

down, and all expenses are defrayed by his countrymen; and I believe that if a sick man should be in debt his people would square up his account. They are very good in giving help to one another. If a great number were to be here, and the gum industry found not to pay them any longer, I feel assured they would find the money among themselves and send those home, rather than let them go on the charitable aid here. The explanation for the small weekly accounts for goods for these Austrians may be the fact that they are keeping fowls in some of the camps. There are thirty and forty fowls in each camp, from which they derive a large number of eggs. The keeping of fowls in the Austrians' camps is quite an established custom. The Austrians are large buyers of chick-wheat and other fowl-feed, and the quantity of eggs they must obtain from their fowls is no doubt considerable.

*Samuel Yates*: I am a runholder, gum-buyer, and storekeeper at Parengarenga. Native lands here are in course of adjudication, as you are aware. *Re* the Te Kao block, 49,000 acres: These lands have been adjudicated upon by the Native Land Court, but an appeal has been made by some of the Natives interested therein. The boundaries, therefore, determined upon by the last Court are subject to alteration and amendment. The unsatisfactory state of affairs now is as follows: As the decision is still pending, outside Natives appear on the scene and dig gum. Those whose right to the land has been acknowledged attempt to stop them from doing so. Their reply is "Show us your title to the land." This they cannot do, and therefore the whole of the ground can now be worked without paying anything in the shape of license or royalties to the Natives. The Natives interested—Herbert Robson and Ngakura—in order to put a stop to these proceedings are now applying to the Native Land Court Judge for an injunction to stop all Natives (even the Natives that own the land, and also the Austrians who have paid a license-fee to them) from digging gum. I would suggest that the Government should purchase this block as a way out of the difficulty. Considering that 90,000 acres was sold some thirty-five years ago from 2d. to 4d., I believe this land under consideration can be obtained at a very small cost, as a great deal of the gum has been taken out of it. They will be glad to sell, in my opinion, as there are so many Natives interested in it. 19,000 acres belong to Hemitaitimu and others. There would be no difficulty about them; but there are 30,000 acres across towards Te Kao, in which about five hundred Natives are interested, and I have advised them to sell in order to get rid of their liability to future taxation.

*George Gosdin*: I have been a gum-digger for one year and four months, and have dug elsewhere. The Austrians are spoiling the gum-fields, because they are coming in such numbers, and work in an exhaustive manner, and they send the money earned out of the colony. I am the only Britisher in the camp I am working in. There are eleven Austrians, one Frenchman, and myself in the camp close together. Some of the Austrians live rough, but a few live well. One of them lives better than I could, going in for more luxuries. The Austrians earn more and save more. Some of them scrape gum till two or three in the morning, and they go out at daylight. Austrians have a great many holidays—saints' days, &c.; they had two last week. The Britishers work eight hours a day, but the Austrian works as long as he can see. We are getting light-brown gum embedded in dark-coloured rock, either sandstone or soft formation, from 1 ft. to 1½ ft. deep. As to the gum, I think the prices are pretty fair; but the prices charged for provisions are high. Fresh meat is 4d. per pound; potatoes, 12s. per hundredweight; flour, 18s. per hundredweight; tea, 3s. per pound; sugar, 5d.; butter, 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. The gumfields will last for years if there is a sale for the inferior classes of gum. Some of the wandering diggers would settle if Government would offer them land, and if they could unite it with gum-digging a few would become permanent. I know of two Austrians who have married within the colony, and have settled down—one at Te Kao and the other at Hohoura. If others could be induced to settle I think they would be good settlers. Now they only help to swell the wandering population. Since I came here there have been three hundred Austrians working on this field at the same time. There is no difficulty in getting your money from Mr. Yates; if £1,000 were due to you you could get it to-morrow. There is no semblance of the truck system. The Austrians get about ¼ cwt. of gum a week; every one of them would at least clear £1 10s. Some of them (three in a tent) have taken £40 a month.

*James Menzies*: I have been storekeeper for Mr. S. Yates for two years. I produce my ledger, and you can pick out what accounts you like: Three men (Austrians), food for one month, £4 18s. 1d., with another 16s. to 18s. for meat; value of the gum dug during the month, £20 2s. 4d. In the succeeding month, the goods were £5 14s. 3d., and 18s. for meat, and the gum they obtained during that month amounted to £31 13s. 4d. Another party of three Austrians paid for goods one month £7 14s. 5d.; no meat; value of gum, £30. In the previous month they obtained gum to the value £40 15s. 5d. The same party in six weeks paid £5 13s. 3d. for stores; value of gum £62. Another Austrian's account for stores, £2 10s. 2d.; 8s. for meat; earned £13 14s. 10d. Next month, 4s. 8d. for stores, and gum to the value of £11 17s. Next month £1 15s. 11d. for stores; value of gum, £13 11s. Next month, £3 11s. for goods; and gum £17 4s. 9d. This man must have obtained additional provisions elsewhere. He is one of the best diggers. The stores of another Austrian who works by himself came to £2 17s. 3d.; value of his gum, £4 8s. 4d. Next month his goods come to £1 3s. 8d., and 10s. for fresh meat; value of gum, £5 14s. Next month his goods came to £1 16s. 4d.; gum £6 10s. Next six weeks: goods, £2 5s. 3d.; gum, £11 9s. 5d. This is the account of a hard-working Britisher for about same period as above: For two months, goods came to £9 4s. 6d., including meat; value of gum, £28 15s. For next month: cost of goods, £3 8s. 4d. including meat; gum, £13 16s. Last month, goods, £3 4s. 9d.; value of gum, £18 18s. Another British digger, for one month: Goods, including meat, £1 10s. 9d.; value of gum, £1 14s. 6d. Following month, £2 5s. for goods, and his gum came to £4 6s. 6d. For next three months: Goods, £6 14s. 8d.; value of gum, £3 3s. For the next month, £2 1s. for goods; and gum, £3 3s. 10d. Another Britisher for three months: