

reserve about two-thirds of the gum-land for British subjects only. At Te Kao the gumfields are Maori lands, and they charge £7 10s. per annum, which two hundred Austrians paid readily when they came to the district. I believe the Austrians offered Subritski £2,000 for the right to dig gum on his land at Awanui for the term of two years. The land comprised 3,000 acres. Mr. Subritski declined the offer. The savings of the Austrians have been derived from the gum-lands. To show what ready cash the Austrians have, six men were robbed in the camp close by here of £156. I give this as a sample of the good financial position the Austrians are in. I know of a case (last Saturday) where an Austrian showed me his bill to check it, and he had £12 2s. 6d. of a balance after paying for tucker. This was the result of three weeks' digging. An Englishman could not make the same, as his tucker-bill would be larger. In the case referred to above his tucker-bill amounted to £2 odd for one month. A bachelor's bill would be about £3 10s. or £4 for the same period. Last month we paid 4d. for fresh meat; flour, 17s. per cwt.; tea, 2s. 4d. the pound; butter, 1s. 3d.; potatoes, 12s.; tinned meat, 1s. 2d. the 2 lb. tin; sausages, 1s. 4d.; sugar, 15s. a bag; candles, 10d. I sell my gum to, and buy my stores from, Mr. Tynan while digging on his land. I paid three years ago £4 per annum royalty for the privilege of digging on Tynan's, but I pay nothing now, as the royalty has been discontinued. I am perfectly satisfied with my dealings with Mr. Tynan. Mr. Tynan is supposed to be giving the best price for gum in the north fields, and I have not heard any of the men complain about the prices paid by him. I do not know whether the Austrians work on the same terms as the British gum-diggers, but I suppose they do. I object to the Austrians from a settler's point of view, because these settlers were dependent upon the gum that might be got in the neighbourhood of their holdings. There is absolutely nothing left for them, and they have to shift. The Austrians, as a rule, take their notions of where gum is to be found from the prospecting of the Britishers, and often reap a harvest themselves when it should fall to the digger who discovered the payable spots. This has happened to myself. Where I left my gum-spear and spade in the evening I found Austrians at work in the morning, within 8 ft. or 9 ft. from the very spot where I was digging. Amongst the Britishers there is an understood code of honour that no one should come to within, say, 50 ft. or 60 ft. of another gum-digger's workings. There is more gum now put into the market than can be absorbed, and hence there must be a decrease in the price. There are no complaints about the truck system here. I earn £3 a week without tucker, working twelve to fourteen hours a day. My wife does the scraping. I think it right and proper that settlement should be encouraged amongst the Britishers. As regards the Austrians, I do not think they will settle in this country. I have spoken to a number of them, and they all express their intention to return Home again. I think a large majority of the Austrians here are married men. It is my opinion that the primary object of their sending the first money Home is to repay advances made to them for passages out here. They assist one another in this repayment.

*John McLee Tynan*: I am a storekeeper and gum-buyer, from twelve to fourteen years. There are private lands and Crown lands here on which gum is worked. Mrs. Tynan is owner of a large block of private land. I allow a limited number of diggers on it. There are no specific conditions except the selling of their gum and dealing with me while working on it. I do not make any difference in the prices I pay for gum which comes from private property or from Crown lands. I buy gum according to the best of my judgment. I examine it, and pay according to its appearance. I get rid of the bad marks as soon as possible. As far as the Austrians are concerned, I would be content to trust them with the key of my store, and if they told me what they had taken out I would be satisfied. Britishers, as a whole, I am sorry to say, are not so honest as Austrians. I make no distinction between Austrians and Britishers in digging on my private land. I produce my store-book, and quote a few samples of the earnings of the Austrians. I will take last November: Three of the oldest hands received £31 15s. 7d., clear of tucker, for one month. The same three men for the following month (which was three days shorter) received £19 0s. 8d. I do not pay by cheque, but in coin and notes. On the 9th December I paid four men £30 10s. 3d. for one month's work, clear of tucker. For the next month for the same four men it came to exactly the same. This is the smallest amount they have had yet for a month's work, as the gum has come down in price, and the quality is inferior. As regards their tucker-bill, the account for two Austrians was a little over £7 for the month, which would be about 17s. 6d. The general run is about 15s. Two or three of the old ones live on rice. The sum total of their weekly expenses will be about 7s. 6d. According to my books the bulk of the Austrians live quite as well as the Britishers. I have remitted £32 on several occasions for a number of Austrians, but have never made a second remittance for the same men and of the same amount. I do not know what this exact amount was for. It may have been for the repayment of the passage-money and interest. In my opinion, the gum-digging will last for years to come, as the price will rise as the article gets scarcer. I used to make roads with gum I am dealing with and sending away now. I have no objection to the Austrians if they would be settlers; they are sending money away, and giving nothing in return. I cannot see any remedy that can be applied, excepting that they should not be allowed to dig gum until they have been twelve months in the colony. A law in that direction would stop the influx of the Austrians. They should have to show that they have been in the colony for twelve months. I do not see why any one digging gum should be allowed to do so without contributing something towards the revenue in the shape of royalty or license-fee. The prices given by Mr. Cheeseman are very nearly correct, but of course the market fluctuates. If a digger deals with me for cash it makes a great difference to him. I charge lower prices for cash. We expect to make a profit on the sale of goods from 25 to 30 per cent. after all expenses are paid. All the goods are delivered on the field. I sent a case of gum up to an outside agent, with the view of ascertaining the market-value, and received 12s. per hundredweight, when my agents got me £1 8s. to £1 10s. In Auckland some men can sell one class of gum and do well, while they are not able to sell other classes of gum. We are buying from 18 to 20 tons a month, and my agent in Auckland gets 2½ per cent. on the sales. I believe my