9 5	41	1 15 4
Austrians—							
Pericio, P. . .	Mar. 1, "	Oct. 18, "	32 17 11	24 10 3	57 8 2	33	1 14 9
Salle Dominiko . .	Sept. 1, "	Dec. 22, "	20 14 9	8 18 10	29 13 7	13	2 5 8
<i>Flax-mill.</i>							
Flavell, C. . .	July 27, "	Dec. 17, "	81 0 5	} * ..	..	20	4 1 0
Goodall, J. . .	July 27, "	Dec. 17, "	69 13 1			20	3 9 6
Goodall, W. . .	Sept. 4, "	Dec. 17, "	67 16 9			15	2 10 6
Griffin, R. . .	Sept. 18, "	Dec. 17, "	61 12 11			13	4 14 10
Brown, J. . .	Sept. 20, "	Dec. 17, "	47 4 11	..	..	12	3 18 0
<i>Maropiu Store.</i>							
Shillwell, J. (man, woman, child)	Dec. 3, 1896	Dec. 31, "	103 1 9	48 2 10	151 4 7	52	2 18 2
Sicheri Brothers (2)	Dec. 31, "	Dec. 31, "	250 7 5	51 10 10	301 18 3	52	5 16 1†

* Amount of goods supplied to these four men, £37 18s. 2d.; cash paid them, £212 5s. † £2 18s. each.

A1.

AVERAGE EARNINGS PER WEEK OF MEN WORKING ON E. MITCHELSON AND BROTHERS' LEASES.

Names.	From	To	Cash received for Gum.	Weeks.	Average per Week.
<i>Flax-mill Lease.</i>					
Flavell, Charles . . .	July 27, 1897	Dec. 17, 1897	£ s. d. 81 0 5	20	£ s. d. 4 1 0
Goodall, John . . .	July 27, "	Dec. 17, "	69 13 1	20	3 9 6
Goodall, William . . .	Sept. 4, "	Dec. 17, "	37 16 9	15	2 10 6
Griffin, R. . .	Sept. 18, "	Dec. 17, "	61 12 11	13	4 14 10
Brown, John . . .	Sept. 20, "	Dec. 17, "	47 4 11	12	3 18 0
<i>Babylon Lease.</i>					
British—					
Cannard, C. . .	Mar. 1, "	Jan. 11, 1898	102 17 5	44	2 6 9
Barandon, J. . .	Feb. 9, "	Nov. 24, 1897	72 9 5	41	1 15 4
Austrians—					
Pericio, P. . .	Mar. 1, "	Oct. 18, "	57 8 2	33	1 14 9
Salle Dominiko . . .	Sept. 1, "	Dec. 22, "	29 13 7	13	2 5 8
<i>Maropiu Lease.</i>					
Shillwell, J. . .	Dec. 31, 1896	Dec. 31, "	151 4 7	52	2 18 2
Sicheri Brothers (2) . . .	Dec. 31, "	Dec. 31, "	301 18 3	52	5 16 1*

* £2 18s. each.