

prices for gum do not vary so much as other storekeepers'. I have communication with my agent in Auckland as to the quantities of gum I am shipping; thereupon he insures this gum, and this gum does not always go to the broker's warehouse, but is very often disposed of before the vessel arrives, and then goes straight to the buyer. I am enabled to do this because I have been careful with the sorting of my gum, and the purchasers in Auckland know exactly when the particular qualities are mentioned. If I shipped my gum myself I do not believe I would get the same price that other known exporters would obtain in the London market. There is something at work which I cannot explain. It invariably makes it a loss to a cash exporter if he deals direct with London. I have never given notice about gum going to town belonging to any man, so as to prevent him getting market-price. It is not a wise thing to dispose of all gum-lands, as they absorb surplus labour, which, no doubt, would be thrown on the Charitable Aid Boards, but I see no objection to disposal of gum-lands to *bonâ fide* settlers in sections of from 25 to 50 acres; but for the roaming gum-digger ample provision should be made by reserving tracts of gum-land.

---

TE KAO, 5TH FEBRUARY, 1898.

*Selwyn Heyward* (a Native of Warahi, living on the boundary of the Native and Crown land): I am a gum-digger, and own some land, and farm it. I do not like the Austrians. I consider the Austrians are a danger in this district, on account of their bad behaviour to the Native women. They have made advances to a number of girls, and some have behaved in a very indecent manner towards them. It has had the effect of frightening our girls and women to go anywhere about where they may be endangered by encounters with the Austrians. Our girls are frightened to go to school; many keep away from it on that account, having to pass the Austrian camp, and some of them being frightened back by their advances. These complaints were strongest when the Austrians were camped alongside the road to the school.

*Matthew Tupuni*, Native (interpreted by E. Evans): I am one of the chief Natives at Te Kao, and interested in this land. We charged diggers £7 5s. for permission to dig on our land, but a smaller charge is made now. I cannot tell what it is exactly. I have nothing against the Austrians. If they have the money to pay for the license, their money is as good as anybody else's. There have been complaints against the Austrians on account of their behaviour towards our women. My daughter was one of those who was stopped and indecently spoken to by an Austrian, who exposed his person. I went to remonstrate, and one after the other said that it was not him who did it, and the matter had been allowed to drop. I do not know of any other special cases. Another complaint I have against them is that they dig gum on the Cemetery Reserve. There had been a piece of ground specially marked off, and which was considered *tapu*, and notices were posted up at the corners, in the Austrian language, warning them not to dig within the boundary of this land; but they ignored them, and dug gum within that *tapu* ground. At that time there were a hundred and fifty Austrians here, and nothing could be done to bring them to justice. One of the Austrians, who has been in the country for nine years, is married to a Maori woman.

*Edward Evans*: I am a storekeeper at Te Kao, at my father's store. There are about fifty Maoris dealing with me, and about twenty-five Austrians. This is a winter field, and most of them have left. There is a large extent of winter ground about here, and the likelihood is that a good many of them will come back again. I have often heard Maoris complain about the Austrians' behaviour towards their women. I have heard of them waylaying girls while on their way to school and indecently exposing themselves, but I did not hear of any personal attack beyond the one, who ended by hanging himself on board the "Clansman" under charge of a policeman. As far as dealing with our stores, the Austrians pay for everything they get, and never try to back out of an obligation, except in the case of one man, who went away without paying his account, amounting to £4 15s. Although they may sell their gum to other storekeepers, they nevertheless deal with me, and I have no hesitation in trusting them, feeling assured that they will pay their way. This gumfield belongs to the Maoris. We have a store here, for which we pay the Maoris £40 per annum. The diggers used to pay a royalty of £7 5s., but for this last half-year only £1 10s. has been charged. As far as I am concerned, I would as soon see the Austrians as any other gum-diggers, as I can do a sounder business with them. I am of opinion that, although the gum is speedily worked by the Austrians, and is soon exhausted, still they will be digging for the next twenty-five years. There is only one British digger on Te Kao Block at present. I do not think the Austrians have sent them away, as it is a winter field. Maori women would not now, as they used to do, travel alone on foot, because they are frightened of the Austrians. I never heard of a case of a Maori woman living with an Austrian as far as I know; they do not want to have anything to do with them.

*George Hadfield* (Maori): I object to the Austrians, because my wife is very frightened of them. I often go away from home, and have to leave my wife, and she is very frightened of the Austrians. Formerly my wife went out digging gum, but now she will not do so, for fear of the Austrians; she will only go out with me. This is the case with all the other Maori women, they being afraid of the Austrians insulting them. The Austrians are clearing the gum out of the fields.

---

PARENGARENGA, 6TH FEBRUARY, 1898.

*Nicolas Cortula*: I am a Dalmatian, and eighteen years of age. I have been in the country about three years, gum-digging. I came straight out from Austria. None of my relations came out here. Some friends recommended me to come out who had been digging here before. My