KAIHU THE DISTRICT
NORTH RIPIRO WEST COAST
SOUTH HOKIANGA

HISTORY AND LEGEND REFERENCE JOURNAL

NINE

RICHES FROM THE HILLS
VALLEYS AND SWAMPS

1780-1900

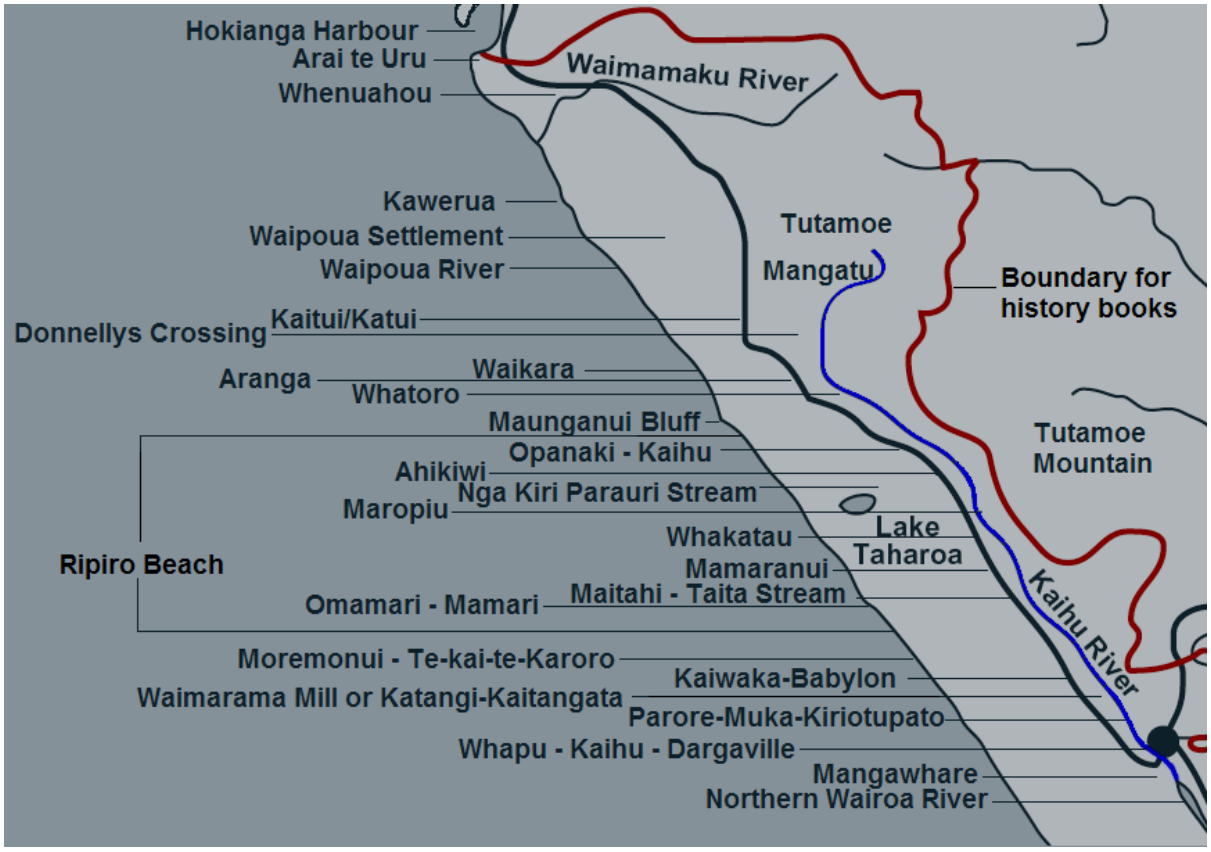
PART ONE

KAURI TREE GUM / RESIN:
1840-1950

PART TWO

TIMBER BONANZA

CHAPTERS



Note: Please remember that Kaihu or Whapu is the name given to the area at the mouth of the Kaihu River now known as Dargaville. Opanaki was the name of the area known as Kaihu today. The change was made towards the end of the nineteenth century.

PART ONE

1
Gum/Resin From The Kauri Tree

Why Did Those Giants Of The Forest Disappear?

Tens of thousands of years ago, giant Kauri trees (Agathis Australis) formed vast forests over much of Northland. Before the Europeans arrived and begun to cut down the existing Kauri for timber, a lot of these great forests had disappeared, probably due to changing forces of nature and climate.

As more and more swamp land has been drained and turned into green grasslands, the old giant Kauri have been found, still there, hiding in the swamps.

A former Dargaville contractor, Milton Randall, spent more than fifteen years recovering the ancient timber. He has conservatively estimated that he recovered up to 5000 logs from around this district, with almost all of them in perfect condition. Often found at three different levels, the top logs all carbon date around 20,000 years of age.

Randall worked for two years in a 13 hectare area near Kaiiwi Lakes, and also resurrected logs at places south of the Lakes, in Scotty's Camp Road in Parore, and Notorious Road West at Aratapu.

He favours the theory that says a huge volcanic eruption off Maunganui Bluff caused a great tsunami that felled the trees in one big catastrophe. Geologists with whom he has discussed the mystery agree, and say that a deep crater lies under the sea about 12 kilometres off the Maunganui Bluff.

We do know, however that these forests existed as Kauri gum was usually dug up in scrub or swamp country where there had been no visible forests for years.

THE SOURCE OF
THE KAURI TREE GUM OR RESIN

During the long life of these huge, ancient trees, large amounts of resin (Kauri gum) was exuded, mostly to cover damage to bark, limbs and roots, which was brought about by insects, wind and ground movement.

As the trees matured and died from natural causes and other, as above, they left behind the fossilised gum which would lay in and on the land and throughout the swamps for upwards of thousands of years until it was harvested in large quantities for commercial purposes in the 1840s through to about 1950.

This gum/resin or sap of the living tree is liquid and sticky, like golden syrup but hardens as it leaves the tree and settles. The Kauri gum which the gum diggers were looking for was initially not from living trees, but from ones that had died thousands of years before and had fossilised in the ground and swamps.

As these ancient trees gradually rotted away and sank into the soil the resin or gum from them became fossilised in hard glassy lumps. These lumps could be anything from the size of a peanut to the size of a boulder. Their colour ranged from creamy white to a very dark brown, with transparent browns, reds and oranges in between. The lumps could be found sometimes on the surface but mostly they were buried in the ground.

1832: One of the first Europeans to record this natural phenomenon was the Jewish explorer Joel Polack as he travelled from the Hokianga to the Kaipara in 1832…

After resting an hour, including dinner, we resumed our travel. The scenery, as we continued our route, was very similar to that we had previously passed; the only variety we saw was on a particularly elevated plain, where no forest was in view; and the nearest that approached the vicinity of the plain was at least one hundred and thirty feet lower in descent than the plain; yet we saw large masses of Kauri gum buried in the earth. What revolution of the elements could have brought the bitumen to these elevated plains, where it was strewed in abundance, it is impossible to conceive? The natives could give no account of its having been brought there. Patches of low forest-land were observable in various parts of these plains, and a number of swamps abounding in flax. The substratum of the hills was sandstone, which was here found in large quantities.

USES BY EARLY MAORI

Pre-European Maori used the gum (kapia) as cooking fuel. It burned brightly with little smoke so it was also ideal for torches. The ash was used in tattooing dyes. The tattooist pounded the ash into a fine powder, mixed it with oil or animal fat then rubbed the blue/black pigment into the tattoo cuts. They also used it as chewing gum. The gum would be boiled until it was soft and chewable.

KAURI GUM COMMANDED SUPREMACY IN THE MARKET PLACE

Entrepreneur's found that Kauri gum was better than most kinds of resin for making varnish which created a demand overseas and kicked off a gum rush to Northland of New Zealand where the Kauri tree had been most predominate.

It was extensively employed by leading manufacturers in every country where varnish was made. This unusual favour we by no means attribute to the superior results to be obtained by its use, but rather to the fact that it is easier to manipulate, that is, it unites with linseed oil quicker, and at lower temperatures than any other gum. It is probable that the essential oil it obtains acts as a solvent; hence, less heat being necessary, carbonization is minimized and a relative paler varnish is the product.

BELOW: A BULLOCK TEAM LEAVING THE GUM FIELDS NORTH OF AUCKLAND, WITH A LOAD OF KAURI GUM [1]

1 OTAGO WITNESS, 8.7.1908

FOUR GRADES OF GUM

Bold or pale: Naturally produced this gum could be picked up from the land, or probed for in areas where it had lain and maybe fossilised over many thousands of years.

Black or steel: Probably burnt gum from ancient fires.

Sugar gum or chalk: Was the term used to describe the gum that flowed from the roots.

The root area of one mutant twin-trunk Kauri is reputed to have produced over three tons of quality gum before the area was cleared by fire.

Candle gum: Dripped down from the bark on the trunk and branches like stalactites, eventually dropping to the forest floor and becoming buried under layers of forest debris often up to a depth of 15 feet.

LEFT: SOME SAMPLES;

For export the gum was sorted into these grades and sold by the gum merchants at auction in Auckland to overseas bidders.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE…

Garden spades were used by the early diggers. These proved to be easily damaged and so a special heavy duty tool was imported. This had steel straps to reinforce the hickory shaft making it ideal to prise and slice through roots. Made by the Skelton Company in England, it was known as the Skelton gum spade.

Other tools usually carried by the diggers were the gum spear, a slender steel rod attached to a spade handle. Usually between two and four metres in length and used to probe for underground gum. The longer spears were necessary to probe the swampy areas. The experienced diggers could *'tell'* by the feel if they struck gum or just tree roots or stones or rocks. Some were able to ease buried gum to the surface with hook-ended spears.

The knapsack often made from flour sacks or flax known as a pikau, was sufficient to carry back the day's diggings.

Also a good sharp axe to clear undergrowth and chop through underground roots: and a scraping knife to clean the gum from mud and other debris.

A bucket for water and the inevitable billy for the midday brew.

The climbers also carried a heavy rope to descend from the canopies, a lightweight rope and lead weight, to hurl up in to the branches, hand hooks and toe spikes,

When the gum was scraped and polished some beautiful pieces emerged, sometimes with fossils or insects trapped deep inside.

As the old scrimshaw whalers carved whale teeth and bone, diggers used their spare time to carve gum pieces into the heads of Maori chiefs, lighthouses, buildings, ships, etc.

Examples of these intricate gum carvings can be seen in the Kauri Museum at Matakohe where tons of gum chips and a fully restored and working gum-washing plant help to complete the picture. Gum can be seen at Dargaville's own Museum at Mt Wesley,

BELOW: DIGGERS WORKING FOR GUM FROM THE KAURI TREE GROWING AT THE REAR. [2]

2 SOURCE:HTTP://UPLOAD.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKIPEDIA/COMMONS/THUMB/B/BA/PICTURESQUE _NEW_ZEALAND%2C_1913.DJVU/PAGE387-791P PICTURESQUE_NEW_ZEALAND%2C_1913.DJVU.JPG

2
THE GUM FIELDS

NORTHERN WAIROA TO HOKIANGA

Most of the gum fields in this area were open scrub country and swamps but as the remaining Kauri forests were cut down for their timber, gum diggers moved in to those areas as well.

They were not usually looking for gum from the trees that had been felled but for the fossilised gum from trees that had died and sunk beneath the surface over thousands of years before.

Once the gum had all been picked up from the surface, both Maori and Europeans began digging for it.

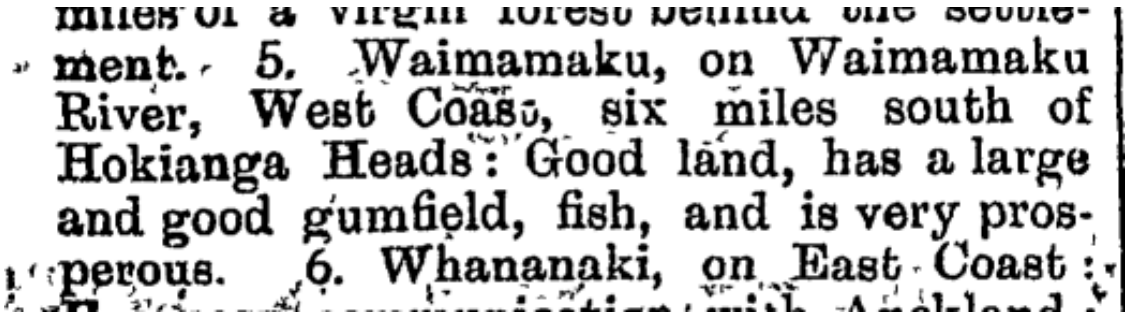
Sometimes quite deep trenches or holes, nearly always in swampy areas were dug. The gum they collected was the best quality however, so it was worth more.

WAIMAMAKU GUM FIELD

APPROX. 80,000 ACRES

Mr. Dickenson's gum field, called *'Waimamaku'* was leased from the Maori: it was opened to the Austrians and others for settlement. Maori charged 2s per hundredweight for gum as royalty.

TE AROHA NEWS, VOLUME VI, ISSUE 327, 22 DECEMBER 1888, PAGE 3



miles of a virgin forest behind the settlement. 5. Waimamaku, on Waimamaku River, West Coast, six miles south of Hokianga Heads: Good land, has a large and good gumfield, fish, and is very prosperous. 6. Whananaki, on East Coast:

KAWERUA AND WAIPOUA FIELD INCLUDING TUTAMOE

APPROX. 100,000 ACRES

It has been said that up to 600 gum diggers lived on the gum fields near Kawerua at the height of the gum digging period.

This field was initially leased Crown and Maori land, from Waikara in the south to Waimamaku in the north.

Kawerua was the only safe landing place from the sea between the Hokianga and the Kaipara.

A small mixed beach community developed there in the late 1800,s and early 1900,s to service the gum diggers on the Waipoua Kauri gum reserve and local gum fields.

It was a flourishing little community with a hotel, a gum store, a post office and a hall. Inland there was a race course, a marae, living places and gardens.

Dawson Birch's recollections of the gum fields at Kawerua in the 1920's were recorded by Peter Mathews in 1979-80…

All along the coast there were camps, permanent for Dalmatians and short term for local Maori when they needed cash.

Kauri tree climbing gangs of three or four worked in the forest for wages. Every three months Nick Yaka's and his brother packed the gum out to Kawerua by horse to sell, and packed food back Philip Matich had the hotel and gum buying license and packed by boat to Omapere. People got annoyed with the store as everything took too long to come through. Trounson had the place after Matich went. Jarvie ran merino sheep at Kawerua, local Maori knocking them off.

*By 1939, when the Crown bought the hotel land and buildings, Kawerua was **"well and truly dead"** as a gum digging centre and the inland road through the Waipoua forest had supplanted the old coastal route. The land was acquired by the forest service who wished to keep people out because of the fire risk.*

Kawerua c.1920

LEFT: GUM STORE, HOTEL, POST OFFICE AND HOME AT KAWERUA. STOREKEEPERS: GEORGE WYATT, ABOUT 1880: W. M. NEDRICK JARVIE, ABOUT 1888: PHILIP MATICH ABOUT 1913

OWENS FIELD, MAUNGANUI BLUFF/ARANGA

APPROX. 40,000 ACRES

This was a combination of private and Crown land spreading from North of the Kaiiwi Lakes to the fringes of the Katui forest which included approximately 800 acres in the Waitapu Valley near the Maunganui Bluff, which was mostly swamp.

One of the agents was, Mr N. N. Downey at Aranga.

During 1898 there were approximately 25 Austrians and 10 British digging Kauri gum in this field.

The town of Aranga consisted of two rows of dwellings facing each other across a sort of common pathway. All were the same pattern. Each house site was surrounded on all four sides by a narrow ditch from which sods were carefully taken to build, within the ditch enclosure, earth walls about two feet high. These were the base for the house and superimposed on them the house frame of tea tree or other poles was erected to support a tent roof and walls and a fly made of gum sacks sewn together.

Women sometimes presided over these lowly households, and here the diggers lived and worked, laboriously scraping and washing gum they had retrieved from the Aranga gum fields.

The hours were long and the work dirty, hard and often wet, since such gum was gained from swamps but the amusements of the digger were few being confined to getting drunk, attending to such local women as were available and running horse races.

Across the road facing the town was the large general store with a Post Office and gum shed. It was here that the agent did his gum trading with the diggers with very little cash changing hands as the gum was mostly traded for basic living stores.

LEFT: SEWING UP SACKING TO MAKE A ROOF, SIDES OF THE SHACK OR MAYBE A HAMMOCK BED

AUCKLAND STAR, VOLUME XXVI, ISSUE 266, 7 NOVEMBER 1895

TO GUM DIGGERS.

KAIHU VALLEY SWAMP.

Tenders are invited for the Purchase, or Lease, for a term of 12 months from the 11th November, 1895, of about 853 Acres of Gum Land, being Lots 1, 2, 3 and 8 of Section 1, Block XIII., Waipoua Survey District known as the Kaihu Valley Swamp, the property of Mr John Owen.

Tenders will be received at the office of the undersigned, up to the 11th November instant, where plan of land may be seen.

The highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. Easy terms of purchase can be arranged if required.

DEVORE AND COOPER,
Solicitors,
Queen-street, Auckland

The gumfield sluice channel at Aranga, north of Dargaville, with Maunganui Bluff in the background. Prices of kauri gum, which had once been such a huge industry in the North, enjoyed a brief rise after World War II when it was still used in the manufacture of paint, polish and lino. Then the introduction of synthetic additives spelt the end of the kauri gum trade forever.

KAIIWI LAKES FIELD

From Local sources it has been said the Lakes district was at the time a major gum digging area.

The largest gum diggers camp (Jacksons) was established near Johnsons Swamp south of Lakes Kaiiwi.

In the early 1900's an attempt was made by the Hall Brothers to drain Lakes Kaiiwi for gum recovery operations.

A drain was dug from the present Lakes Kaiiwi outlet to Johnsons swamp and the Lakes lowered by about 2 metres.

At about the same time gum was being recovered from Lakes Waikere with the aid of a diving bell. In 1921 the Crown set aside a large area of land between Lakes Taharoa and the west coast for gum recovery operations.

The swamps in the area were bored with hand augers in the hope of recovering gum chips. The operations met with little success and by the late 1920's most gum diggers had left the area. Few signs remain of the gum digging operations around the Lakes. A gum diggers hut from the shores of Lakes Kaiiwi is now situated at the Dargaville Maritime Museum.

The Kaiiwi Maori reserve established by Parore Te Awha in 1876 was surrounded by Crown Kauri Gum Reserves and was used as a base by Maori gum-diggers.

Graham's survey plan showed five huts labelled 'gum kainga' on the land and a track from the kainga and Lakes to the Kaihu Valley.

The reserve was a gateway to the Lakes system.

There was an old Pa site overlooking the Lakes in the reserve and on the shores of Lake Taharoa there are two urupa.

The Kaumatua, Lovey Te Rore from Opanake/Kaihu gives us his recollections of the Lakes from the time he first went there with his father about 1922-23. He remembered Johnson's swamp, where over 100 people lived in the 1920's, mostly digging gum…

It was a real papakainga: The people living there were from Kaihu. Some were Te Roroa. Others were Waiariki and Hokianga. Those families eventually settled around Kaihu and live there till this day: access to the Lakes was by way of the Ngakiriparauri track used to transport gum from the settlement to meet the train at Kaihu.

There was an 18 horse pack train which carried it over the track: others of our people settled around the fringes of both Lakes Kaiiwi and Taharoa, partly because of access to gum, but also because of proximity to both the eel fishery in the Lakes and the coastal Toheroa and Mussel beds.... plentiful around Pahekeheke Rock. The Lakes and coastal fisheries provided a plentiful food supply for the settlement.

MITCHELSON'S GUM LEASE

North of Dargaville to Kaihu includes…

Kaihu blocks 1-3-4: about 40,000 acres owned by Mr Nimmo. Rent 1893, 1,000 pounds.

Kaihu No 1 a: about 2,400 acres held by Mr James Trounson. Rent 1893, 40 pounds.

Kaihu No 2: being 9,800 acres off the Maori. Rent 125 pounds.

Opanake: 7,130 acres off the Maori. Rent 125 pounds

Total: 1290 pounds.

The brothers Mitchelson's had trading stores at Dargaville, the Flax Mill Parore, Babylon, Maropiu, and Opanake/Kaihu. Not at Aranga as some punters have said in the past.

In 1893 there were approximately 267 Austrians, 225 British and 127 Maori working on this field: Output 1138 tons. [3]

At the 1898 Gum commission meeting in Dargaville, he states there are now 168 Austrians, 75 British and 42 Maori working these fields. Output: 552 tons in 1897.

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3 SOURCE: (ALL STATISTICS GIVEN BY RICHARD MITCHELSON AT THE 1893 GUM COMMISSION ENQUIRY)

MESSRS. MITCHELSON BROTHERS (AND THE GUM DIGGERS)

NORTHERN ADVOCATE, 23 MAY 1891

'NINETEENTH Century Oppression' is the heading under which, in another part of this issue, a correspondent expatiates upon the state of bondage to which certain Gum Lords would reduce the Knights of Spade and Spear; and a similar tale reaches me from Kaihu district, in letters from two correspondents, complaining of the doings of Messrs Mitchelson Brothers. I have been at some pains to ascertain the truth as between the Mitchelsons and the gumdiggers, and I am satisfied that there are errors on both sides. One of my correspondents furnishes the following comparative list of prices, to show that the Mitchelsons charge exorbitant rates for provisions on the gumfield:—

	Babylon.	Mangawhare.
	s. d.	s. d.
Bread, 4lb loaf...	0 10	0 7
Butter, per lb	1 3	1 0
Tea, per lb	3 0	2 0
Sugar, per lb	0 5	0 4
Potatoes, per cwt	16s., 14s,	8s., 7s.

This correspondent also asserts that Messrs Brown and Campbell pay higher prices for gum than the Mitchelsons do—a statement which is probably true, and no wonder, when the gum is dug from land for which the Mitchelsons pay £1,500 a year rental. On the other hand, it is alleged that Mitchelson and Co, have been grossly swindled by gumdiggers palming off dirt upon them as gum, and I have had ocular demonstration of this fact by witnessing the bags of rubbish just as they were emptied on the floor of the store.

* * *

These seem, on the face of them, to be matters calling for private arrangement, and that have no right to be made subject of public discussion. If Mitchelson and Co. choose to pay £37 per ton for Kaihu clay, that is their business; if gumdiggers choose to pay Mitchelson and Co. tenpence for sevenpence worth of bread, that is their look out. It is doubtless a loose way of doing

THE WOES OF THE GUM DIGGER

OBSERVER, VOLUME XI, ISSUE 649, 6 JUNE 1891, PAGE 3

[FROM A HERALD CORRESPONDENT.]

FOR some time past some of the diggers on the Kaihu Valley ranges, not being satisfied with the price paid for the gum by Messrs Mitchelson, have taken and sold their gum to other storekeepers. In consequence of this all the gumdiggers have had notice to quit the field within seven days, notices to that effect have been posted along the district. In order to protect themselves Messrs Mitchelson have notified that their permission must be obtained and the following contracts signed, before the men will be allowed to commence digging on the leased field :— Contract to dig gum on Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. 1. All kauri gum dug or obtained in any way shall continue to be the property of Messrs Mitchelson Bros., and shall be delivered by persons digging the same to either of their stores at Kaihu, No 1 block, and until so delivered shall be held by the person digging the same as bailee for them. 2. No rent is to be charged the above mentioned diggers, but it is hereby agreed that in lieu thereof that on delivery as aforesaid of any such gum, Messrs Mitchelson and Bros. (whose decision upon the quality and description shall be final and binding upon the persons delivering the same) shall have the right to fix, and shall thereupon pay, the fair and reasonable value thereof to the person delivering the same, whose receipt shall be a sufficient discharge. 3. Any persons being on the said land shall leave and vacate the same within 48 hours after receiving notice, either verbal or in writing, requiring him or her to do so from Messrs Mitchelson and Bros., or their agents, and will not enter upon the same land without first receiving permission from Messrs Mitchelson Bros. or their agents, such notice, if in writing, shall be deemed to have been given if left at the last known place of abode of such person." In consequence of these rules most of the men have cleared out, but some of those left on the field held a meeting by the side of the railway at Maitahi, on May 12th, to consider what steps should be taken. Considerable discussion ensued as to the exorbitant prices charges for "tucker," and the small price given for gum, as compared with other storekeepers at Dargaville, and the meeting terminated.

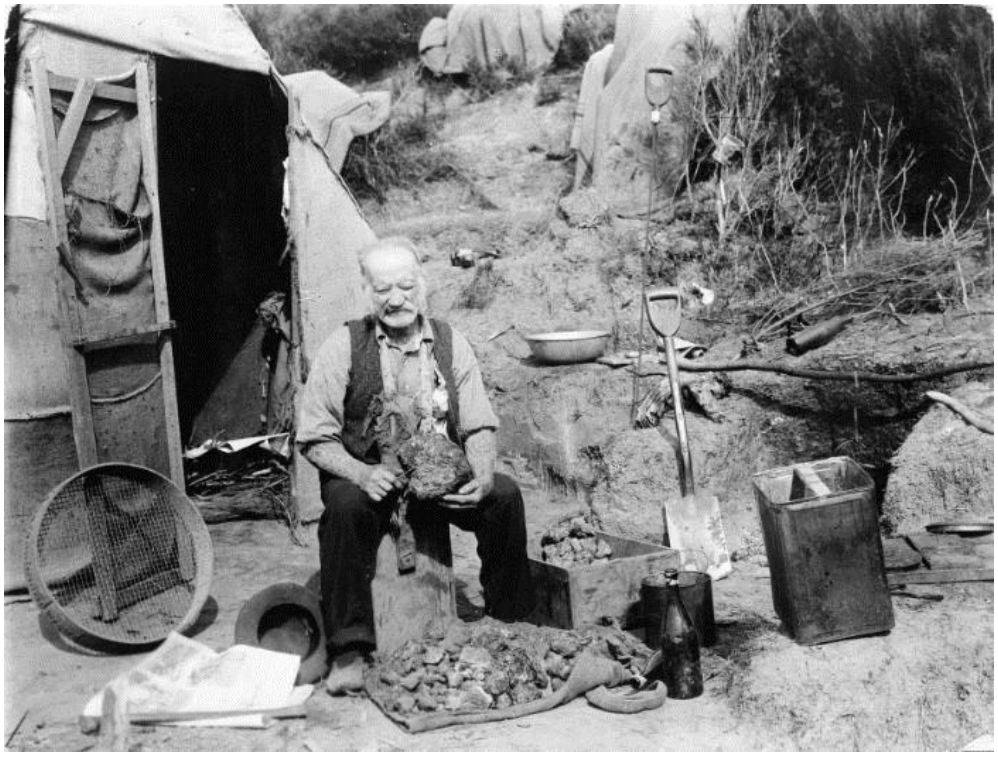
business ; but if people choose to trade in that way, instead of in an open and honest manner, they need not hope to gain anything by publishing their shame to the whole world. It is stated that the present friction has arisen because of a determination on the part of the Mitchelsonian Gum Lords to place the business on an honester footing, by insisting upon inspecting and riddling the gum before buying it. This is a proper step, but it would also be well if the firm were to start supplying the diggers with provisions at current and reasonable rates. That this is necessary is proved by the fact that Mitchelson and Co., holding a monopoly of nearly all the gum land up the Kaipara, have decreed that no one shall be allowed on their lands unless they sign an agreement, undertaking to deal at their stores, and take whatever price for gum the Mitchelson Brothers may choose to give.

If the buyer is to fix the price in one case, why not in the other? Let the agreements stipulate that the gum-digger shall fix the price of the provisions he may buy, and the bargain will be equitable. As the agreements now run, they are most one-sided, and I am not surprised to learn that gumdiggers by the score are leaving Kaihu Valley for pastures new. This is much to be regretted, as the tendency will be to create an 'unemployed' class in the city. Perhaps Parliament will do something to adjust the relations of the Gum Lords and their serfs. If a proper Truck Act were passed, it would solve some of the problems that are producing the present state of deadlock and loss to the community. The question becomes a public one whenever there is a manifest injustice, or when it is apparent that selfish tactics are operating against the public welfare.

NORTHERN ADVOCATE, 24 DECEMBER 1898, PAGE 3

Regulations under the Kauri Gum Industry Act, 1898, are gazetted, and the constitution of the districts under the Act is also defined.

Mr A. Gray, of Mangakahia, wants the Auckland Acclimatisation Society to liberate opossums upon the high forest plateau between Kaihu and Hokianga.



ABOVE: AN OLD TIMER CLEANS HIS GUM
BESIDE HIM ARE HIS SPEAR AND A SKELTON GUM SPADE

HARDING'S GUM LEASE

SOUTH OF DARGAVILLE WEST OF THE WAIROA RIVER, LAND OWNED BY MR HARDING

1893: Royalty paid to Mr Harding by all gum diggers.

1897: Royalty on all gum paid by Messrs Brown and Campbell and Mr Marriner store keepers at Mangawhare to Mr Harding. Gum diggers had to trade with these characters.

A NEWS CLIP FROM PAPERS PAST TELLS US THAT SOME OF THE DIGGERS ARE SAVING SOME MONEY

DAILY SOUTHERN CROSS, VOLUME XXXII, ISSUE 5718, 20 JANUARY 1876, PAGE 2

NORTHERN WAIROA

After steaming five miles up the river "Minnie Casey" makes a call at Mangawhare, the station of Messrs.' Brown, Campbell and Co , and the first settlement from Aratapu, lying on the same side of the river A landing was effected at a strongly built wharf running out in front of the main store This is a large, commodious, well stocked place, and contains the Post Office and Savings' Bank The returns from this latter department are satisfactory, and show that bush men and gum-diggers can be saving, for in addition to a large amount deposited in the bank, Mr. Spencer, the manager, holds upwards of £600 on trust for these much maligned men.

LEFT: CARTING THE GUM OUT BY BULLOCKS TO BE TRANSPORTED FROM THE RAIL HEAD OR BY FERRY

LEFT: TRADING TO THE GUM BUYER

"THIS IS GOOD GUM, BOSS TOP PRICE PLEASE"

BELOW: NOTICE THE CONTRAST IN DRESS BETWEEN THE GUM BUYER AND DIGGER.

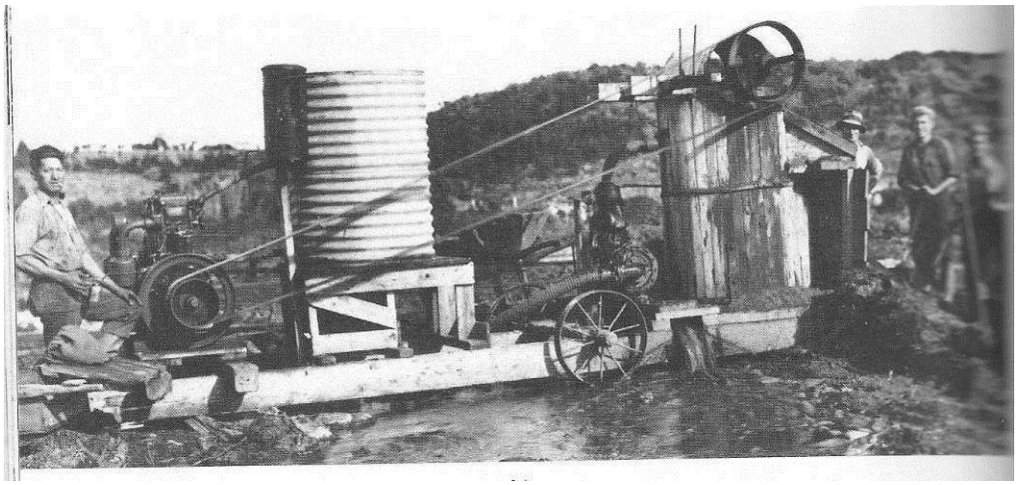
LEFT: WEIGHING THE GUM IN THE FIELD

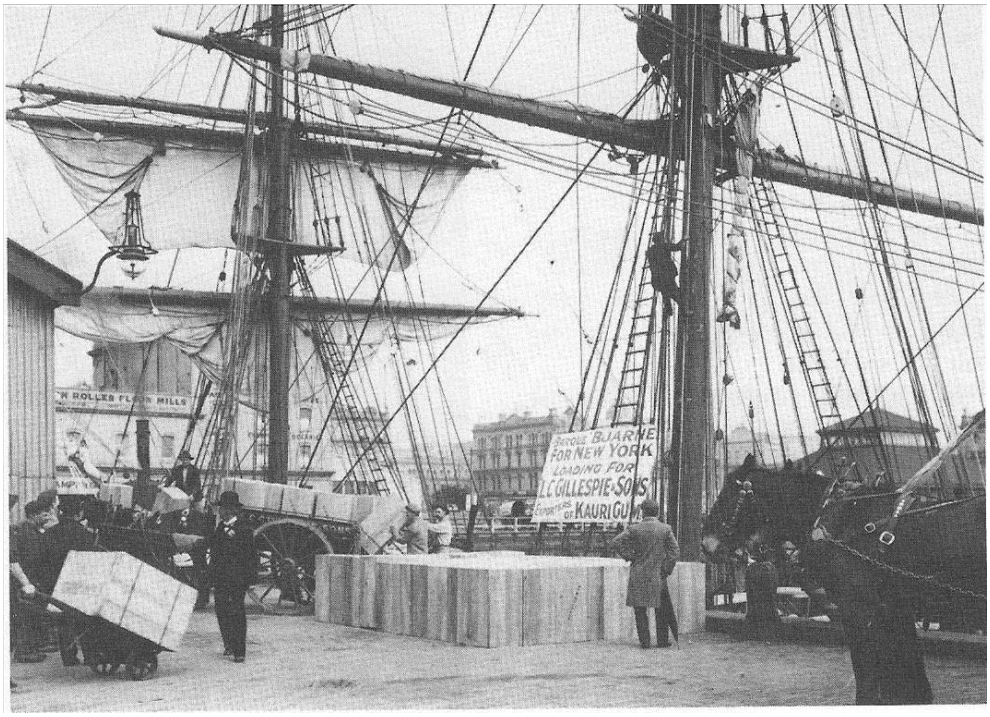
LEFT: THE GUM ARRIVES AT THE MERCHANTS IN AUCKLAND TO BE AUCTIONED OFF FOR EXPORTING

RIGHT: AUCTIONED TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

LEFT: HAND WASHING THE GUM

RIGHT: PETROL POWERED WASHING MACHINE

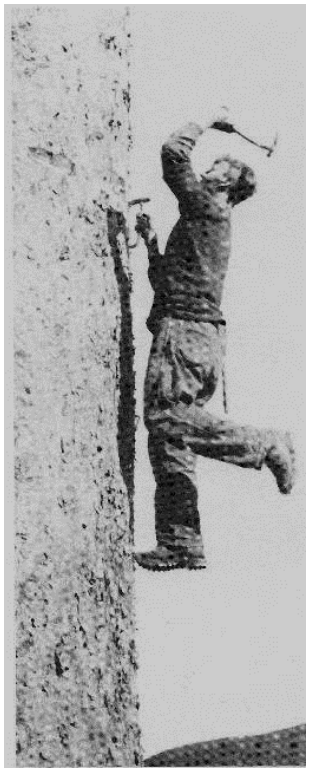




LEFT: AND FINALLY, LOADED ONTO WAITING SHIPS AND THEN OFF TO SOME FOREIGN SHORE TO BE PRODUCED INTO VARNISH.

BELOW: GUM DIGGERS DRAINING SWAMP LAND
NOTICE THE AXE ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE DRAIN FOR CUTTING THE SWAMP TREE ROOTS

TREE BLEEDING



LEFT: BLEEDING A KAURI TREE FOR GUM

At the same time that gum digging was becoming a major industry, the timber industry was also developing in the north. Bushmen felling Kauri trees would often find gum which had gathered naturally in the fork of the branches, and they would chip this off and sell it. It was not worth as much as the fossilised gum though.

Then people got the idea of bleeding the tree, in the same way as rubber is obtained. This was dangerous work. A man would have hooks fitted to his hands and spikes in his boots and would "walk" up the trunk of a tree with amazing speed. He would make cuts into the tree about every metre. A few months later he would return and chip the gum which had bled from the tree and then hardened however this process damaged and often killed the living tree, and in 1905 it was made illegal to bleed trees on crown land.

TRADE

The trade in Kauri gum practically commenced in 1847 and its price continued from that date up to 1853 to be about 5 pounds per ton. The price however rose up steadily until 1898 when it reached the highest figure it had ever attained at 61 to 70 pounds per ton.

Up until the end of 1897 the industry had yielded product for export to the value of pounds, 8,162,945.

During the early part of the 1900's the prices for quality gum peaked at around 100 pound per ton. There was again a brief rally in the price just after WW II, but the demand slowly faded as synthetic additives were developed for the manufacture of varnishes, which required only the best quality gum. The lower grades were used for the manufacture of paints and polishes, down to low grade gum dust and chips used in the manufacture of floor coverings such as linoleum.

During the 1880's and 1890's gum was the second largest export in the Auckland province and earned almost twice as much as wool and three times as much as timber.

By the time the industry reached its peak in 1898, it estimated that there was somewhere between five and ten thousand people involved in the gum industry. Besides the diggers, their wife's and families, there were also large numbers of people working as gum dealers, and people transporting and exporting gum.

PAYMENT FOR THE GUM

Local stores grubstaked many diggers, who in turn sold their gum to that store, paid their debt and bought the next month's supplies. The store owners were agents as well for the gum merchants with some store owners owning or leasing large tracks of land with the lease holder having the rights to dig gum.

Complaints were made from all parts of the gum fields for some years as to the prevalence of what is called the truck system, which is the payment being made in goods instead of cash.

It was found that in some cases the digger was under considerable disadvantages through not being paid in cash. If these conditions be acceded to the digger then he must entirely trust the honesty of the storekeeper not to pay him too little for his gum and not to charge him too highly for his stores.

Complaints were also received from diggers to the effect that they were often unjustly dealt with in the matter of weight. Instances were given of many pounds in the hundredweight being pilfered from the seller of gum by means of unproved balances and scales. It appeared from the investigations of your commissioners that the system of

inspection of weights and measures was exceedingly defective and that some of the weighing appliances were of a very primitive or antique character.

NEWS CLIPS FROM PAPERS PAST GIVES US SOME STATISTICS

INANGAHUA TIMES, VOLUME XVIII, ISSUE 314, 15 MAY 1894, PAGE 2

RETURNS published in Government Gazette show that during the past three months of the year 1892 there were exported 2335 tons of gum valued £147,195 being equal to about £63 per ton. The quantity exported for the last quarter of the current year was only some 72 tons less, but the value had decreased by no less than £27,237, and the shipments for that period average only £53 per ton. It is no wonder that the gum diggers have been suffering from the fall in value of their staple product, but as opportunities have been put within the reach of the gum diggers of taking up land and settling down, the collapse in the value of the gum trade may not prove so disasterous to the diggers in the long run. The Auckland correspondent of the Otago Daily Times writes as follows:—"Of course the collapse of the gum market has quietened that industry, but as it is driving a number of men to the land, it may be regarded as a blessing in disguise, inasmuch as a diminished output will ultimately benefit the gum-diggers remaining on the fields. A good deal of settlement is taking place between the terminus of the Kaihu Valley Railway (Opunaki) and the head waters of the Taieke river, as it is found that the land is of good

FROM GUM LAND TO FARM LAND

COLONIST, VOLUME XXXVII,
ISSUE 7937, 12 MAY 1894

THE depreciation in the value of kauri gum has been a matter of deep concern in the north of the Colony, for not alone have the gumdiggers suffered sorely, but those with whom they have dealt have been affected largely. From the returns published in the Government Gazette it appears that during the first three month of 1892 Auckland exported 2335 tons of gum, valued at £146,195, or about £63 per ton. But during the first quarter of the current year the amount exported thence was less by only 72 tons, but the value of the amount shipped away had decreased by no less than £27,236; the amount exported for the quarter ended with March last being 2253 tons, valued at only £118,959, or at the rate of about £53 per ton. These figures alone suffice to show that the effects of the depreciation in value of this article must have been widespread, and it is evident that to those who have been engaged in digging the gum from the soil the falling off must have led in many cases to hardships, for the man who has to accept five shillings where he formerly received six suffers very materially. A good deal has been said and written recently relative to the position of the gum industry, and an almost amusing instance of the length to which political opponents are prepared to go has been afforded in the ridiculous charge that the lessening in value of kauri gum was solely due to the Liberal Govern-

[illegible] during his recent tour was evidently immensely impressed with the possibilities of the profitable use of much of the country in the North. He told an interviewer that though the general character of the country in the neighborhood of Hokianga is not suitable for agriculture, he had satisfied himself of the existence of many fertile small areas, alluvial flats and little valleys in the kauri country that will prove sufficient for settlement for even the large population now engaged in gum digging. Indeed, the Minister mentioned one special spot that may serve to indicate the possibilities in favored portions of the country. In a cottage garden in a remote settlement he found growing in semi-tropic luxuriance the plaintain (banana), orange, lemon, olive and magnolias. A country capable of providing these fruits must be declared generous. Even some of the pumice country the Minister found had been put to profitable use, for he declared that at the farm of Mr Rich, at the Upper Thames. he saw several paddocks of pumice country permanently pastured with a sward of grass (chewings fescue), and stocked with crossbred sheep, the paddocks growing abundant feed, the grass resisting the intrusion of fern, manuka, and cotton bush, and according to Mr Rich resisting drought also. Such country may be rendered more prolific by resorting to irrigation, but the Government are to be commended for encouraging its utilisation whereby the prosperity of the Colony will be increased, and we trust that Ministers will continue to do good service in the same direction, and that they will in the near future do all in their power to place in profitable occupation large and valuable areas in the Nelson district, for it is by extending settlement, by providing men with the possibilities of overcoming the difficulties consequent on uncertain employment and of winning independence, and by giving them a direct stake in the welfare of the land that general progress is to be secured. The Government are proceeding in the right direction, and we have faith that they will persevere in well doing.

3
THE KAURI GUM DIGGERS

The Maori were the first gatherers of Kauri gum, then the early would-be British farmer/settler who used the gum as a cash crop to improve their farms. There was no income from farms until the land was cleared sufficiently to produce. By this time the industry was established and then the professional gum diggers arrived.

Note: One must remember that many early settlers arrived to find nothing but what they had brought with them: no way of making a living or even growing anything until the land was cleared.

As most European countries had been in working order for many years, this was a daunting prospect for many. Until settlement of townships became established, there was little use for skills or professions, so the gum fields were a life saver. Prejudices and injustices were overcome and those who were prepared to work often made enough money to establish farms and businesses.

Those persons engaged in procuring gum from the soil may be divided into three categories…

1/. The Maori: who take to digging when their crops prove a failure or their stock of provisions, are exhausted.

2/. The Settlers: who as a rule only occasionally work on the gum fields to supplement their earnings from their farms?

3/. The Professional Diggers: who depend entirely on the gum for a living?

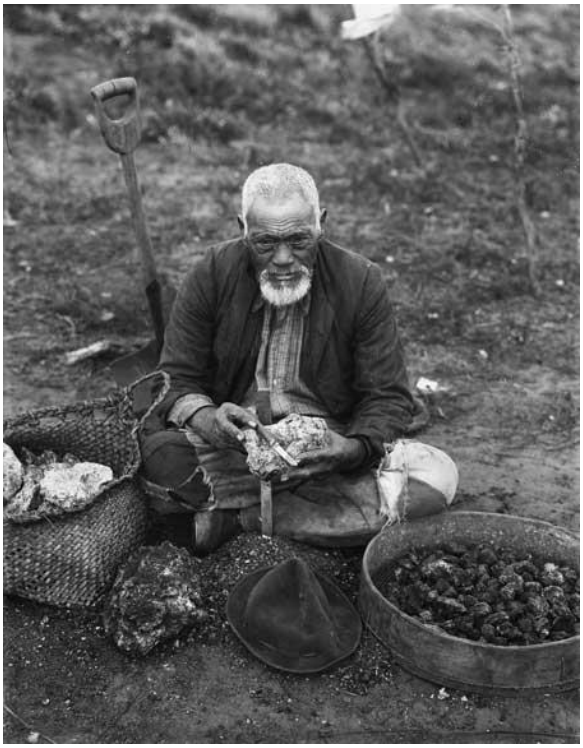
THE MAORI

J. T. Bell, a traveller in Northland during the early years of 1900 left an interesting description of the way a group of Maori set about digging for gum in a swamp…

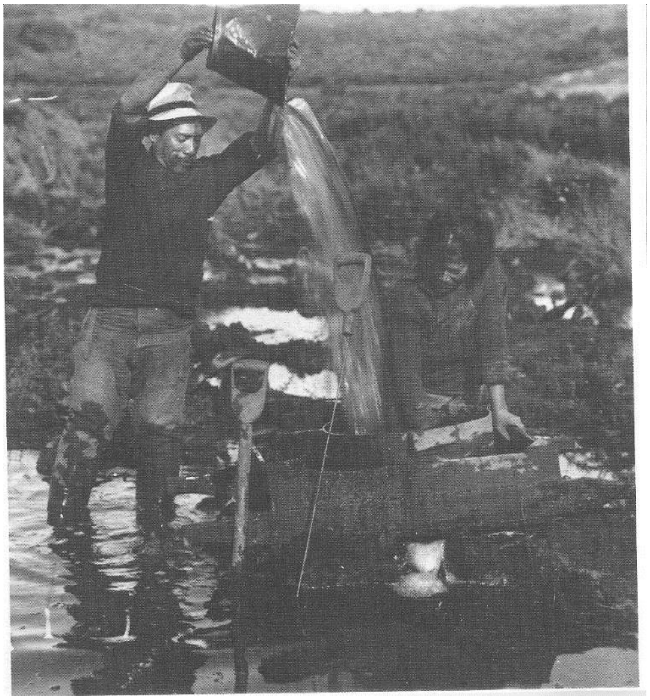
This was a time of leanness in their funds, and all alike, men, women and children seemed busily engaged in gum-hunting. Some bared to their waists, stood submerged to their middles in water holes in the swamp, feeling for lumps of gum which they brought up from time to time with their feet, or dived for it with their hands. Others walked over the more solid parts of the ground prodding with a long iron spear. When a piece of gum was located it was brought to the top with a long iron hook or, if the piece was big, it was sometimes necessary, owing to intervening roots, to dig for it. This operation accomplished another object besides unearthing gum. The hole filled quickly with water, ready for those who felt for the smaller particles with their feet. For the most part, those who engaged in the active prospecting were the young or middle-aged of both sexes. The old people and the children were perched along the edge of the swamp, scraping the large pieces of gum and assorting the various grades into coarse sacks. All seemed to be enjoying their various occupations immensely.

BELOW: A MAORI FAMILY SCRAPING GUM

BELOW LEFT: AN OLD TIMER SCRAPING GUM
BELOW RIGHT: GATHERING IN THE SWAMPS



ABOVE: LOADING SACKS OF GUM OUT TO A WAITING BOAT



LEFT: WASHING GUM
RIGHT: IN CAMP

THE SETTLERS

Mr. Richardson, Minister of Lands best explains the situation that the early European Settler had in the North as follows…

SETTLEMENT IN THE NORTH

AUCKLAND STAR, VOLUME XX
ISSUE 8, 10 JANUARY 1889

THE Hon. Mr Richardson, Minister of Lands, returned from the North yesterday afternoon, and left for the South at noon to-day by the steamer Mararoa. In his Northern tour Mr Richardson was accompanied by Mr R. Thompson, M.H.R., Mr R. Hobbs, M.H.R., and others, and the following places were visited:—Whangarei, Kamo, Hikurangi, Puhipuhi forest, Hukerenui Special Settlement (North and South), Kawakawa, Waiomio native settlement, Pakaraka, Ohaeawai quicksilver deposits and hot springs, Russell, Whangaroa, Mangonui, Ōruru, Fern Flat Village Settlement, Homestead Settlement, Fairburn's line, Victoria Valley, Kaitaia, Awanui, Takahue Village Settlement, Ahipara, Herekino Village Settlement, Whangape, Hokianga Heads, Pakanae Deferred Payment Settlement, Rawene, Kohukohu, Mangamuka, Taheke Village Settlement, or Punakitere, Motukaraka Village Settlement, Waimamaku Village Settlement, Canterbury Special Settlement, Kawerua, Mangonui Bluff, Opunake, Kaihu Valley, Dargaville and Helensville.

The Hon. Mr Richardson was interviewed at the Northern Club this morning, and kindly furnished our reporter with his impressions of the Northern settlements.

Have the Government any large area of good land suitable for settlement in the North? asked the reporter.

Yes, replied Mr Richardson, they have. It is clear that people have not sufficient knowledge of the Forthern lands, or else there would not be so much good land lying idle as there is at the present time. There is the Mangonui-o-wai Valley, which is approachable from Motukaraka, opposite Rawene; there is a very large area of good Crown land there. It has been in the market for a long time, and is still in the market at from 5s to 10s per acre. There is a road from the Hokianga waters into the block, and all that is wanted is one or two more people to make a start and there would be a splendid settlement. Part of the block is within reasonable distance of the Whangape waters. The Mongonui-o-wai is one of the largest blocks of first-class land we have in the North, and is well worth the attention of anyone who wants to go into the country.

Mr Richardson: Homestead settlement has had the best trial; that is to say it has been in vogue for some years, many of the homestead settlements having been in existence for seven years, and it has proved very successful. The settlers have nice homesteads and good crops. Most of the deferred payment lands have only recently been acquired, but very large improvements have been made during the short time they have been in hand. There are very few lands held under perpetual lease, and this tenure seems as yet to have been little appreciated in the North.

Reporter: Are these lands of which you speak available for settlement now?

Mr Richardson: A large area of the Mangonui-o-wai block is surveyed, and in and about the village settlements there are good sections not taken up. There are also many that have been taken up and abandoned. There is plenty of land for a man to go on to at once, and of course we shall see and put on more people as rapidly as possible. There is no difficulty in obtaining land now. There is one thing deserving of attention. In the case of a man going North to settle he should not go there in winter, because the roads are then very bad, and the difficulties of getting on the land and making it supporting are enhanced considerably; many a man may be disheartened if he goes North in the winter, when he will have to plough through mud tracks and that sort of thing.

Reporter: What do you propose to do in order to open up these lands?

Mr Richardson: The only thing I think necessary is to call attention to them. I think that when it is known down South that there are such good lands in the North, and when this is known especially in districts where all the good settlement lands are taken up, there will be a large number of new settlers attracted in this direction. Some of the farmers in the South are now looking out for land, and they are already going into the North Island. They have not, however, come to the extreme north because they have been under the impression that the land north of Auckland is miserably poor.

Mr Richardson: The further North you go the more the land improves, and the extreme North is very superior to anything close to Auckland. Do you understand what I mean? I mean that here you have patches of good land, but the proportion of bad land is infinitely greater. There are three acres of bad land here to one acre of good land, but in the extreme North there is rather more land suitable for settlement than there is bad land. Every creek, every river, and tributory have more or less rich alluvial flats, and the hill lands rising above these are mainly first class pastoral country when cleared and sown down. One advantage which some of the special settlements have in the North is the area of open country carrying good cattle feed, so that settlers without a bite of grass of their own can run as many cattle as they can afford to purchase. It places them in the position of the settlers in the South in the old days who had a hundred commonage until the whole of the lands were taken up. The settlers in the North have practically a commonage in a good many of their settlements.

Reporter: What are your impressions of the village settlements now?

Mr Richardson: I look upon it, that apart from its being an attempt to solve the question of relieving the labour market during a very dull time, though an expensive scheme, the village settlement movement has been a very valuable advertisement to many northern lands, which may be taken up by putting facility in the way of settlement. It is quite clear that it is in the interests of all that these settlements should be made successful, and the settlers enabled, as far as possible, to maintain their holdings—at least those who are honestly trying to form homes for themselves. With regard to the professional unemployed there are not half-a-dozen on the settlements. If many of that class went there originally they have been weeded out, for they are no longer there. The men on the village settlements now are really first class workers. Of course there has been a good deal of sorting out going on, and many sections have been transferred once, twice even, but the men now on the land are, for the most part, trying to form homes for themselves. There are one or two settlers—but only one or two—who will unquestionably leave when they cease to obtain advances from the Government. There is nothing the settlers resent so much as to have it supposed that they belonged to the unemployed class, and they say, "Send us settlers, let us have neighbours, but don't send any unemployed here."

Mr Richardson: That is a question that I ought not to answer. It is a question for consideration of the Government. Individually, my opinion is that the settlement which has taken place naturally, homestead, deferred payment, and village settlement without advances, compares favourably with any of the Government settlements receiving advances. There is the difficulty, too, that there advances to settlers, to State-aided village settlers, are disturbing the ordinary settlement of the country. Homestead and deferred payment men who have in the past been quite content to work their way, seeing their neighbours aided with roads to their doors and given other assistance of different sorts, are beginning to question why they are left out in the cold, because they think they are entitled to similar expenditure. There is complete unanimity on the part of the village settlers on two points. They say: "We require employment," and, "Send no unemployed here." There were a great many other points brought up at different places, alterations which they asked for in their conditions, such as right to acquire a freehold. There were demands in one or two instances to be relieved from rent for the first three years, that advances should be made by Government for the purchase of cows, agricultural elements, etc., that payment should be made for the improvement of open lands, etc., etc. The settlers were, however, unanimous on the two points I have mentioned.

Mr Richardson : They have demonstrated the suitability of the extreme North for close settlement. Nothing could be finer than the produce of their gardens, and you would experience a difficulty in beating them here at any show. The settlers will hold their own in any place with vegetables. Their difficulty is that they have no employment. When the Government advances on their sections and the different road works in the district are done, there remain only the gumfields. Some of the settlers object to dig on the gumfields. One man told me that he didn't go there to dig gum, and others at the same place told me that the gumfields were worked out. On the same day I saw a homestead settler nearer the village settlements than his own homestead, who had got about 70lb of gum for three-quarters of a day's work. This homestead settler (we saw his place afterwards) had several acres of crop, and everything very comfortable. He was not too proud to dig gum in order to raise the price of a bag of flour while his crops were ripening, and the result was apparent. The village settlers as a body, however, are not above gum-digging, and I merely relate this to show the character of a few of them. Most of the settlers say that the gumfields are worked out, but this is not the case. Professional gum-diggers are living on the fields and are making a fair living there, and I believe these gumfields will carry gum-digging for ten years hence.

Reporter : How are these Village Settlements doing now?

Mr Richardson : The general opinion is that they will require two years' further work from the Government before they will be able to live by the returns from their lands. They admit, however, that if ordinary settlement were taking place around them, the difficulty would be met by them obtaining occasional work in bush-felling, fencing, etc., from the new settlers. Their difficulties are flour, boots, clothes, and the want of money to get a cow or two, and in some instances to purchase agricultural implements. There is not a team or plough on any of the settlements. The only wheeled vehicles are wheelbarrows, and many of the men have put in as much labour in the cultivation of two or three acres of farm land as would, with proper implements and teams, have laid down a fifty-acre paddock.

Reporter : What assistance are the village settlers receiving at the present time?

Mr Richardson ; They are getting the regulation advances for housebuilding and for improvements on their sections. They have received from these two funds more than half the expenditure to which they are entitled, and in some instances they have been paid in full. Their road works are in a forward state as regards access ; that is, in some cases there is very fair access already, and in other cases there is yet road work to do, but not to the same extent as that already completed, so that work from this source must now be considerably reduced.

Reporter : Do you think the present village settlers would be materially assisted by additional holdings being taken up by others?

REMITTANCE MEN

Jean Boswell nee Smith grew up in the Katui district just north of Aranga pre the 1900's and in her book 'Dim Horizons' she gives a very vivid view of "The Remittance Men" as she remembered…

They were the strangers within thy gates, the wanderers, the exiles, and the loveless. They were the rejects of a great creation- the soft, clipped pieces of the British body social, scattered abroad to the colonies to a niche in a world, or to fall into the foreign soil of their exile, unclaimed, forgotten, useless except to nourish with their dust new shoots and seedlings of British growth springing up in new earth.

So many tall, handsome, even noble looking men: Scions of fine stock, from aristocracy, the clergy and the County: from Oxford and Cambridge, Eton and Winchester and Harrow: from England, Scotland, and Ireland, to the gum fields of New Zealand.

I knew but one who completely rehabilitated himself. He did indeed become a worthy citizen of New Zealand, and he might easily have returned in honour to his land, but he said he owed a greater loyalty to the country and the women who had restored him to manhood.

One or two others obtained positions in some form of industry, but their periodic sprees had to be allowed for, because there was no labour surplus in those days.

But most of them gravitated to the gum fields, generally living in whare's, their food consisting mainly of damper or scone loaf baked in a camp oven, and potatoes and bully – beef.

Their days were spent in spearing and digging gum, their evenings in scraping the days find. On their quarterly remittance days they would take their gum down to the stores, battering it for provisions. As soon as their next quarter's subsistence was arranged for, along to the post office they would go to collect their remittance and then make a bee-line for the beckoning bar of the pub.

When their week of boozing was over they would find their provisions and saddles in the stables, and their old horses, broken down crocks like their masters generally – waiting in the Hotel paddock ready to carry them back once more to the land of the lost.

Many of these men at various stages of our lives passed through our settlement, some through our own section, on their way to their periodic sprees, and for us all they had a charm and a glamour that gave us almost an enchanted feeling, a feeling that we had been admitted into magic lands and were seeing the wonder of the world.

Their cultured accents, the soft modulation of their tones, the inflexion of their speech, were all strange music to us. They were magic carpet, whirling us away to worlds of breath taking beauty and romance. They were all gentle and kind; their behaviour to women was exemplary, their manners impeccable. Most of them were quite young in years, but there

was about them as it were an odour of decaying summers, with not a trace of the triumphant challenge of a conquering autumn. They had no age. It seemed that time stood still awhile, reluctant to label with the mark of departure those in whom youth still hopefully, though unhappily, lingered.

Somehow, we were expected to have and to show more respect for these drunken dissipated remittance men than for the sodden topers among our own community, or for ordinary foreigners who had haughty, wealthy families to endow another country with their shame.

I soon discovered that it grew out of pure snobbishness – the cardinal sin, in my opinion.

It was the acceptance of the average Englishman of the separation of Englishmen into distinct classes, the lowly born and the high. These throw outs from the homeland, these odd bits and pieces that had refused to be moulded and fitted into the pattern of good society, were still gentlemen, and for the aristocracy of England hallowed by thy name.

But though we young New Zealanders could not develop that sense of reverential wonder for their aristocratic stock, we could not but feel the charm and the fascination of these cast-off scions of the family trees, and even though as we grew older we realized that their cultured manners, their erudition, their calm assumption of superiority, so natural that it was never offensive, grew simply out of centuries of privilege, and that being well born meant, in the ultimate, being wealthy born. So however acquired, they had what we hadn't, and we could only feel regret that their talents were of no value either to the land of their birth or that of their exile.

But who talks so smugly of no value. I should be the last. Who knows what seeds of culture they wittingly or unwitteningly sowed in the new rough soil, or what a hunger of knowledge they planted in many minds.

Maybe there are thousands more than I this day who have reason to feel grateful to some of the men whom we knew as the living dead; those lonely despairing inhabitants of William Satchell's "Land of the Lost"

I am glad now to recollect my own parents concern for them. I seem to hear Mother now, on some wet winter's day: "Dad! Hadn't you better go down to the fern and see How Charlie Timmins is? He hasn't up for a long time now, and you never know. Take this bit of butter, and he might as well have this piece of cake" Or, "Call in on the way back Mr Ferguson. You know there's always a cup of tea waiting for the making" And we, who were used to the casual, "Right-o thanks Missus!" of our rougher diamonds, delighted to the doffed hat, the bow, and the courteously – spoken "thanks" which were to us the hall-mark of the social graces.

And then we would see them returning after their week of dissolute indulgence, unkempt, unshaven, sodden, bleared; yet still with that indefinable something that marked the distinction between drunkenness and depravity, between carousel and sottish corruption. And never did they call in on their return journey. It was not in their code. The humblest

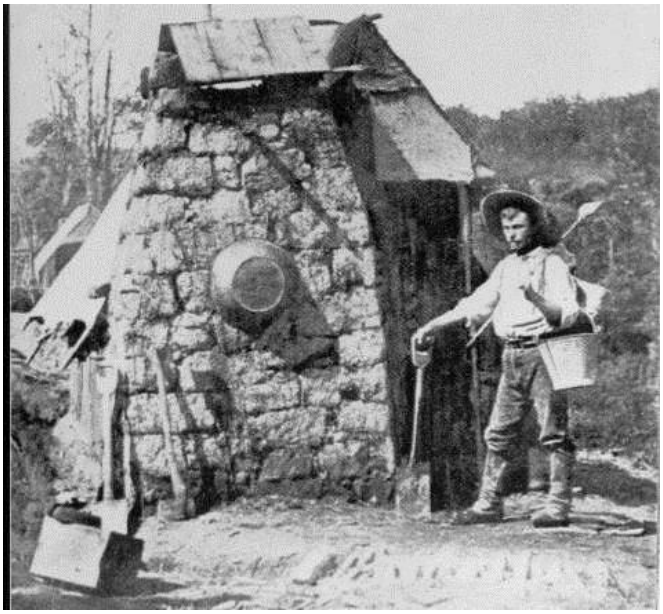
cottage, if there were women and children in it, was not to be degraded by them in their sodden recovery. They were gentlemen.

They died as they lived, lonely and neglected, sometimes in their miserable whare's; sometimes out on the wind swept fern hills or in the green swamps that had virtually been their graves for years.

The body would be found; the law would do its duty and the coroner would pronounce his verdict "death from natural causes" (As though death can be said to come naturally when a man dies in his prime, like a dog in a ditch or a beast in a bog!)

There would be a pathetic funeral procession, with the body in a rough, unlettered casket, and a couple of settlers or Maori navvies to perform the distasteful task of returning dust to dust and another family escutcheon would be wiped clean of another stain.

"What would his mother say?" My mother would muse, pitifully. Perhaps a few other mothers, of the few that knew him, would echo the question. It would be his only requiem.



LEFT: HOME SWEET HOME.

THE PROFESSIONAL DIGGERS

These were men from many countries of the world and many different backgrounds, who were looking for a new way of life. The work was hard and because of mostly swampy conditions, wet and unpleasant - but quite lucrative for that time.

Some were seaman who had jumped ship in New Zealand and others worked their passage via the Californian and Australian gold fields.

Among those early gatherers of gum were pioneering families from the United Kingdom, but the major ethnic group of gum diggers it would appear from past information came from Austria with most of these being Dalmatians from the coastal region of Yugoslavia (Croatia).

Thousands of these Central and Southern European immigrants chose to escape the cultural, economic and political turmoil. They elected to leave their homeland and start afresh in the New World.

The confusion with the different cultures in those early days was settled when they became known collectively as *"Dallies".*

Separate camps were established by the various groups of diggers. Familiar camp names were…

Scotty's, Long Gully, Russian, Turk, Ti Tree Gully, Big Omamari, Binko's, China man's landing, Kai Iwi, Kennedys, Babylon, Flax mill, Jerusalem and many more.

Note: It would seem from a news clip I found in papers past that there was a group of Fijians working in the fields.

TARARA/ THE DALMATIANS

In the 1880's when the first Dalmatians came to New Zealand, the Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled Dalmatia, which is on the Adriatic coast of the Mediterranean. This is why they were often mistakenly called 'Austrians' in New Zealand.

After Austria-Hungary was defeated in the First World War, Dalmatia was incorporated into the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and in 1929 this was renamed Yugoslavia.

Immigrants from this part of Europe have been known not only as Dalmatians but also as Yugoslavs and Croatians.

These people were named "Tarara" by local Maori.

Note: Strangely enough almost all of them came from one small area of Croatia: just a few villages on the Dalmatian coast with some also from the Balkan States.

In their own country they were mainly agriculturists engaged in the vineyards olive groves etc. but some were fishermen from the Adriatic. They spoke a Slavonic dialect, not German. Very few of them had wives or children and it is asserted that their desire to escape military service prompted immigration: it has also been said that they were attracted to this country from accounts given by Dalmatian sailors who on the frigate *Novara* had called into Auckland during 1858.

However it happened, Dalmatians/Croats began arriving in New Zealand and most of them went straight out to the gum fields.

Gum digging was an ideal occupation for them as few could speak English which meant that many other kinds of work was not open to them and also they naturally stayed together and worked as gangs as they would have done back in their villages of the old country.

They saved their money to bring out wives and families, or sent money home, but in a country where money was in short supply this was not always met with approval.

They were hard workers in sometimes appalling conditions, and kept to themselves most of the time which in its self probably caused some suspicion.

It is very hard to have a census of these people but it is believed that in 1898 fifteen to sixteen hundred lived in Northland with 20 to 30 living in separate camps digging in the swamps in summer and on the hills in winter.

As the gum depleted some of the more prosperous diggers bought land and became farmers; others purchased land closer to Auckland and planted fruit and grapes for wine and local consumption.

Rudi Sunde who worked the field's right up until the end of the industry expressed this dreaming about his homeland in his poem Figs and Vine…

I left my homeland the figs and vines,
I left my dear parents, I left them behind.
No more did I see them, nor the dark blue sea,
I sailed away, my fortune to seek.

The gum fields, the gum fields,
That's where I went,
To the gum fields, the gum fields
My life there I spent.
Hooking and digging and scraping the gum,
On the gum fields, the gum fields
Oh why did I come?

I landed in New Zealand at the age of sixteen,
A lonely young man, as homesick as can be;
I made my way northward, by boat and train
Travelled to the gum fields on the
Dark windswept plain

Life there was hell, life there was rough,
Of swamps and cold water I sure had enough;
Digging by day and scraping by night,

Scraping away by candlelight…

Many the years I lived on the field,
Scheming and dreaming that one day I would leave;
I dreamed of my homeland
The friends I left behind,
I dreamed of my homeland
The figs and the vines

BELOW: DALMATIAN CAMP AT LAKES OMAPERE, NORTHLAND
(NOTE: THEY HAVE THEIR COUNTRY FLAG FLYING)

CAMP LIFE

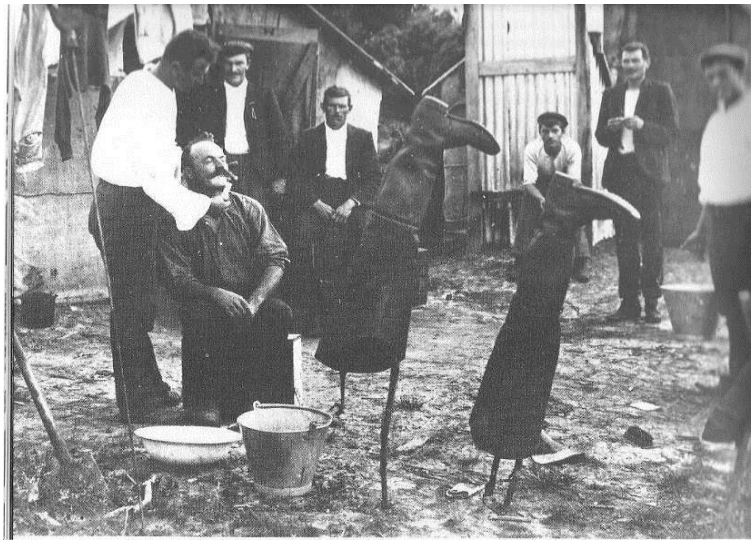
Apart from scraping gum, eating, mending and laundering clothes you might think that entertainment in the digger's camp stopped there. Not so, as one old Dalmatian digger recalls… *"Saturday night in the camps was party time"*

It might seem a bit odd to say life was all beer and skittles but according to our digger that's the way it was…

His Dalmatian camp had smoothed out a sandstone area and created a bowling lane. Sly-grogger's traded their elicit brews and the musical Dalmatians who'd brought accordions, squeezeboxes and stringed instruments with them from the old country, played, partied and danced the nights away.

Most spent the week either digging deep holes or poking around in swamps. Life must've been pretty lonely for the blokes in the camps.

Some of the diggers and bush men had fleeting relationships with Maori girls. Others took the longer term approach, fell in love and married.



LEFT: SUNDAY CLEAN UP IN CAMP.

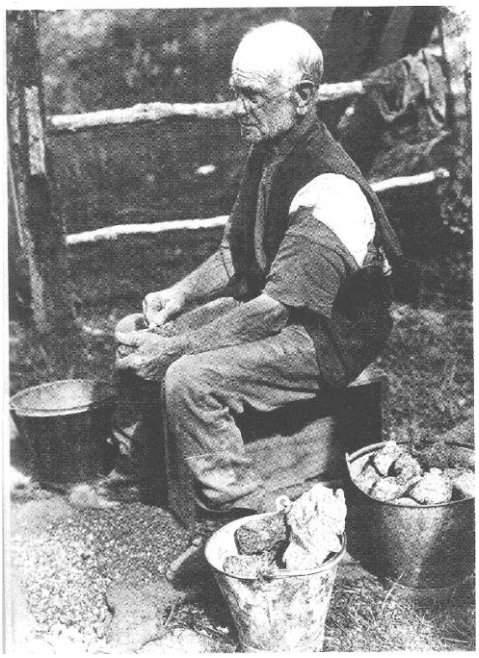
Of those who could afford it, many went back to the home country to bring out their wives and families or to marry their childhood sweethearts.

Many diggers wandered constantly from gum field to gum field, living in tents and cooking over an open fire. Settlers doing spare-time digging to earn money, would camp out as well, although they had a home to return to.

Other diggers settled in one place for a while, these would often build themselves a whare or shanty.

Groups of diggers often lived together in the shanties and took turns in preparing the evening meals, although a significant number lived in the gum fields with their wives and children.

The wives, living a normal life and performed all of the usual household chores: Cooking was done over an open camp fire in billy's and the daily bread made in the camp oven. [4]



THESE TWO OLD GENTLEMEN SPENT THEIR SPARE TIME SCRAPING THE GUM

4 SOURCE: THE DALMATIAN PIONEERS TRUST BOOKLET 1997

LEFT: HOMEMADE BREAD OUT OF THE CAMP OVEN (LOOKS VERY CRUSTY)

WHAT DID THEY EAT?

Their diet was usually simple: very often it was camp oven bread and tinned meat with potatoes, macaroni or rice.

Diggers with a permanent shanty might grow their own vegetables and raise chickens.

A standard cooking utensil was the camp oven. This was a round cast-iron pot with a lid. It could be filled with a dough mixture and then placed in the embers of a fire to make bread.

PREJUDICE

There was a lot of prejudice against the Dalmatians in those early days. Everybody agreed that they were hardworking, sober, thrifty and very easy to get on with, but some other gum diggers namely the British wanted to keep the wealth of the Kauri gum to themselves.

Some also complained that the money the Dalmatians saved was leaving the country and going back to Dalmatia to support their families, when as those objectors said, *"The money should remain and be spent in New Zealand to help prop up the local economy"*

Note: Some of these people would usually come out in groups, work hard for a few years and then return to Dalmatia with the money they had earned, to buy a small farm or set themselves up in a business.

Another complaint the British digger and the settler had is that the Dalmatian is rapidly depleting the resources of the gum fields and also the quantities of gum brought in by them serve to lower the market price.

Yet another complaint was that the Dalmatians ignorance of the English language presents him from understanding market quotations and therefore he accepts any price for his gum

that the storekeeper chooses to give, thus lowering the general value thus the reason why gum buyers and the storekeepers like these people digging on their leases.

Because of such complaints fair or unfair the New Zealand Government passed in 1898 an act under the Kauri Gum Industry Act 1898. This Act created Kauri gum reserves which only New Zealand subjects could use.

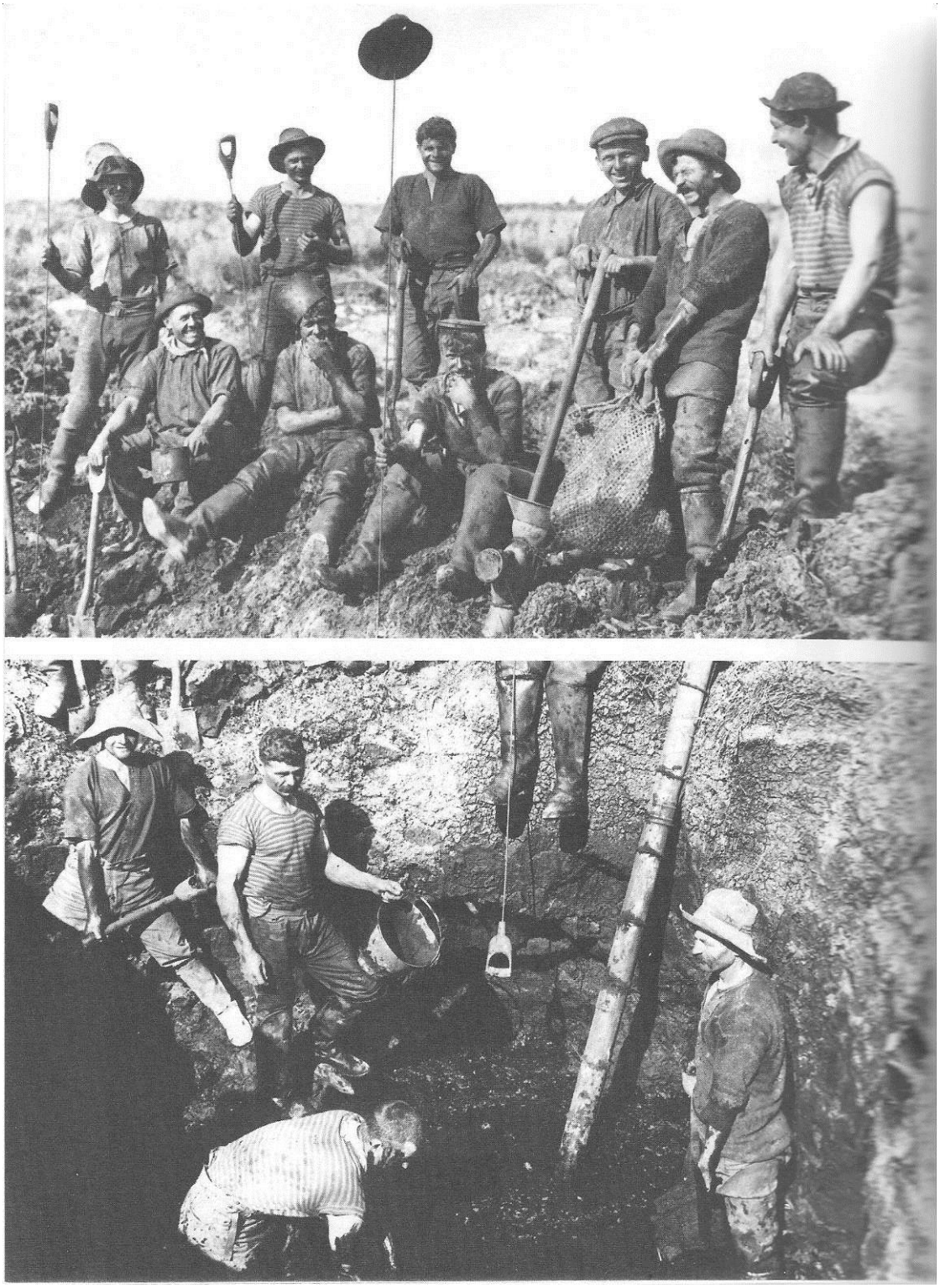
Foreigners were allowed to dig on the remaining areas of unreserved land but they had to pay for it. A license cost one pound a year.

The prejudice that the Dalmatian people once met with, was usually based on ignorance. During the First World War, they were sometimes suspected of being spies for the Austro-Hungarian or German Governments, despite the fact that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was actually hated by the Dalmatians.

Unfortunately this did not prevent the New Zealand Government from putting some of them in prison camps like the one on Somes Island in the Wellington Harbour.

NORTHERN ADVOCATE, 24 DECEMBER 1898, PAGE

Regulations under the Kauri Gum Industry Act, 1898, are gazetted, and the constitution of the districts under the Act is also defined.



THE DIGGERS: AUSTRIAN/DALMATIANS

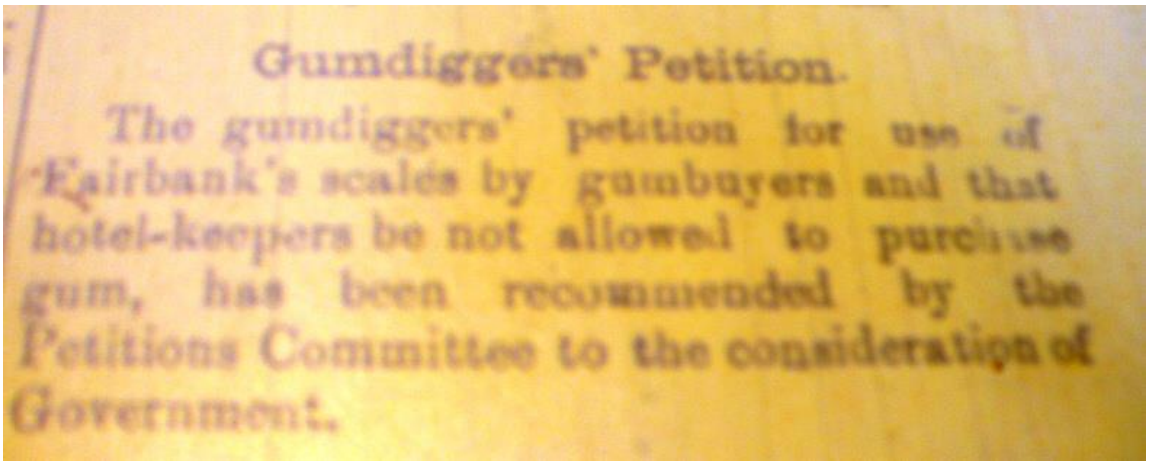
Wairoa Bell: 1892


The Wairoa Bell

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

Vol. IV. No. 159 ARATAPU, N.Z. FRIDAY, AUGUST 19, 1892 PRICE—TWO PENCE.

Norman A. McLeod MONEY TO LEND.


Gumdiggers' Petition.

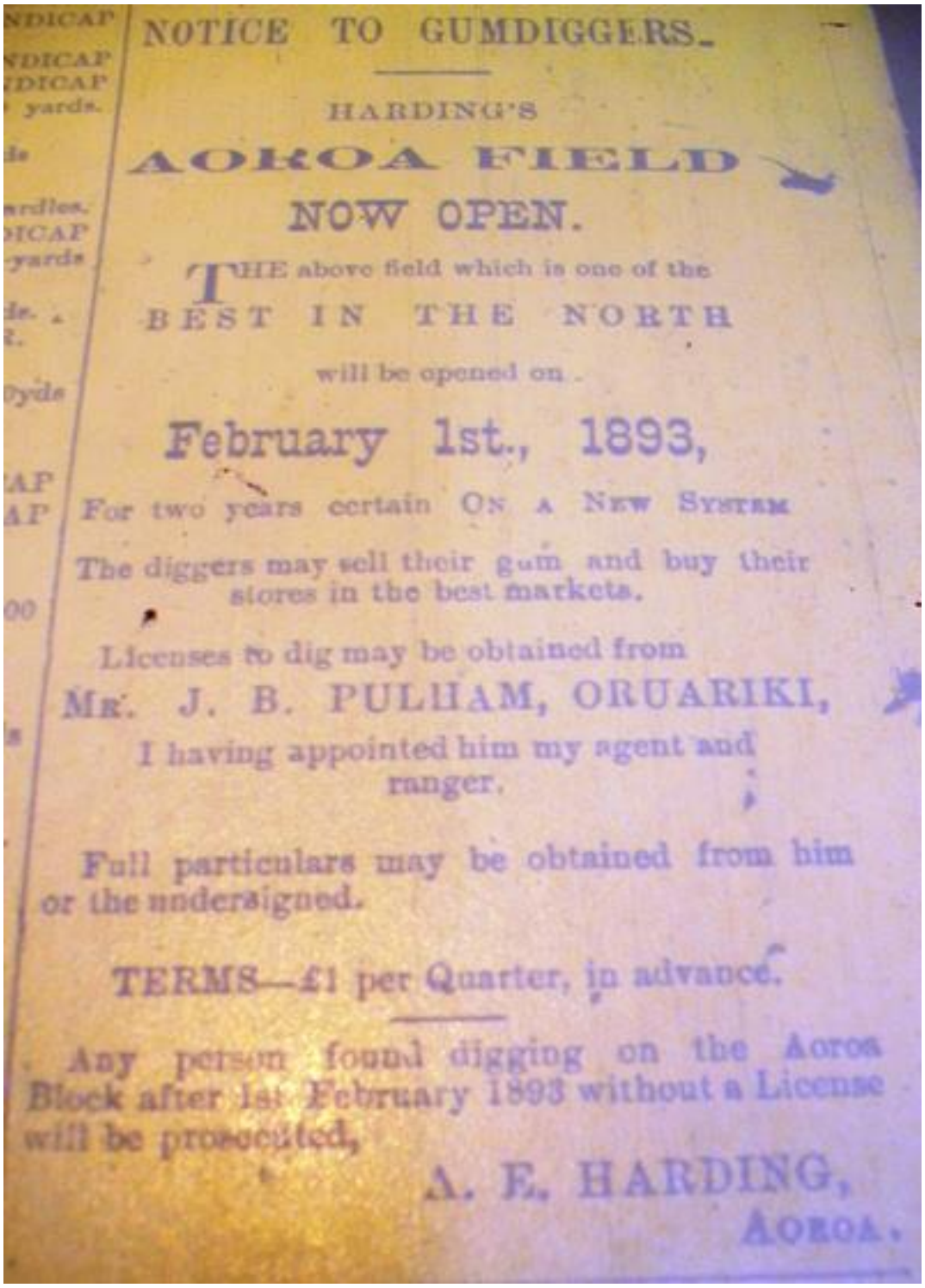
The gumdiggers' petition for use of Fairbank's scales by gumbuyers and that hotel-keepers be not allowed to purchase gum, has been recommended by the Petitions Committee to the consideration of Government.

Notice to Gumdiggers.

NOTICE is hereby given that the Kauri Timber Company, Limited, have appointed Mr P. LANGTON as Caretaker of their Lands and forests in this District. Gumdiggers and others are hereby CAUTIONED that before digging on the Company's Lands, permission must be obtained by license, duly signed by those authorised to issue them, and who will explain the conditions on which such permission will be granted, the main object of which is to prevent and suppress fires, which each Summer destroy tracts of valuable Kauri Forest, a loss not only to the Company but to the District, and therefore assistance from everyone to prevent such destruction of property is looked for.

Any persons TRESPASSING without such permission will be liable to Prosecution, and for the reasons given above no further licenses will be issued during the Summer Months.

By Order of the Board,
E. F. BROAD, Manager.



NOTICE TO GUMDIGGERS.

HARDING'S

AOROA FIELD

NOW OPEN.

THE above field which is one of the

BEST IN THE NORTH

will be opened on

February 1st., 1893,

For two years certain ON A NEW SYSTEM

The diggers may sell their gum and buy their stores in the best markets.

Licenses to dig may be obtained from

MR. J. B. PULHAM, ORUARIKI,

I having appointed him my agent and ranger.

Full particulars may be obtained from him or the undersigned.

TERMS—£1 per Quarter, in advance.

Any person found digging on the Aoroa Block after 1st February 1893 without a License will be prosecuted,

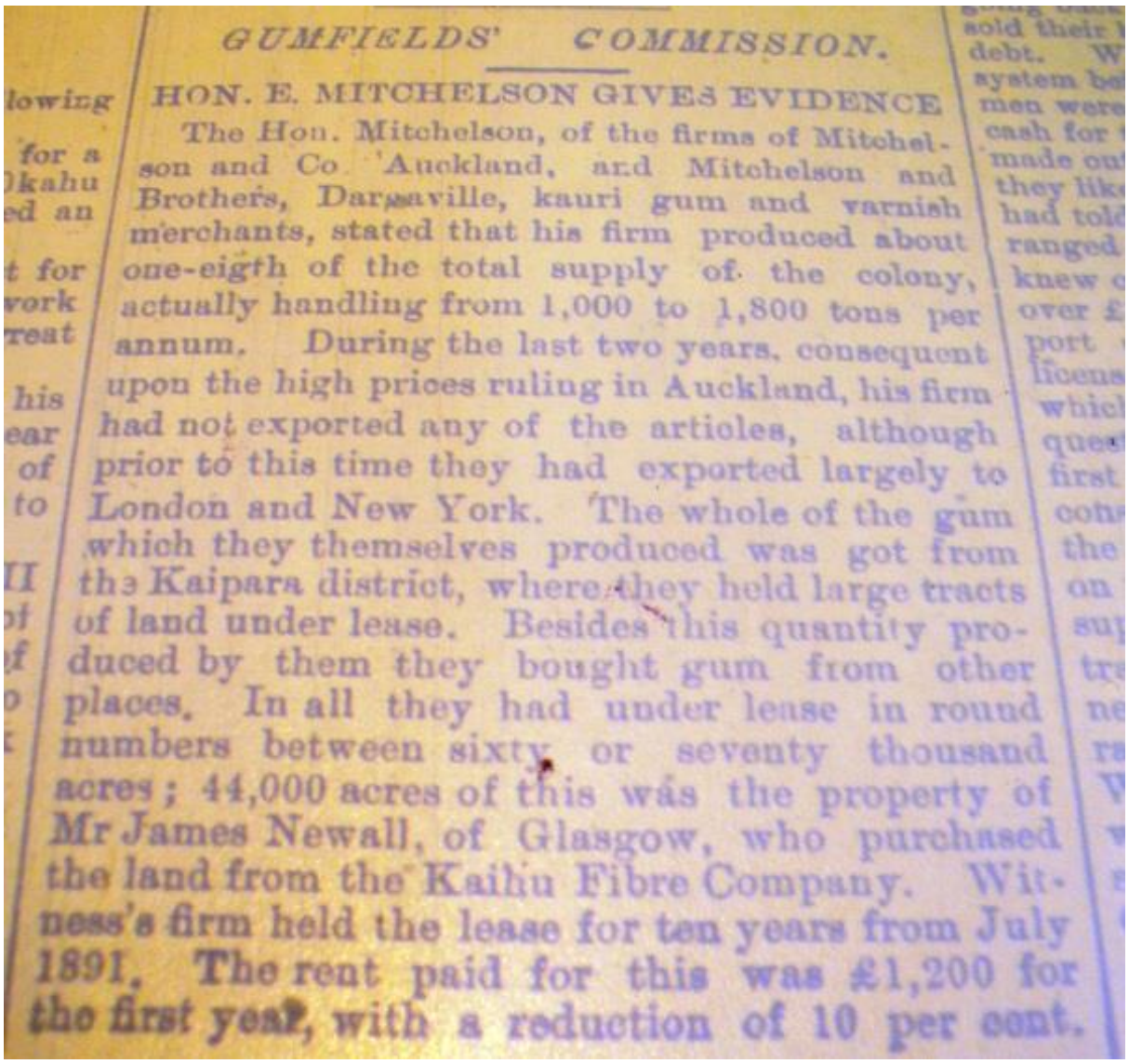
A. E. HARDING,

AOROA.

MAY 5 1893 WAIROA BELL AUSTRIAN GUM DIGGERS

Kairara Flats and in the Northern Wairoa, now totals upwards of several hundreds, and the advent of every Sydney steamer sees a not inconsiderable addition.—*Auckland Star.*

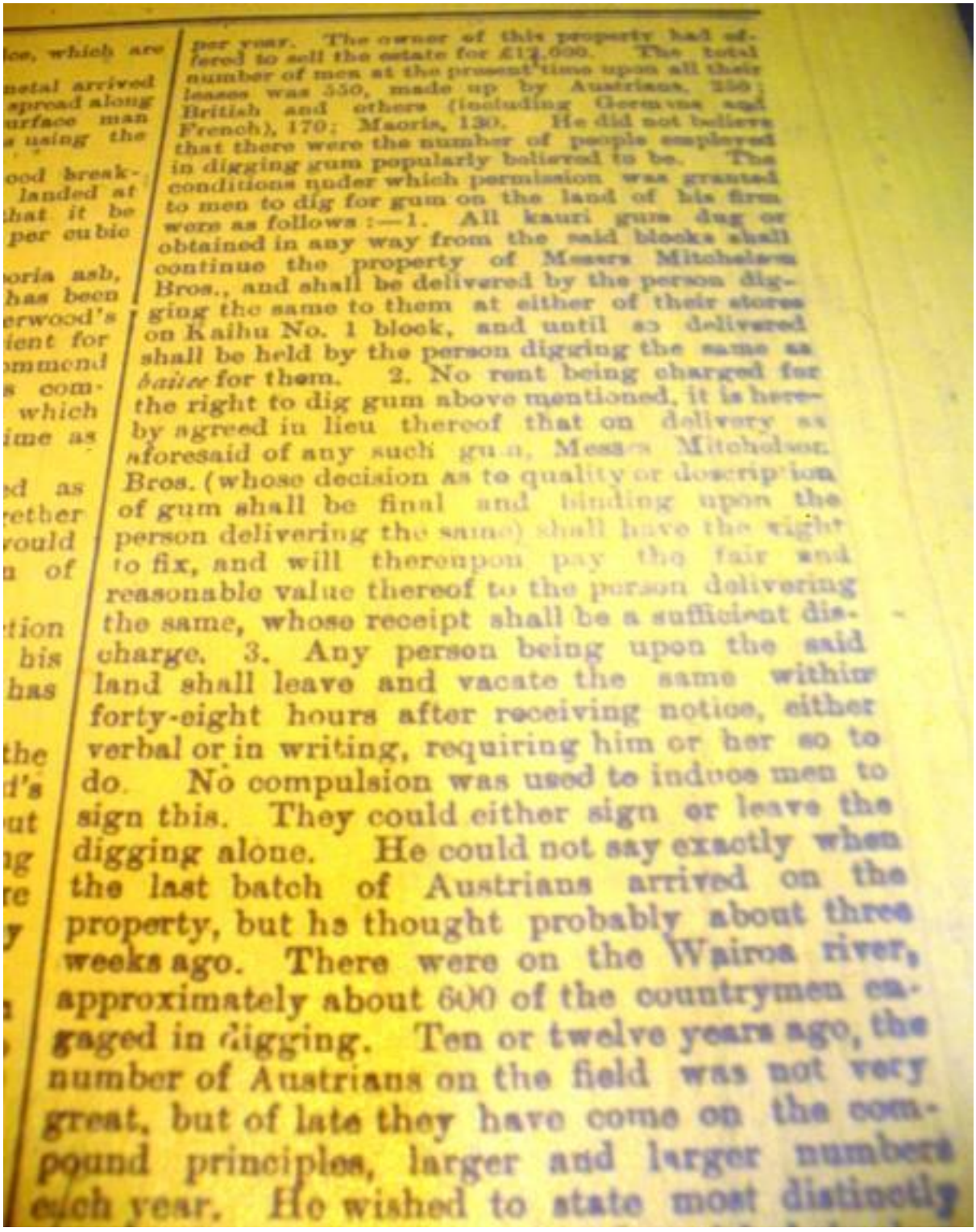
WAIROA BELL JUNE 16 1893 GUM FIELDS COMMISSION



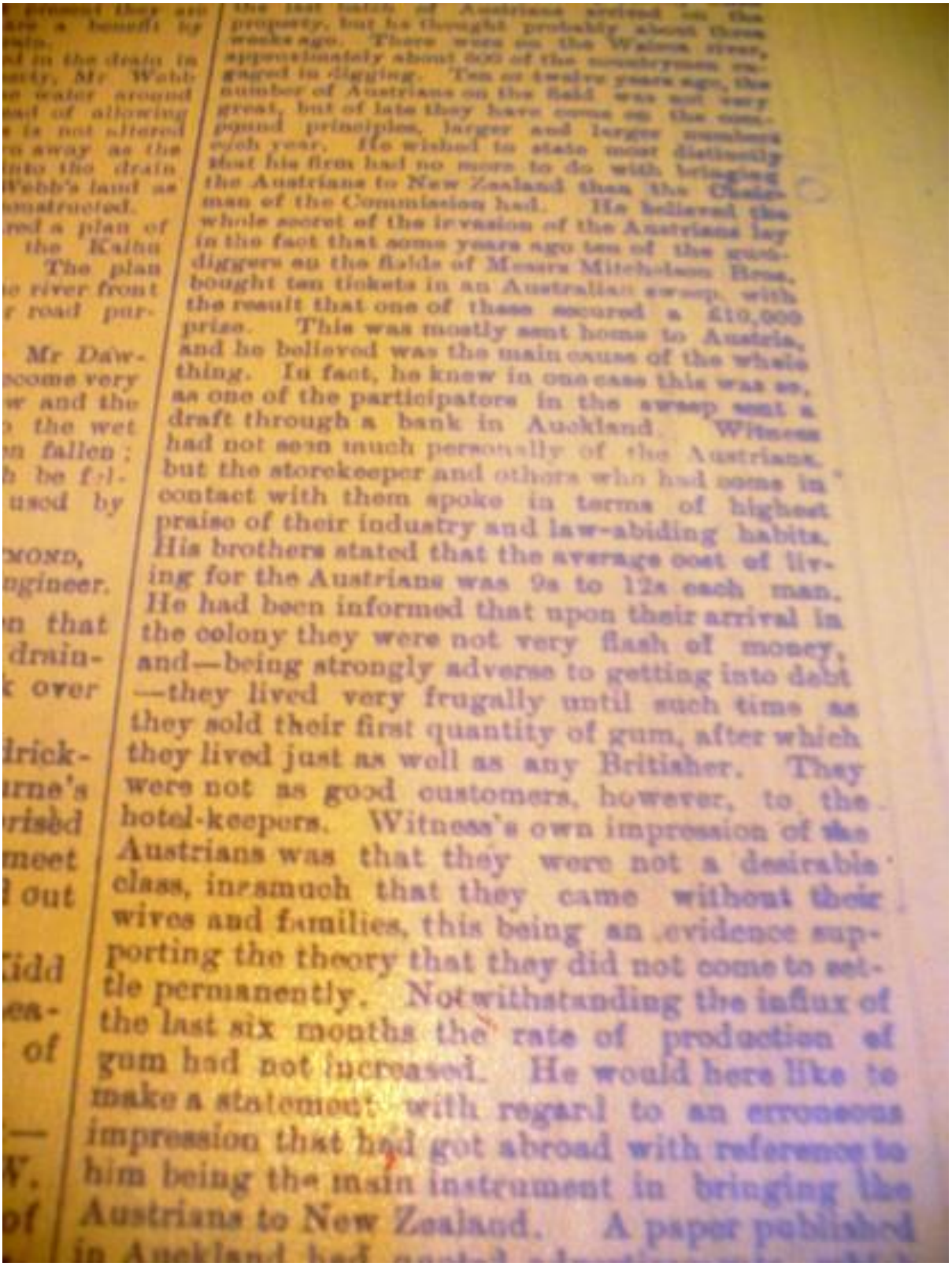
GUMFIELDS' COMMISSION.

HON. E. MITCHELSON GIVES EVIDENCE

The Hon. Mitchelson, of the firms of Mitchelson and Co. Auckland, and Mitchelson and Brothers, Dargaville, kauri gum and varnish merchants, stated that his firm produced about one-eigth of the total supply of the colony, actually handling from 1,000 to 1,800 tons per annum. During the last two years, consequent upon the high prices ruling in Auckland, his firm had not exported any of the articles, although prior to this time they had exported largely to London and New York. The whole of the gum which they themselves produced was got from the Kaipara district, where they held large tracts of land under lease. Besides this quantity produced by them they bought gum from other places. In all they had under lease in round numbers between sixty or seventy thousand acres; 44,000 acres of this was the property of Mr James Newall, of Glasgow, who purchased the land from the Kaihu Fibre Company. Witness's firm held the lease for ten years from July 1891. The rent paid for this was £1,200 for the first year, with a reduction of 10 per cent.



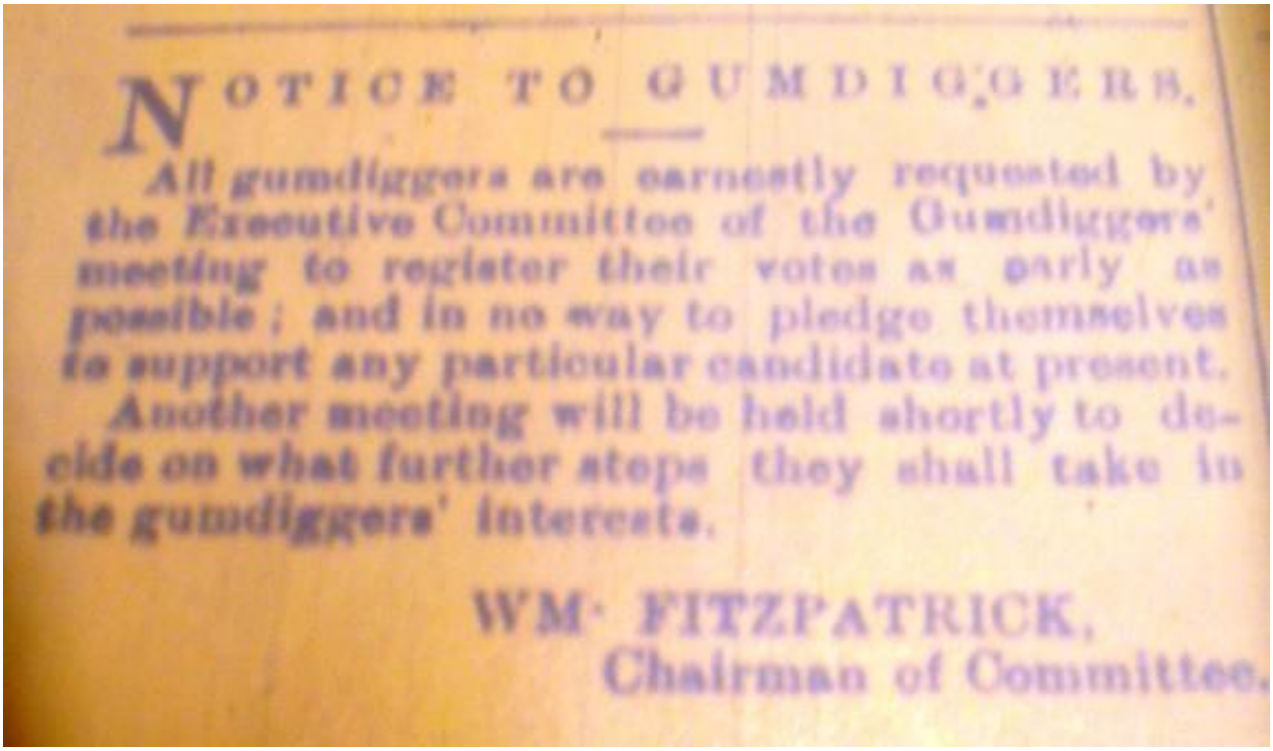
per year. The owner of this property had offered to sell the estate for £13,000. The total number of men at the present time upon all their leases was 350, made up by Austrians, 250; British and others (including Germans and French), 170; Maoris, 130. He did not believe that there were the number of people employed in digging gum popularly believed to be. The conditions under which permission was granted to men to dig for gum on the land of his firm were as follows :—1. All kauri gum dug or obtained in any way from the said blocks shall continue the property of Messrs Mitchelson Bros., and shall be delivered by the person digging the same to them at either of their stores on Kaihu No. 1 block, and until so delivered shall be held by the person digging the same as *bailee* for them. 2. No rent being charged for the right to dig gum above mentioned, it is hereby agreed in lieu thereof that on delivery as aforesaid of any such gum, Messrs Mitchelson Bros. (whose decision as to quality or description of gum shall be final and binding upon the person delivering the same) shall have the right to fix, and will thereupon pay the fair and reasonable value thereof to the person delivering the same, whose receipt shall be a sufficient discharge. 3. Any person being upon the said land shall leave and vacate the same within forty-eight hours after receiving notice, either verbal or in writing, requiring him or her so to do. No compulsion was used to induce men to sign this. They could either sign or leave the digging alone. He could not say exactly when the last batch of Austrians arrived on the property, but he thought probably about three weeks ago. There were on the Wairoa river, approximately about 600 of the countrymen engaged in digging. Ten or twelve years ago, the number of Austrians on the field was not very great, but of late they have come on the compound principles, larger and larger numbers each year. He wished to state most distinctly



property, but he thought probably about three weeks ago. There were on the Waiora river, approximately about 600 of the countrymen engaged in digging. Ten or twelve years ago, the number of Austrians on the field was not very great, but of late they have come on the compound principles, larger and larger numbers each year. He wished to state most distinctly that his firm had no more to do with bringing the Austrians to New Zealand than the Chairman of the Commission had. He believed the whole secret of the invasion of the Austrians lay in the fact that some years ago ten of the gum-diggers on the fields of Messrs Mitchelson Bros. bought ten tickets in an Australian sweep with the result that one of these secured a £10,000 prize. This was mostly sent home to Austria, and he believed was the main cause of the whole thing. In fact, he knew in one case this was so, as one of the participators in the sweep sent a draft through a bank in Auckland. Witness had not seen much personally of the Austrians, but the storekeeper and others who had come in contact with them spoke in terms of highest praise of their industry and law-abiding habits. His brothers stated that the average cost of living for the Austrians was 9s to 12s each man. He had been informed that upon their arrival in the colony they were not very flash of money, and—being strongly adverse to getting into debt—they lived very frugally until such time as they sold their first quantity of gum, after which they lived just as well as any Britisher. They were not as good customers, however, to the hotel-keepers. Witness's own impression of the Austrians was that they were not a desirable class, inasmuch that they came without their wives and families, this being an evidence supporting the theory that they did not come to settle permanently. Notwithstanding the influx of the last six months the rate of production of gum had not increased. He would here like to make a statement with regard to an erroneous impression that had got abroad with reference to him being the main instrument in bringing the Austrians to New Zealand. A paper published

wives and families, this being an evidence supporting the theory that they did not come to settle permanently. Notwithstanding the influx of the last six months the rate of production of gum had not increased. He would here like to make a statement with regard to an erroneous impression that had got abroad with reference to him being the main instrument in bringing the Austrians to New Zealand. A paper published in Auckland had quoted advertisements which had appeared in certain Sydney papers offering inducements to Austrians to dig gum in New Zealand. This Auckland paper had so arranged those advertisements over an article with the concluding query, 'Who is the M.H.R.?' that they made out witness to be the person referred to. He now desired to state that he had nothing whatever to do with the insertion of these advertisements. In order to clear himself, he instructed his Sydney agents to enquire into the matter, and after a good deal of expense and trouble it was discovered that they had been inserted by a couple of swindlers. The detectives, after making their enquiries, found that the advertisements inserted in the Sydney papers were put there by a couple of swindlers, who netted £1 4s 6d profit out of every one they sent. They had gone from Auckland with a letter of introduction from a person there, and opened a 'New Zealand Labour Agency.' They held out that they had a block of land near Dargaville, and that they had authority to send over men. They showed the place on a map, and had a man there who said he knew the place well, and had made £6 to £12 a week there before, and meant going back. They suddenly closed the agency, sold their books for a trifle, and left Sydney in debt. Witness said he knew nothing of a truck system being in vogue on his firm's estate. The men were paid [illegible] their gum and they paid cash for th[illegible] there was money to be

WAIROA BELL AUGUST 25 1893 GUM DIGGERS



NOTICE TO GUMDIGGERS.

All gumdiggers are earnestly requested by the Executive Committee of the Gumdiggers' meeting to register their votes as early as possible; and in no way to pledge themselves to support any particular candidate at present.

Another meeting will be held shortly to decide on what further steps they shall take in the gumdiggers' interests.

WM. FITZPATRICK,
Chairman of Committee.

THE WAIROA BELL AND NORTHERN ADVERTISER SEPT 27
KAURI OIL

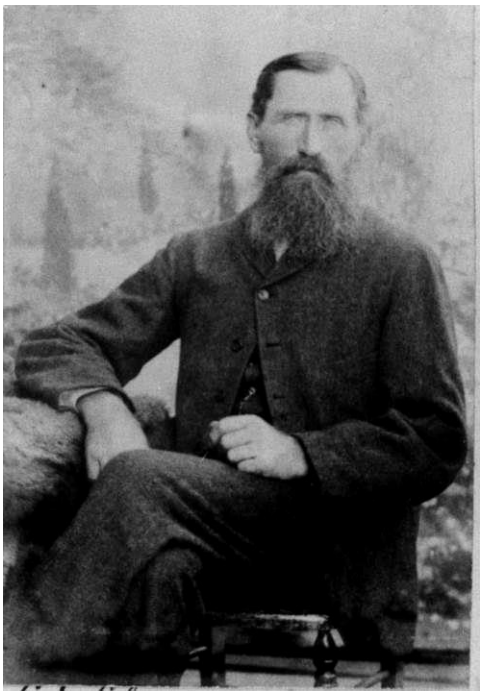
IRÂTION.

KAURI OIL.

Some two years ago a trial was made at Mangawhare with a process of extracting oil out of the resiniferous deposited in the kauri-gum swamps, with some success. The earth was put into a large iron receptacle, similar to a steam boiler, and a furnace underneath was applied. Under an immense heat the resinous portions of the earth were reduced to a thick oil, of good body, a very satisfactory percentage of oil being obtained. This oil was tried for painting purposes and declared to be excellent for marine work. For house painting it was not altogether a success, the difficulty being to sufficiently refine it. However, it was clearly demonstrated that there were large possibilities in the direction of obtaining a very satisfactory oil, and enormous quantities of it, from the deposits in our gum swamps. Another interesting discovery, also, was that in the making of the oil, an illuminating gas was generated, that gave an excellent light. This gas was conducted from the oil pipes leading from the cylinder by a small upper pipe, and a practical proof was given by Mr Trevor of the value of the gas for lighting purposes when he successfully lit up business premises with it.

The great expense incurred in experimenting was probably responsible for the cessation of operations previously. We are now pleased to learn that a powerful English syndicate has representatives in the district exploiting the possibilities of the kauri oil, and it is likely that we shall see this further adjunct to the kauri gum industry prove of great value to the north.

4
Characters of the Gum Fields



Left: Friedrich Carl Otto: German immigrant.

Left: My great, great, grandfather Otto worked in the gum fields during 1870.

Friedrich kept a diary of his journey to New Zealand and his first few months after his arrival. He initially got work as a farm hand at Mangere, Auckland and then after some time he heard there was a fortune to be made in the gum fields in Northland and so with a friend they headed into the wilderness and became gum diggers.

The following excerpts from his dairy give an indication of how tough it was…

Sunday, the 17th of July: Only rain on Monday, the rest of the week was cold and the brightest clearest weather with some haw frosts for 3 nights, but nothing to speak of. We worked all week except for half a day repairing fences. I cleaned the stock yard and worked on the drainage. This would be so, God willing, be my last Sunday in Mangere because next Thursday I leave to become a gum digger. I shall be in Auckland for one week.

5 Weeks Later Near the Wade River Just North Of Auckland

Sunday, the 21st of August, 1870: I left Mangere on July the 19th and stayed for 1 week in Auckland. I came here on July the 26th. No, I did not really get here on Tuesday evening, because I got completely lost and to crown it all, it poured all day. I spent the night at the farm, which I located at 8 in the evening after a great ordeal and effort. I shall never forget that evening in the New Zealand wilderness.

On August the 1st, I, in company with friend Vogel started as gum diggers. Because my belongings did not reach me earlier from the Wade, they were sent there from Auckland by Cutter.

We have worked here for 3 weeks to-day and have found about 4 cwt. of pure gum: In Auckland 1 cwt. costs at the moment 30 to 31 shillings. But business must get better, we must find more gum and the miserable rainy weather has to stop at first, before I can get a taste and really be a judge.

The weather is since my departure from Mangere absolutely horrible. There is nearly no day without rain and what rain. No one can imagine the wetness and dirt and mud on the badly made roads and footpaths. Only those who have seen it and how anyone can stay healthy is beyond my understanding. Yet, I am as fit as a fiddle, thank God, all the time.

I am beginning to dislike New Zealand more and more and often regret that I did not go to America. I would have saved about 150 and would have had several months in which I could have earned about 50. As soon as I am able, I don't yet know how and when, I shall leave here and go to San Francisco, because if I stay here, I cannot get any further. The times are far too bad to let my beloved ones come over, it would be stupidity.

Note: Friedrich had been an economist (Accountant) in the old country and probably not that used to getting his hands dirty and so he only spent a short time in the gum fields at the Wade before deciding to seek his fortune in the gold fields of the South-Island.

During his travel there he was offered a job as a shepherd on a large sheep station on the shores of Lakes Wakatipu and because of the uncertainty of finding gold he accepted this position. Saving money to bring his wife and daughter out from Germany was paramount.

During the next twelve months he would make friends with one of the employees of Hallenstien. (Hallenstien had a share in the sheep station and also owned a general store in Queenstown). This friend was also German and through this friend's brother who lived in London, they would eventually assist Frederich's wife and daughter with their preparation for their long journey to New Zealand. They arrived in New Zealand nearly two years after Friedrich.

CAROLINE NGOUNGOU
(QUEENIE)

LEFT: QUEENIE

Queenie a European girl was taken as a hostage from Taranaki by Maori to the Kaipara Gum fields.

To Mr. Sheehan her story unfolds.

Queenie said…

I have no recollection whatever of my early life at Lepperton. Neither is it true, as has been read to me from the newspapers, that I can remember being taken across the sea in a great canoe by Maori.

My first conscious memories begin from the time when, as a small girl, I was digging gum with a band of wandering Maori in the Kaipara district, north of Auckland. I could not speak Maori then so it must have been shortly after I was kidnapped. The Maori were very unkind to me at the time though I was never struck or beaten. They simply ignored me, and had it not been for the kindness of one or two of the women-folk life would have been miserable indeed. Their method of teaching me the language was very simple. Pointing to some article on the ground they would order me to pick it up, and in a very short time I was able to speak Maori as fluently as any of the tribe.

It was then I discovered that the Maori with whom I worked belonged to no special tribe, but they were drawn from all over the Waikato and Wanganui districts and banded together for the common purpose of digging gum.

They were split up into about forty camps scattered all over the Kaipara district. We lived in raupo whare's and the life was hard and comfortless.

Every morning at daybreak I used to go out with a spade and spear and dig until sunset. All the children worked just as hard as the parents, and though it may seem hard to Europeans we thought nothing of it. In the evening we sat in the camp and scraped the gum. The dust and scrapings we flung on the fire which blazed up and lit the darkness. There were no candles at all.

There was plenty of gum in those days – great lumps of it. When we had enough we took it down to the store and sold it. What the name of the settlement was I never found out, but there was actually no township, only a shop or two.

Our camp was ten miles from this place and when I was only a child I used to walk this distance with about sixty pounds of gum in a sack. It was backbreaking work but I did it for years and it doesn't seem to have done me much harm because I am still hale and hearty and working hard at sixty-three years of age.

After selling the gum we would each carry a fifty six pound bag of flour back to the camp.

LEFT: MAORI WOMAN WORKING THE GUM FIELDS
(THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A TYPICAL SCENE FOR QUEENIE)

As to clothes, I got enough to keep me covered and no more. Print dresses, bought readymade, were what I usually wore. Boots I never saw at all. In fact it was not until my second marriage that I wore boots. My feet were as hard as iron and nothing could hurt them.

About one pound was allowed me each time I sold my gum. The balance in accordance with Maori custom went towards camp food.

The storekeeper to whom I sold my gum never passed any remark about my white colour. Perhaps he was an Austrian or a Dalmatian, but newly arrived in the country, and thought I was an Albino Maori a freak of nature. I did not know. In any case I did not stop to consider I was different from the Maori to whom I belonged.

I saw my face in the river often but it did not seem strange that I was of a lighter colour. That seems difficult to explain but never the less it is a fact.

I remember a Pakeha speaking to me one day when I was a young girl and he offered me some biscuits. Of course what he said was meaningless to me. Since the mystery about me has cleared up I have up I have been told his name was Coxhead, a young surveyor. He had heard of a white child being kidnapped from Lepperton and he thought I might be the missing girl.

This was what he told my sister, Mrs Kay, of Lower Hutt, some years afterward.

The Maori were very annoyed about my talking to the young surveyor and called me away. "Never speak to any Pakeha at all" *they said.*

As I grew to young womanhood among the Maori the feeling against me grew less and what remained of it was more conspicuous among the men. The women were very good to me and all the children played with me as though I were one of them. They never asked me why I was white, nor did I at any time hear any curiosity expressed or any reference as to my origin. Neither was I curious because I accepted the fact that I was Maori.

At night sitting around the camp fire scraping the gum, my Maori brethren sang and laughed and told old legends that had been passed down from father to son for hundreds of years. They were a merry lot when work was finished.

Food was plentiful. We did not need the European butcher shop then. Tunas (eels), Kereru (wild pigeons) and pigs gave us all we wanted in the way of meat. The pigs we caught with the dogs. And fat! Nowadays we have to feed the ordinary pig up such a lot to get him fat and there is little fat on the wild pig. But in those days we enjoyed him very much. And the little Pihipihi, the little bright eyed silly birds, we caught them too.

First one would be caught in a snare and kept alive. He would call to his mates who would flock round in scores to see what the matter. Before they knew what was wrong a Maori would rise up from behind and sweep them to the ground with a big stick. Then he would put them in a bag and wait until some more foolish birds came along. When enough were caught they were preserved in fat until such time as they were wanted. We had a very crude way of making bread.

We mixed the flour and water until a hard sticky mass was formed. It would then be pulled into a long roll and a stick was pushed through the centre of it and set in front of the fire. The stick was slowly turned until the bread was properly baked. Just flour and water and baking soda, but it was wonderful bread! I liked it better than I like European bread now. And the big, sweet tunas we used to catch were the finest I have tasted. Perhaps it was because I worked so hard that I thought they were so good. There is no sauce like the source of hunger.

We shifted our camps from place to place as we searched for gum. As to education, I didn't know what it was. There were no schools in that life, and I never heard of them at all. The education I got was the education of the outdoors, and though perhaps Pakeha children could read and write and add up figures I could have shown them a lot about real life – the life where to live was to work, and to work hard. I have never learned to read or write and I have never missed it. I don't know whether it would be a benefit to me but where I have lived it never has been necessary anyway.

On Sundays there was no work in the camps. That was the one day we could relax. We observed the same Sunday as the Christians worked because that was the one day we could not sell gum at the store. That is how we came to fix on that particular day. We would lie round and eat and talk and laugh and make merry generally. Yes, Sunday was a day to look forward to. And at Christmas we had a big feast and celebration. Though there was no Christmas pudding there was plenty of everything the Maori like and we ate just as the Europeans do nowadays, though perhaps we did not feel quite sick afterwards. I don't remember ever seeing any liquor in the camps. Sometimes Maori would go away and get drunk, but that was very rare.

My memory is very indistinct because I have worked hard and passed through great troubles, so I must be excused if there are things I cannot tell.

What religion we had I cannot say now because it is so long ago. I do not think we had any. We were just a tribe of nomads and all we thought of was working and eating, for they were the necessary things to do. I used to go down to the river with all the women and children and do the washing. Soap, of course we had plenty. We bought it from the store in great bars. At the riverside we would chatter and laugh and sing, just the same as the other women.

My hair was cut short just like a boys and my skin was tanned by exposure to the weather as the years went on. I saw Pakeha men who never suspected I was not a Maori, but I never saw a Pakeha woman. In fact it was not until after my second marriage that I first saw one, and I still remember how frightened I was.

But I saw little of Pakehas generally until I came down to live here at Whakatane.

Every little while we would go down to Mahurangi Heads to rest at the pa near Waiwera and Warkworth. There used to be hot springs there where we bathed. I have been told since that they have all been fenced in and are good hot springs. After spending a time at the pa resting after our labour and enjoying ourselves back to the gum fields we would go to work hard as before.

It was here on the Kaipara gum fields near the place called Kaihu that I was first married. I was only about fifteen when my husband took me. I had known him and worked with him for years, he was a big, fine-looking Maori. Some of the papers have said he was a Maori chief but that is not true. He was just a nomad Maori digging gum as we all were doing. His name was Ewa Ngaru, and he was much older than I was though I could not say what age he was. He had come up from Tauranga a long time before.

We were married according to Maori custom and went on with our work side by side on the gum fields. He was a very good husband to me. I kept working right up until the time my baby was born. After the birth my husband's mother looked after the baby and I went back to the gum fields. My first baby grew up fine and strong and healthy and was married years ago. Her name is Mrs Ngaruna Mikaere and she lives near Coromandel. She has had thirteen children of her own of who ten are now living.

Shortly after her birth my husband's health began to fail and he grew weaker and weaker as time went on until he could work no longer. His trouble was consumption. It was very sad and pitiful and eighteen months after the baby was born he died of the disease leaving me a widow of about eighteen years of age. A great Tangi was held for him and his body was kept for two days before he was put into a rough wooden box and buried.

I was heartbroken and my hair was cut off close into the scalp as a special sign of deep mourning. This custom is kept up among the older people today, though the younger Maori are letting all the old customs go. The cutting was done by the women of the camp who consoled me in my great loss.

Soon after his death I was stricken with the typhoid fever and for eight weeks I was very close to death. I went down to skin and bone and all my hair fell out, leaving me quite bald. I

must have looked a strange site. My Maori friends were very good to me then and all the old feeling against me had completely passed away. They waited on me and did everything they possibly could to bring me back to health, even though they were busy themselves.

It is hard to say how I caught the disease as it was not among the Maori with whom I lived. Most likely it was drinking from some small stream on the fields. My Maori friends kept putting cold water on my head to keep me cool for I was parched and burning and felt that I was on fire.

However, though it was a hard struggle I eventually battled through, but it took me months to regain proper strength and condition. But I shall never forget my old Maori friends for their kindness then. It is burnt into my mind in fire. Though I never made fancy mats or did any of the finer work I used to make any number of potato kits with the rest of the women. I liked that work too. They were happy days indeed when we sat together and talked and laughed. Alas! Most of my friends have gone from this world and I have seen none of my old acquaintances from the Kaipara for over forty years.

One habit I could never take up was that of smoking. The Maori, both men and women, were always puffing away at their clay pipes but I could not acquire the habit though I tried once or twice.

The Torori, or Maori tobacco, was terrible stuff and burned my tongue. It was made from proper tobacco plant, but had none of the usual ingredients of the prepared tobacco and was very bitter. Perhaps it was my forgotten white blood that rebelled against the habit. The rest of the camp thought it strange that I did not like it.

I was still on the Kaipara fields when I met Ngoungou, my present husband. I suppose I would be about twenty at that time. Ngoungou came from Wairoa and was a big fine-looking young Maori. He had come up from the south with his grandfather to pay a visit to some relatives and it was then he first saw me and wanted me to be his wife.

On his way up the Kaipara, Ngoungou was in the Te Puke on the night of the great eruption of Tarawera in 1886 and could see far off the glare of the great mountain that slew so many, both Maori and Pakeha. Then he came to Tauranga and took the boat to Auckland before travelling into the Kaipara district.

I fell in love with Ngoungou for he was a very fine- looking Maori indeed and he took me to be his wife according to Maori custom. There was feasting to celebrate our union. It was agreed I should go down to Whakatane with my husband, but first we were to have a three month holiday. So after about twelve years on the fields I left my Maori friends behind for ever and turned south ward, never more to see Kaipara. My little daughter was left with the tribe.

With us we took the dead body of my first husband's brother which was to be taken back to his home in Tauranga. From Mairangi we came down to Tauranga by boat, quite a voyage in those days. On arrival at Tauranga a big tangi was held to do honour to the body of my brother-in-law, Pikake Ngaranui, and then we went on to Kaikari where we stayed for nearly

two months. From there we came down to Te Puke, which was practically nothing in those days. There was only one hotel and the population was all Maori. We stayed there six or seven weeks before coming down through Whakatane to Poroporo where I have lived ever since, about forty-three years.

BELOW: MAORI ON THE GUM FIELDS IN NORTHLAND

THE KAIHU VALLEY ARISTOCRAT

A "REMITTANCE MAN" OR NOT

In 1874 at the height of the Kauri gum boom a young man who didn't look like a labourer arrived at the mouth of the Kaihu River looking for work. He called at the local timber mill, gave his name as, **'Edwin Abercrombie Dashwood'**, and asked for the boss.

In 1871 Edwin Mitchelson had joined the firm of J. M. Dargaville and Company, timber and Kauri gum merchants. He was soon promoted to manager of their store and trading concerns and through his good management had a thriving mill and a monopoly over the Kauri gum trade. (Edwin would later become well known as a successful Merchantman and a Parliamentarian)

Mitchelson obviously took to the young 'Edwin Dashwood' despite his unlikely appearance, for he sent him up to his store at the Flax Mill at Katangi/Parore as a gum buyer. Most of Mitchelson's business in gum took place here. The Kaihu Valley swamps were a rich depositary of Kauri gum.

Mitchelson had thrown him in the deep end and it is likely he was a quick learner, distinguishing between pale gum which fetched top price and steel and chalk gums of progressively lower grades. The politics of the gum fields probably escaped him for he was something of a hedonist, according to people's memory of him.

He was a likeable young man people agreed. He had an easy manner, a quick smile. A bit of a 'Toff', they claimed: Generous with his money in the pub.

Someone started the rumour he was a **Remittance Man**. It was a convenient explanation for his being there.

He played cricket for Northern Wairoa. Commonly held views were: *"He's fond of women, he likes his grog, but a good cricketer, eh"*

They nick named him *"'My Lord'* or *'Lord Dashwood'* little knowing that after his father's death in 1882 he would become the eighth baronet of West Wycombe Park a huge estate in Buckinghamshire England.

He married 17yr old Florence Norton daughter of Dr Frederick Norton of Dargaville on 24th August 1889 returning to England that year to take up his inheritance. He died suddenly on 7th April 1893 at West Wycombe and was succeeded by his brother Robert.

He is remembered not for any one achievement but because settlers chose to believe he was a **'Remittance Man'.** The mistake was to be perpetuated in at least one regional history. At least it provided a category by which people were to remember him.

Only fragments of information survive of Edwin's life in Northland but it would seem that while he lived at the Flax Mill he would play cricket for the local side as he is mentioned in the following cricket match news of the day as a player for that area.

From Papers Past we have the conclusion of a cricket match played on the Kaihu River at Katangi/Flax mill. Edwin Dashwood features…

Note: The game was between Katangi/Kaitangi not Haitangi as printed and Aratapu.

DAILY SOUTHERN CROSS, VOLUME XXXII, ISSUE 5708, 8 JANUARY 1876

A match was played at Haitangi on Monday, 27th December last, between an eleven of the Aratapu C.C. and an eleven of the Haitangi C.C. It was won easily by the Aratapu, with four wickets to spare. The batting of Dashwood for the Haitangi, and Bromley for the Aratapu was excellent. A number of visitors from Mangawhare and Kaihu were present throughout the game, and a very pleasant day was spent. In the evening, dancing interspersed with singing was engaged in till an early hour.

1ST INNINGS.		2ND INNINGS.	
Walker, st Maitland ..	0	b Dashwood ..	2
Pivott, c Marriner .	1	b Marriner ..	5
Hartley, b Dashwood ..	3	lbw, b Marriner .	0
Dodd, b Dashwood ..	2		
Houlihan, b Dashwood ..	9	c W Oldham ..	3
Bromley, not out . ..	31	lbw, b Marriner ..	7
Mansfield, lbw, b Isbiter ..	1		
Anstey, b Isbiter	2		
Rowland, c Dashwood	6	not out ..	7
Taylor, b Isbiter	3	c Dashwood .	10
Black, c and b Dashwood ..	3	not out ..	4
Extras	8	Extras .. .	7
Total	69	Total . ..	45

ARATAPU.

1ST INNINGS.		2ND INNINGS.	
Maitland, b Pivott ..	0	b Pivott	4
Dashwood, c Black .	43	b Pivott . .	8
Wellwood, b Houlihan	6	c Rowland .	0
Isbiter, b Houlihan	16	not out ..	18
W. Oldham, b Pivott ..	0	b Houlihan .	5
H. Oldham, b Pivott ..	1	c Mansfield .	0
Griffith, c Houlihan . ..	0	lbw, b Pivott ..	0
Middleton, b Pivott ..	0	b Pivott .. .	0
W. Ball, not out .	0	b Pivott . ..	0
F. Ball, b Houlihan . ..	1	b Pivott	2
L. Marriner, b Pivott ..	0	b Houlihan ..	3
Extras .. .	4	Extras . ..	2
Total	71	Total .	42

HAITANGI.

1st Innings.		2nd Innings	
Whewell, c McKellar, b Cleary	1		
Masefield, c Douglas, b Garwood	1		
Lunkham, run out . .	2		
Thorne, c Douglas, b Garwood	11		
Rees, c Douglas, b Adams	50		
T Brassey, c Tuke, b Davies ..	18		
W. Brassey, b Adams ..	1		
Waterhouse, run out	0	not out .	3
Dacre, not out	7	b Adams	2
Wynyard, c McKellar, b Adams	0	not out ..	4
Swanson, c McKellar, b Adams	8		
Extras	10		
Totals	109	.. ..	9

THAMES STAR, VOLUME XXIV, ISSUE 7468, 11 APRIL 1893

SIR EDWIN DASHWOOD, whose death was announced by a cable message yesterday, was in New Zealand for some years, and was well-known in the Auckland district. He was born in 1854 in Marlborough, where his father owned a run. After the removal of the British troops from New Zealand, the family went to England, but Edwin Dashwood, at an early age, came back to the colony, and became a cadet on an estate in the Kaihu Valley. He left his employment there, and during the years which followed, till the time of his succeeding to the Dashwood estates, had an eventful colonial experience, "roughing it" in the bush, north of Auckland, and eventually going on to the gumfields. About six years ago, he became Sir Edwin Dashwood, but did not obtain possession of the estates until three years later, when an aunt who had been next in succession before him died. Three years ago, Sir Edwin Dashwood married Miss Norton, daughter of Dr. Norton, of Dargaville. He leaves one child, a girl; and probably his brother will succeed to the title. Sir Edwin and Lady Dashwood went to England after their marriage, and were received with great enthusiasm by the tenantry when they arrived home. They visited the colony again about a year ago. The Dashwood estates, which are in Buckinghamshire, are amongst the most important in the county, with a large rent-roll.

FIJIAN GUM DIGGERS

"BY GUM"

OBSERVER, VOLUME 9, ISSUE 569, 23 NOVEMBER 1889

A phase of the "labor question" is referred to by the Northern Wairoa Gazette as follows:—At the back of the flax mill it is stated that several Fijian natives are employed in gum digging. This of itself would not seem worthy of notice, but when it is alleged that they are only paid a wage of £5 per year, and their food consists only of rice, that they are compelled to work seven days a week, and that their employers stand over them to see they are continuously employed, this savours too much of slavery to be tolerated. The gumdiggers in that neighborhood are likely to take strong measures to put an end to this state of things, they feeling disgusted at the treatment of and means used towards these fellow creatures though of a different shade of color. Doubtless we shall soon hear more of this, but meantime it should hardly be allowed that these islanders should be brought here to compete with Europeans, and paid so small a sum as £5 per year, and be fed on rice only.

RIGHT: WEST COAST TIMES, ISSUE 4437, 12 OCTOBER 1883

It's very little good talking now, but we did converse a great deal, when we found out what kind of a paradise an ignorant but well meaning friend (by ignorant, I mean that he was totally devoid of any information in regard to the payable qualities of gum fields) had earnestly recommeded us to try our fortunes at, by following the noble profession of gum excavating. Our financial thermometer was getting towards zero, and not having any particularly remunerative occupation in view, we took our friend's advice, and ail the filthy lucre obtainable; we also got as much information to assist us in finding the most desirable spots.

We went aboard one of the Kaipara steamers, and took a ticket for the furthest port she called at, with the intention of getting well out of civilization. We succeded in doing so far beyond our wildest expectations, for a more uncivilized place is not yet out of the hands of the manufacturer. Upon the steamer reaching her last place of call far up the Northern Wairoa, we disembarked and proceeded to lay in a stock of articles necessary for a professor of gumology's outfit. We had a tent—we got that in Auckland; but such as blankets, cooking utensil, etc., we had to obtain in that blanked part of the universe.

Having accumulated all the accessories neccessary for the expedition, we converted them into swags, and departed thence for those celestial plains where it was said that any man could make from three to four pounds a week, by simply waltzing round and picking up the gum nuggets that paved the earth for miles like a macadamized road.

We had to tramp about twenty miles from the river to our future place of operations. This walking tour was not one of the most exhilarating excursions. Part of the way lay along the track

river to our future place of operations. This walking tour was not one of the most exhilarating excursions. Part of the way lay along the track of the then embryo Kaihu Valley railway, and was not so easy walking along as an asphalt footpath would be, for what part of the track wasn't mud had to be waded through, with fearful odds as to the reliability of you lifting your feet out of the composition. The weary monotony of this ramble was varied occasionally by having to cross large creeks by means of bridges in various stages of completion, the stringers of which had been carefully and liberally tarred by some human fiend. After a heavy shower of rain (these occurred at intervals of four and a half minutes and lasted upwards of half an hour), the before mentioned stringers were as slippery to stick to as some Auckland bankrupts, and as easy to walk across as a greasy brass rail overhanging a precipice. When you come to consider the fact that we were each handicapped with a swag, some thirty pounds weight, you may conclude that we tripped across these lubricated structures as gaily as a bull doing a promenade on a frozen sheet of water.

In the course of time we safely surmounted these obstacles, and in less than two days we found ourselves—and the heterogeneous samples of soil that had accumulated on our boots—in the suburbs of those famous fields inhabited by wealthy gumdiggers and some eternally unwashed Maoris. When we gained the summit of the hill that overlooked the homes and country adjacent to the gum speculators, as we surveyed the scene from where we stood, we were filled with an ambition (not yet satiated) to make use of the largest and most powerful adjective outside the pale of the English dictionary in expressing our opinion in regard to the appearance of this El Dorado of a gumfield, but all we could exclaim was "By Gum," and that was only managed by making a supreme effort.

We descended the hill to the place where the calico town was, and made investigations as to the most suitable site whereon to pitch our tent. We finally decided to erect it across the creek from the rest of the populace; we liked to be select, as it were. We were at a great loss to find timber suitable for tent poles. Whilst we were diligently searching about in the faint hopes of finding some material that would answer our purpose, one of the noble army of gum excavators informed us, with a beaming face, that we would find the necessary timber in the bush over there. The bush over there meant a walking tour of two miles over a range of fern-clad hills. I left my friend to get tea ready, whilst I went in quest of the necessary spars. By the time I got back the shades of evening were falling fast, and acted as an incentive to us to stay in and get our mosquito sanatorium fixed up. After tea had been cleared we formed a committee to arrange the plan of campaign. We agreed that we should spend the following morning in preparing a stock of provisions, so as not to lose any time in developing the mineral resources of New Zealand.

As soon as breakfast was over on the following day we went to the gum store to make several purchases, such as rice, flour, biscuits, baking powder, candles, and other edibles, also spades and spears. The last named articles are substituted for the tennis racket in this innocent and guileless home for the ostracised Lord and Baronet. We introduced ourselves to the storekeeper, and suggested to him that we had come to

Baronet. We introduced ourselves to the storekeeper, and suggested to him that we had come to to his circuit with the intention of staying a few minutes to recruit our shattered frames, by unearthing the hidden treasures that were concealed from the public gaze by six feet of *terra firma* and stumps. He seemed quite pleased at this overwhelming intelligence, and ventured to remark that we ought to do very well. We knew before he told us that we ought to do very well, and so we did in regard to labour, but as to improving our position, either socially or financially, it didn't come off.

Perhaps I should explain to my readers the definition of a gum store. It is a place run by the benevolent proprietor, who buys goods at say sixpence and disposes of them to the grateful gummies at a slight elevation above cost, namely half-a-crown; and by this scanty profit the philanthropical storekeeper is enabled to eke out a meagre existence on a miserable pittance of sometimes ten to twenty pounds a week clear.

Having got the tools and provisions, we returned to the camp and commenced to get the provisions ready. My friend, to my intense gratification, took the liberty of installing himself cook, and by way of a preliminary he gave me the Gladstonian pursuit of chopping firewood. Whilst engaged in this rural occupation my olfactory nerves were from time to time, and many a time, saluted with an indefinable odour, something between the smell of a whaling ship in full swing and an oily rag on a hot stove. Some considerable time elapsed before I could decide where this unusual restaurantic effluvia was emanating from when it suddenly dawned upon my intellect that it was my friend preparing dinner. My conjecture proved true—too true, alas, as one empty pain-killer bottle is a silent witness that the dinner had been no mythical legend, but a sad and painful reality.

The cook was very profuse in his welcome on my making my appearance for the mid-day meal. 'Sit down, old man, I'll have the dinner on the table in a brace of shakes,' he remarked.

I sat down and awaited developments. He spread a sack on the ground, and put in the centre a piece of round charcoal about eight inches across and four inches thick. This was followed by boiled rice pudding and some tinned meat. But I am forgetting. He had a composition in a billy; I refrained from asking him what it was; it put me too much in mind of my first sea voyage; if I recollect rightly, he called it Irish stew. I hope it was, for his sake. I didn't have any. My curiosity was aroused when my friend asked me if I would have some bread. I promptly answered in the affirmative. I would have said yes to anything at the time, as I was getting desperately hungry. I didn't care whether it was bread, roast duck, or the Governor's billet; besides I was getting anxious to see what the bread looked like.

My nervous system received a severe shock when the cook seized hold of the charcoal mentioned previously, with one hand, and grasped a bowie knife with the other. I, by great force (thinking that the worn-out graveyard scenery that was spread all around had had some deranging influence on his intellect, and that it was his intention to feed me on charred wood), raised my moral courage sufficiently to inquire what interesting operation he contemplated doing. Imagine the galvanic shock my feelings received when he told me he was "going to cut the bread," and without further ceremony he forced the knife through the burnt mass and handed half to me. I took it as cheerfully as a condemned man would receive his death warrant, and subjected it to a

I took it as cheerfully as a condemned man would receive his death warrant, and subjected it to a critical examination. All that I could discern with the naked eye was a doughy-like substance, not unlike a piece of india-rubber in the tropics, enclosed in a belt of charcoal to the depth of an inch. A piece of this compound liberally coated with axle grease (sold at the store under the assumed name of butter, but it was too strong for them, and asserted its rights as axle grease) constituted the principal course of the dinner. As *entree* we had the boiled rice pudding. The recipe of this pudding, which was decidedly a luxury in those parts, would read something after this fashion: Rice, 40 parts; water, 40 parts; bits of sticks, salt, baking powder, and sundries, 20 parts. Total 100.

Upon concluding this indigestion-promoting repast we sallied out in quest of gum as a means of counteracting the probable results of the dinner. We had been told repeatedly that, on forcing the gum spear into the earth, if it struck on anything gritty, it was gum. We followed the direction.

On pushing the spear into the universe, we both struck on something that appeared to have the correct grating sound. After exchanging a mutual smile at the success of our first prod, we began to heave the sods to all the four parts of the compass and elsewhere. A lumper working on the wharf for half an hour on Sundays wasn't a funeral procession to the lightning rapidity with which we manipulated those spades in our frantic endeavour to see what kind of a haul we were going to make.

After a quarter of an hour's toil, we unearthed a large block of g—— no, I'll be hanged if it wasn't an infernal lump of timber!

As we gazed at this remnant of some noble forest monarch, we felt an inclination to make a few remarks (mostly adjectives) that would have been highly suitable for the occasion, but we refrained from doing so, owing to the extreme scarcity of breath, so violent had been our exertions.

As we gazed at this remnant of some noble forest monarch, we felt an inclination to make a few remarks (mostly adjectives) that would have been highly suitable for the occasion, but we refrained from doing so, owing to the extreme scarcity of breath, so violent had been our exertions.

During the rest of that afternoon and the whole of the next day we did nothing but excavate as many roots and stumps of trees as would have started a combined sawmill and fire wood yard. Now that I come to recollect, I believe we did get some gum for our trouble. We came to the conclusion, after entering into an intricate and mathematical computation, that had all the gum which we had the unalloyed pleasure of bringing to the surface been made into varnish there would not have been sufficient to varnish the interior of a medium sized cathedral; but, had it been used with great skill and economy, there would have been enough to have ornamented a walking stick.

When we returned home on the eve of the second day, we unanimously agreed that gum-digging was a fraud and not worthy of the scientific evolutions we had gone through for its aggrandisement. After tea, whilst we were taking into consideration the serious proposition of emigrating to a more prosperous portion of the Southern Hemisphere than a paralysed gumfield, one of the professional gum experts paid us a visit. I informed him that we were getting on very well indeed, and if we could only manage to detain our present cook a few more days, we would receive the inevitable call to proceed to a mansion beyond the skies. Our visitor gave us his cordial sympathy and hinted that we should try the big swamp.

"That's the place for gum!" he remarked, and then he entered into a fabulous statement as to his gross takings.

After concluding his Baron Munchusen oration

was available for commerce out of the five foot—somewhere about half a hundredweight—and carried it to our camp. We entered into an arithmetical discussion as to the value of our find, and finally decided on the highest computation being correct. I don't exactly know what the figure was, but I know it was some fabulous sum. Having scraped the lot, we carried what was left to the storekeeper. He looked at it very solemnly, and after a (to us painful) interval, he slowly shook his head from side to side and began to look as limp as a Blue Ribbon lecturer. Then he sagely remarked that it was that species of gum known to experts and ourselves by the cognomen of "Black Jack"—as saleable an article here as a dead horse would be. Great Jehosophat's wooden ghost! There was all our labour; all our stock of adjectives, all the troubles and trials incidental to being experimented on by a fifty-fourth rate cook; all the sufferings necessary to any one who has been the mosquitoes happy hunting ground—all these things had been expended to raise, for the benefit of the world at large, about half a hundred of "dark-complexioned John."

We concluded that our wisest move was to wind up this series of gymnastic performances. On the following morning, almost before daylight, we had left the Arcadian pastures and the fifty pounds of "Black Jack" to the tender mercies of the community at large, whose sole object, aim, and ambition in life is to make "five foots" and miscalculations as to what the liberal-minded and plaster-on-three-hundred-per-cent-profit storekeeper will give them for their produce.

I noticed that the farther away we got from the gumdiggers' elysium, and the nearer to civilization, the inclination grew stronger in us, until at last we finally agreed that never again would we ask anyone to "Buy Gum."

MR JAMES TROUNSON

POLITICS COMES TO THE GUM FIELDS

Residing at the Flax Mill, Parore, Mr James Trounson, timber and cattle man, stands for government and hopes to capture the gum diggers vote.

He would stand for government twice but failed both times by a narrow majority.

James had recently moved from Paparoa where he had left his son James junior in charge of the very large cattle run he had established from bush and scrub.

James had acquired considerable areas of good grazing land, as well as blocks of good Kauri in the Kaihu Valley and as these were developed for pasture and milking purposes, his growing financial interest in the area made the move to Parore necessary.

James also took up a 40,000 acre lease with Mitchelson and Co who in turn had this land leased from Mr Nimmo with gum digging rights. James had the grazing rights to run cattle on this land between Parore and Maropiu.

James set up a butchers shop at the Flax mill and also took over the Te Kopuru and Dargaville butchery business's to aid in the disposal of his cattle.

Europeans and Maori alike trusted him and his word was his bond. Poaka Parore, descendant of Parore Te Awha stated *"For many years I had dealings with James Trounson over land and cattle and other matters and no written agreement was ever used between us. We trusted each other absolutely. Our word was sufficient".*

Another example of James character was the fact that no royalty was ever charged by him to the numerous gum diggers who dug gum on his land. Most settlers did charge royalty.

Vivian Trounson the third son of James and Sarah Trounson recalls leaving school at a comparatively early age to work for his father, where he was engaged mainly in packing meat and stores out to the gum diggers on the large Flax mill property.

NORTHERN ADVOCATE 25 WHIRINGA A RANGI, 1893

FROM THE GUM DIGGERS WEEKLY WE HAVE

MR. J TROUNSON, LIBERAL

As we surmised in the last issue the gum diggers of Dargaville, or at least those represented by the Gum Diggers Executive Committee, of which Fitzgerald is Chairman, have been cleverly entrapped. They are going to support Trounson, who they say is a Liberal!!

While he has condemned in no measured terms the Government policy and measures, and is advertised in the 'Herald' as the nominee of the Auckland National Association: an Association formed for the purpose of annihilating the Seddon Liberal Government that ever took any interest in the gum digger: passed the Truck act for him and this year appointed a Royal Commission to enquire into the gum industry.

Capital has been made by the opponents of the Government out of two of the Commissioners recommending a tax on gum: a proposal which the government had any intention of levying. All the government ever thought of doing was to impose a license on gum diggers so as to assure to diggers certain prescribed legal privileges similar to those held by gold miners; and (2) part of the license fee was to be set aside for an old age pension fund.

Till the present Government came into power, nothing was done to ameliorate the condition of the gum digger. The Mitchelson – Atkinson Government ignored the very existence of the gum digger, who was left a prey for the vultures that held every gum field in their clutches.

The Seddon Government entered into the grievances of the gum diggers with vigour, passing the truck act and preventing any gum lands from being sold or leased. And next session, the government introducing other laws with a view

(1) Regulating the gum trade so as to preserve a standard value for the gum,

(2) Providing settlement land contiguous to gum fields for diggers, and

(3) Establishing an old age pension fund out of licenses.

To prevent these things being done the National Association; and its nominees, Mr. Trounson, Mr. Mitchelson and the rest are moving heaven and earth to oust the Seddon Government from office. And the gum digger is blandly invited to support Mr. Trounson.

The National Association, which is running Mr. Trounson, issued their manifesto last week as follows…

For city of Auckland…

Mr. Charles Edward Button.

Mr. William Crowther.

As to the third vote, the council finds that all the other City candidates are more or less out of harmony with the principles of the Association.

The council regrets that it is not able to support Mr. Edward Withys Candidature on account of his well-known views on the tax theory.

Other constituencies…

For other constituencies of the Auckland Provincial District the council urges members and friends of the Association to vote for, and to use their best efforts to secure the return of the following candidates…

Parnell: Mr. William Shepherd Allen

Eden: Mr. Edwin Michelson

Waitemata: Mr. Richard Monk

Bay of Islands: Mr. James Trounson

Manukau: Mr. William Francis Buckland

Franklin: Mr. William Ferguson Massey

Waipa: Mr. Frederick William Lang

Waikato: Mr. Isaac Coates

Bay of Plenty: Colonel Henry Burton

On this Programme gum diggers will notice that Trounson and Mitchelson are in the same boat. This association not only seeks to replace Mr Houston with Mr Trounson, but also wants to knock out Jackson Palmer for Monk. If then the gum diggers lend themselves to this plan, they will deserve to forfeit the friendship of the Seddon Government. But we believe the gum diggers are fully alive to their own interests and that when they read the telegram from the Premier published elsewhere, they will to a man rally around the Liberal Banner and vote for Houston.

This pronouncement made by the Premier commits the Government to a distinct programme in favour of the gum digger. He indicates that legislation will be brought in to...

(1) Regulate the gum trade.

(2) To ameliorate the condition of gum diggers.

(3) And to provide land for gum diggers.

This is the programme we have advocated, and if the gum diggers support it by returning Houston, they will make their political weight felt for the first time in the history of our politics. As this official pronouncement will be placed in the hands of every gum digger before the day of the poll, we have no doubt but that Houston will completely smother his opponents.

5
News Of The Day
Gum Industry

LAST NIGHT'S DISPATCHES
Bay Of Plenty Times, Volume XII,
Issue 1473, 12 January 1883

There are indications of a continued rise in the price of gum. Ordinary is now quoted at £46 to £47 per ton. Finest selected gum, of which there is not more than one per cent in a ton of ordinary quality, fetches £240 per ton in the London market just now.

Poverty Bay Herald, Volume XII,
Issue 4437, 27 November 1885

Owing to the lawless disposition of the gum diggers in the Kaihu district the settlers have requested police protection.

North Otago Times, Issue 7085, 6 May 1890

A bushman named Cunningham attempted suicide at Northern Wairoa by stabbing himself in the neck and breast.

About eighty nominations for immigrants were sent from Auckland this month.

Kauri gum has risen to £47 per ton, and a number of coal miners from the Kawakawa coal mine have gone gum-digging.

Manawatu Standard, Volume 3,
Issue 41, 13 January 1883

A small party is to be despatched to prospect for minerals in the country at the head of the Kaihu river and Wairoa river.

West Coast Times, Issue 8058, 21 January 1891, Page 4

The machinery for boring purposes recently imported from England by Mr Nimmo, owner of a 40,000 acre block of land near Dargaville, known as Kaihu No. 1, is being put together there.

BAY OF PLENTY TIMES, 17 MAY 1893

The gumfields.

WELLINGTON, Tuesday.—The appointment of a Gumfield's Commission has been made in consequence of representations to Government that certain storekeepers in the north of Auckland districts have agents abroad constantly sending on parties of Dalmatians to work the gumfields, and that the northern gum fields are being flooded with this alien labor to the injury of the regular gum diggers.

It is alleged already that 1,000 of these foreigners have arrived, and from 3,000 to 5,000 more are expected. Government therefore has in contemplation the expediency of introducing legislation next session to put gum digging on Crown Lands under the same kind of supervision as now obtains with regard to mining on Crown lands. It is probable also that arrangements will be made whereby natives will allow their lands to be dealt with in a similar way.

STAR, ISSUE 1100, 3 JULY 1893, PAGE 1

The Gumfields Commissioners rode through Harding's lease yesterday to the east coast, and interviewed several camps of Austrians and Englishmen. They found the former's huts well up to the average in cleanliness and comfort. The men stated they earned about 10s weekly over "tucker." Some intended going home, but the majority would doubtless stay. Many had already been out five and six years, although they had no intention when leaving to stay more than a few months. In all probability not half would return. To-day a meeting was held at Mariopou, Mr Mitchelson's lease, when eight Austrians, all new arrivals in the country, were examined. They expressed themselves pleased with the quality of the land for agriculture. If the Austrians understood the terms on which they could get good land, and could save a little money, they would take up land. They made 20s to 25s weekly, and paid 12s to 14s for "tucker." Fred. Marriner, storekeeper at Mount Wesley, was examined, and handed in some interesting statistics showing the wages earned and the proportion of earnings to expenditure of the Austrians and other foreigners. Mr Mitchelson's manager was also examined. He said that during three years they had not lost a penny through the Austrians, but had lost about £100 yearly through other diggers.

OTAGO WITNESS, ISSUE 2092,
29 MARCH 1894

The Premier and party arrived at Kawerua on Tuesday. At Waimamaku, where there was a flourishing Native school, the Hon. Mr Seddon was interviewed by the Maori committee, who asked for the establishment of a school in the district similar to that of Te Aute and St. Stephen's. They were prejudiced against sending their children to a distance, as they contracted disease and bad habits, and many died. The Premier expressed great pleasure at receiving such a request, and said he thoroughly agreed with their scheme, and would discuss the matter with the Minister for Education and endeavour to accede to their request. Mr Winkleman is the teacher, and his scholars sing and read admirably.

The Premier and party arrived at Dargaville on Wednesday evening, and was entertained by the Executive of the Gumdiggers' Association, the Chairman of which asked that the Government would employ diggers during the present depression. He suggested that roads should be started to Crown lands, which would then be opened for settlement. Many of the diggers were very willing to settle, and if they had gum lands to assist them that would serve in lieu of capital. They wanted some legislation enacted to prevent the influx of aliens and employed from other colonies. The Chairman assured the Premier that Austrians merely came to the colony to make money. They said themselves that they would not settle, but meant to return to their own country. He thought a license should be issued, and only to persons who had been in the colony for 12 months. A royalty should be put on gum, but diggers would be glad to be free to buy and sell where they pleased. He complained bitterly of the truck system, which, he said, was pressing cruelly on the men. A royalty of 1s 3d could go to the county council, he said, for rates, to give gumdiggers a vote as ratepayers, and a 2s 3d rate could go to form a benefit fund for the diggers. He said many men were in a state of destitution on the fields, and at present the prospect for the winter looked very black indeed. The highest rate of wages was about 25s a week, and it took an able man to make that amount.

Mr Seddon said he was considering the advisability of opening land for settlement and reserving gum lands to enable settlers to procure some capital. If there was any road-making that would promote settlement it was desirable that the work should be proceeded with this would absorb a lot of labour from the gum fields. He referred to the difficulty of dealing with the alien question. Once the men were here we could not control their methods of gaining a livelihood. That would be unconstitutional, and would involve a serious difficulty between England and foreign nations. In connection with Mr King's remarks on the gum market, the Agent-general had been instructed to inquire in England, on the Continent, and in America, and to endeavour to ascertain the cause of the present low prices. The Government would then know how to act.—(Applause.) The truck system had already been dealt with by the Government, but that carried on in connection with the gumfields was very difficult to deal with. More agreement between employer and employed was necessary. The Premier said that as regards the main body of gumdiggers, the only thing the Government can do, as far as he could see at present, was to put in hand different roads for which money had been voted, and put married men who are now on the gumfields, as far as practicable, at constructing these roads. He stated that he purposed

GUM DIGGERS' SETTLEMENTS
EVENING POST, VOLUME XLVII,
ISSUE 107, 7 MAY 1894

ing these roads. He stated that he purposed purchasing samples of different gums and sending them to the Agent-general, so as to assist him in ascertaining the Home value. This proposal greatly pleased the executive of the Gumdiggers' Association. The Premier told them plainly that there is no hope of the Government purchasing gum, and they admitted it was impracticable. In regard to permanently settling people in the vicinity of the gumfields, the Premier said he intended to consult with the Minister for Lands as to throwing open more good land for settlement near the gumfields, at the same time reserving portions of gum bearing land for the exclusive use of those settlers, so that portion of their time would be engaged in improving their land and another portion of their time could be devoted to digging for gum, which would stand to them as capital, and would help them to ultimately become independent of the industry. In support of this scheme, the Premier found that a large number of settlers in several districts he had passed through attributed their success to having been able to go and dig for gum occasionally, and by that means pay for their flour, sugar, and tea. The Premier said it was evident the Government would have to consider the advisability of resuming the ownership of all gum lands, a statement which was received with great fafour. The whole question he promised would be fully considered by the Cabinet at the conclusion of the tour, and it would be premature to say anything at present. The deputation thanked Mr Seddon, and withdrew.

[BY TELEGRAPH.]

[UNITED PRESS ASSOCIATION.]

AUCKLAND, 5th May.

Mr. Ellis, secretary of the Dargaville Gumdiggers' Union, telegraphed to the Premier approving the plan promulgated by the Government for settling diggers and others on a block of Crown lands containing 80,000 acres lying between Kaihu Valley and Hokianga, and stating that the Union will endeavour to organise bodies of its members to take up sections of land as soon as the conditions are fully known. The Premier has replied stating that he is pleased to hear that the plan of the Government for settling the gumdiggers on the land is generally approved. When the conditions and details are complete, he will send them to the Union. Mr. Seddon adds that nothing will be wanting on the part of the Government to promote permanent settlement, and in that way to some extent to ameliorate the troubles that have overtaken the gumdiggers owing to the very low prices obtainable for gum.

WANGANUI HERALD, VOLUME XXVIII,
ISSUE 8413, 4 DECEMBER 1894

An interesting discovery is reported from the Muriwai gumfield, which is situated about half way between the Maunganui Bluff and Kawerua. A party of Austrians digging for gum found, at a depth of nine feet below the surface, some stone axes and some stones, which, it is thought, had been used to sharpen the axes. Wooden spears, clubs, and other articles of native workmanship were also found; also, some stones which had been used in the construction of cooking ovens. The Austrians appear to have had no idea of the value or interest attaching to such finds, and carelessly reburied them in their diggings. Probably nothing would have been known of the find, but for a colonial digger who fortunately saw the point of one of the spears projecting from a heap of mullock that had been thrown out by the ignorant finders. The sight aroused his curiosity, and in reply to his enquiries the aliens told him that they had found numerous similar articles, but had flung them away, and they had been covered under their workings. By careful search some were again found and handed to the colonial digger, who, it is said, intends sending them to the Auckland Museum. A block of charred kauri gum, estimated to weigh two hundredweight, is said to have been found in the same spot, but only 40 pounds of good gum were got out of it; the remainder having been destroyed by fire. The gum, they say, was 7ft deep and the relics 2ft deeper. The find was made close to the coast, and it will most probably lead to further discoveries of Maori relics in the near future.

THE GUM COMMISSION

NORTHERN ADVOCATE, 29 JANUARY 1898

THREE diggers were examined at Kaihu, their evidence being much the same as that given at Dargaville. All the evidence given so far is generally similar to that given before the former Commission. In all only about a dozen diggers will have been examined in the Wairoa district. Diggers' opinions here are anything but favourable to the Commission.

From Dargaville the Commission proceeded to Poroti, where they had under examination Mr Rawnsley and several Austrians. Owing, however, to the difficulty of interpreting, they were not successful in gaining much direct information from the latter. One of the aims in view was to ascertain whether the Austrians desired to take up land and settle in this colony, but so far this point is undetermined. The Austrians apparently view the Commission with considerable suspicion, perhaps because the question has been asked of them whether they have served their time in the army. It is not unlikely that, as with many German subjects who have come to New Zealand, some of the Austrians may have left their own country to avoid the conscription, which is always unpopular. In this case, they will regard Government officials with the apprehension which inspires the Continental mind, as having designs upon their liberty.

We understand that one of the chief objects of the Commission is to endeavour to settle the Austrians permanently on the land, so as to check the constant outflow of the money which they make in New Zealand to the country from which they came.

OTAGO WITNESS, ISSUE 2487, 13 NOVEMBER 1901

AUCKLAND, This Day

Mr Bragato, Government Viticultura Expert, acting under instructions from the Government, recently visited Dargaville, Mangawhare, Te Kopuru, and the surrounding districts, with a view of assisting Austrians on the gumfields in those parts to obtain land for permanent homes. He found a large proportion of Austrians, who number about 600, anxious to settle permanently in the colony. Mr Bragato regards Austrians as men who will become useful and valuable settlers.

AUSTRIAN SETTLERS IN AUCKLAND
NELSON EVENING MAIL, VOLUME XXXVII, ISSUE 64, 31 MARCH 1903,

Some idea of the importance of the kauri gum industry to the Northern Wairoa district may be gathered from the fact that within the last month gum-digging licenses have been drawn at Dargaville as follows:—Swamp of (approximately) 70 acres, £70 bonus and 7s 6d per week per man; term, four years. Swamp, 30 acres, £170 (with additional 10s per week per man); term, eight years. Ordinary gum land, 300 acres (part only gum-bearing and in great measure dug over), £150; term, five years. Some time ago (says the Auckland Herald) a swamp of unascertained area was leased for five years at £120 per annum for 26 men, on condition that they left it thoroughly drained and fit for cultivation.

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The 1898 Kauri-Gum Industry Commission

Notes From The 1898 Kauri-Gum Industry Commission

The commissioners gave an in depth account of all Kauri gum doings with many meetings and enquiries all over Northland and as it is far to lengthy to add all to this account I have concentrated specifically on the area as we know between the Hokianga and the Kaipara as follows…

Now Know Ye That In Pursuance And Exercise Of All Powers And Authorities Me Enabling In This Behalf, And Acting By And With The Advice And Consent Of The Executive Council Of The Colony Of New Zealand, I, Uchter John Mark, Earl Of Ranfurly, Governor Of The Said Colony, Do Hereby Appoint You, The Said;

Edward Tregear And Gerhard John Mueller To Be Commissioners For The Purpose Of Inquiring Into Matters Hereinbefore Set Forth, And Also In Particular…

1/. *To report on the condition of the gum trade, industrially and commercially:*

2/. *To report on the condition of those engaged and occupied in digging the gum, and the remuneration of contract or not:*

3/. *To ascertain if there has been a large influx of labourers from outside the colony to the gum diggings, and, if so, whether the same are free labourers or under contract:*

4/. *To enquire whether those engaged in gum-digging on Crown lands hold licenses therefore, and as to what payments are made for the use and occupation of the said Crown lands:*

5/. *To advise as to the best and most effectual means to conserve the interests of the colony and the wellbeing of those engaged in the gum industry.*

THE GUM FIELDS NORTH OF AUCKLAND CITY COMPRISE OF 724,000 ACRES

There is a peculiar feature about the gum fields of the North. In many places two, three and sometimes four layers of gum have been found, revealing the existence of two or three Kauri forests, which on disappearing in ages past left in succession their quota or layer of gum in the ground.

The large pieces called bold gum were found on the surface or barely embedded in the soil. Next the gum digger had to search for it 10 inches to 12 inches deep with a spear; then a second and third layer was found on fields that were thought to be exhausted, and the large gum spear 8 feet to 12 feet long was used and a hook to bring to the surface the gum in the swamps which a few years ago were not known to contain gum.

From all sources of information supplied the commissioners compute the earnings of gum diggers in 1897 as follows…

3,800 British and Maori diggers earn 1 pound six shillings per week.

1,500 Austrian/Yugoslav diggers earn 1 pound 11 shillings 6 pence per week.

6,450 tons was exported in 1897.

For digging gum on crown lands a license fee of 5 shillings has been charged in years past per year and was left to the county councils to collect the fees with the exception of the Hobson County (Dargaville) as they found that the cost of collecting was sometimes more than the fees received.

For the right to dig gum on private lands or on Native lands various systems of charges are in vogue. In most cases payment of a fee ranging from 1 pound to 7 pounds per annum is the condition of being permitted to dig gum; but in the case of those holders of private land who are storekeepers, the usual arrangement is that the gum-digger working on such lands must sell his gum to obtain his provisions or stores from these store keepers

The food supplied by storekeepers is in most cases is imported from abroad, tinned meats, tinned milk, tinned butter, tinned fish, tinned fruit etc.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE GIVEN TO THE GUM COMMISSION 1898

FROM THOMAS SOMERS AT OWENS FIELD MAUNGANUI/ARANGA

DEFECTIVE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

I have not worked on Mitchelson's Lease since 1894. I have been gum digging in the Maunganui swamp (Aranga) for the last two years, and I state that conditions under which I work are perfectly fair. I pay 2 shillings a week royalty to dig gum, with perfect freedom to buy stores, and I also get a fair price for the gum. Mr John Owen is the owner of the land I work on and Mr N. N. Downey is the agent. There are about ten British diggers on this lease and twenty five Dalmatians, and all work under the same conditions on Owens land.

We feel the competition from the Austrians very severely even at Owens land. They come in large numbers temporarily, and exhaust the gum, and the British diggers, many of whom have taken Crown land have practically no resources left to meet their liabilities or work the land.

To the best of belief, within the last six months three hundred have arrived in the colony and are scattered over the gum fields, of which thirty came to the Wairoa. At present time there are fewer Austrians in this district than in 1893. The Austrians found the conditions rather severe in the Wairoa and so have left for the northern fields principally Mangonui and the Marsden and Whangarei districts.

I have heard some twelve months ago of their being too much in the hands of the lessees of the private gum fields.

There are great complaints about defective weights and measures used by the storekeepers in buying gum and it is urged that a frequent inspection of these should be taken in hand by the government. If the Crown would give gum-diggers facilities for the acquiring of small areas of Crown land wherever available it would probably result in the diggers settling more permanently in the gum fields.

I think it would be judicious to make provision for old diggers the number of who is very greatly increasing in the fields now and certain blocks of gum land should be reserved for them especially.

I am not in favour of an export duty as it would be borne by the digger. I think a gum digger should have a license issued to him under the same line as miner's right. There is a difficulty in connection with the collection of license fees over crown gum fields, but it might be met by authorising Postmasters to issue the licences. If I as a settler had some crops to sell to diggers on adjacent leased fields I would not be able to dispose of it to them. If the diggers were inclined to buy they would be turned off the gum field. There have been instances of this.

WILLIAM REYNOLDS

AUSTRIANS/DALMATIANS ARE BIRDS OF PASSAGE

I am a gum digger and settler on 543 acres sections 17-17-a Waipoua survey district, purchased from Mr Owen at 13 shilling an acre, part fern part mixed bush.

I depend upon gum digging to cultivate the land. I have been digging for sixteen years, principally in the Wairoa and this district. Up until eight years ago I worked on Mitchelson's lease. I was not satisfied with the way things worked and so I left. Since then I have worked on free fields, where I paid royalty and have been satisfied with the results. I was dissatisfied while working on Mitchelson's lease because I did not think I obtained a fair price for the gum and I paid too much for the stores. I believe I could have obtained one pound or more per hundredweight more if I was at liberty to sell it at any free store on the Wairoa. I quote one instance which shows that too low a price was paid, or attempted to pay. The price of gum was 1 pound 14 shillings and instructions were sent up from Dargaville up to reduce it by 7s. A number of us immediately left whereupon the reduction was only effected to the extent of 2s.

For the same sort of gum which we dig at Tutamoe we obtained from a storekeeper Brown 1 pound 16 shillings a hundredweight, although it had to be brought twice the distance to market.

The system that obtained at Mitchelson's was this:

The digger would bring in his gum, the value would be fixed by the store keeper; then the amount due for tools and provisions etc. was deducted from the value and the balance paid over in cash or cheque. We were never asked to leave the value due to us in the hands of the storekeeper.

At Mr Harding's lease the gum business was worked in a different way from Mitchelson's. He charged a royalty of one pound per quarter and the digger was permitted to obtain his tools and provisions where ever he liked and sell his gum wherever he liked; but Mr Harding reserved to himself the sole right of supplying meat and of doing all the carting necessary to bring the gum to the stores. For a distance of 7 miles, his charge was 1s. 6 pence per hundred weight, for more than seven miles, 2s. He allowed store keepers to cart out provisions to the gum-diggers.

We gum diggers in this district are of an opinion that Owens swamp should be acquired by the Government, and assistance given in cutting one main drain through it. It would be a field for years for settlers about Maunganui Bluff to earn a few pounds during the summer time.

Regarding the Austrians we have no fault to find with them as men, but we do object to them because they are birds of passage, coming to make a few hundred pounds out of gum and the going home to their own country. I have spoken to one of them about this and he confessed that his object was to get 300 pounds together, and then go home, where he

could live upon it as well as a man with 3,000 pounds. I think they should be licensed only after they have lived two years in the country. The presence of the Austrians as far as I know is accounted for by a few of the country men doing well on the fields and recommending others to come to New Zealand. This has been spreading for years, and now it appears there are about fifteen hundred in the country.

SETTLER AT ARANGA: ALEXANDER MCCULLOUGH

I am a gum digger of ten years standing. I am the holder of a lease in perpetuity No 7 Waipoua Survey District, containing 300 acres. I am a married man, with two children. I have been two years on the section. I hope to improve my section by my earnings on the gum fields. I have heard the evidence of Mr W Reynolds and I generally agree with the options expressed therein. Gum lands should not be disposed of solely for gum digging purposes, but cultivable gum lands might be granted to intending settlers if there is reasonable ground for believing that the land is no longer sufficiently rich for gum digging. In the grant or lease of gum land a provision should be made that any gum digger has the right to dig thereon for gum if the lessee himself is obtaining gum thereon, except in the ordinary course of clearing and cultivation.

ELLIS REES ELLIS AT MITCHELSON BROTHERS LEASE KAIHU VALLEY

FREEDOM TO BUY AND SELL WITHOUT RESTRAINT

Having heard the evidence read over as given before the Commission in 1893, I endorse what I then said.

The platform of 1893 is given below and was adopted by gum diggers at a meeting held at Opanake/Kaihu in September, 1896. I still consider these as being the object of the main body of gum diggers…

1/. *No export duty on Kauri – gum.*

2/. *All Crown lands to be reserved for gum digging purposes.*

3/. *The production of Kauri gum to be restricted to British subjects only.*

4/. *The only legal charge to gum diggers for digging on lands, private or otherwise is to be royalty, leaving the diggers to buy and sell where they choose.*

5/. *First class land adjacent to gum fields to be first roaded, and then thrown open to selection, so as to give gum diggers and others an opportunity to make homes for themselves.*

6/. *The Government is to take over and maintain all main trunk roads in the north.*

7/. *State ownership of all gum-lands.*

8/. *Compulsory Arbitration and Conciliation Act.*

We were paying on the fields from 4 pence to 6 pence per pound of onions, whereas settlers were prepared to sell at one and a half pence, but had not an opportunity of doing so, because the gum diggers on private lands would not run the risk of being expelled if they purchased from other proprietors. A similar case occurred with the raising of potatoes by settlers; they were ready to sell for 6s a hundredweight, whereas the proprietors or store keepers charged 12 shillings a hundred weight which the diggers on this land had to pay.

I think it would be good idea if a gum digger had to produce a license before he was allowed into transactions for the sale of his gum. There is not a store keeper in fifty who will advance an outfit to a stranger.

An instance of the different prices paid for in different districts is that a man took his gum to Maropiu, and Rawnsley's packer bought gum there, and packed it through to Poroti and thence carted it to Whangarei, and with all this he was able to pay 8-10 shillings a hundredweight more than buyers in this locality. This shows the way that men are imposed when forced to sell to buyers of private fields.

The freight is 1 pound 7s 6d per ton railway or steamer from Dargaville to Auckland; 1s 6d a hundredweight is charged on the fields to pack to the stores and about 1s 6d for freight from Dargaville to Auckland: total 3s. And so that any difference between 3s and the deduction made by buyers on the field represents their profit.

ROBERT GRIFFEN

SHORT CHANGE FOR GUM

When we come in with our gum to Mitchelson brothers store in the field the man in charge says; ***"Here is so much a hundredweight for your gum and that is what you have to take".***

If we owe anything for stores that is deducted and the balance handed over to us. The market price for re scraped gum in the papers was five pound ten shillings and upwards, but we received four pound two shillings and six pence. and subsequently only three pound twelve shillings and six pence after deducting one shilling and six pence for carriage. There was a difference of 10s and 12s per hundredweight between prices we received and the prices quoted in the local market. The agreement that we dig gum on Mitchelson's lease we signed, but have no copy. The agreement is not stamped.

JOHN BROWN

TAMPERING WITH THE SCALES

The stores I get from Mitchelson's store are weighed in my own spring balance and they are correct. I weighed 6 hundredweight of my gum and it was 10 pound short. I told him the scales were wrong. He screwed a nut up at the back of the scales which made a difference of 6 pound in 6 hundredweight.

We feel sure we will have to leave working gum at Mitchelson's lease after giving this evidence.

HERBERT BASIL COX

WHERE ARE THE DIGGERS

I am a market gardener at Ahikiwi and sell to any one, generally the store keepers. This year I have not sold any produce to gum diggers on Mitchelson's lease. I might have sold some potatoes. I get 1 and half pence for onions from the storekeeper now. I have sold them two years ago at 1d to Brown and Campbell. I was not aware that the diggers on Mitchelson's block were prohibited from dealing with me, but I often wondered why they did not purchase some of my produce. I have not done any gum digging myself for four years.

I sent down a ton of potatoes last week to Brown and Campbell at 7s 6d a hundredweight.

JOHN GOODALL

CROOK SCALES

I sold gum eight days before Xmas at Flax Mill Mitchelson's lease, and I weighed my gum. I went on the scales myself and registered 10 stone. I said your scales are wrong. And the storekeeper told me to fetch the policeman up. Then I went to the store about two chains away and weighed myself again and registered 10 stone 5 pound both are Mitchelson brother's scales. I went to Trounson's scales (the butcher) and weighed 10 stone 7 pound.

Mr Flavell here present was a witness to these different weights.

CHARLES FLAVELL

FAIR GO

I am a gum digger on Mitchelson's lease and was present when John Goodall weighed himself in Mitchelson's stores. It did not take ten minutes to go through the weighing.

EVIDENCE GIVEN BY THE AUSTRIANS/DALMATIANS

JACOB RADATICH

MY COUNTRYMEN

I am from Croatia in Austria.

I came to New Zealand in 1893 from the broken Hill mines in Australia.

I was digging gum at Babylon on Mitchelson's lease. I heard from some of my country men and others that they were making good wages at gum digging and that is the reason I went to Babylon.

I went to the store for goods and asked the storekeeper should I pay him at once and he said at the end of the month would do. He made no charge for rent for my digging or royalty. I dug for two months there and moved to another part of the lease.

I was one of a party of twenty two Austrians who tried to drain Johnsons swamp. This did not prove a profitable job and thereupon gave up gum digging and ultimately settled in the Marlborough settlement.

My opinion is that many came from Austria simply through reports and advice from their own relations and friends. They would hear at home about doing well and hence come out to try their luck.

While digging on the swamp with twenty two of us we lived as well or better than the British gum digger. I am sure it never cost us more than 15 shillings each per week.

Every week we got 130 pound of beef. Every two or three weeks we got a pig and cured it ourselves. In the summer time our earnings are 1 or 2 or 3 pounds a week.

In the winter it takes all our time to make 1 pound a week in the best of fields.

We are working on the co-operative system. We got our tucker the same way. We had two men acting as cooks and whatever was made in the swamps was divided between us cooks and all.

I have heard the evidence of the following Austrians read over to me which was taken by the Commissioners in 1893 and believe they are correct, and I agree with their statements.

PETER GOVECICH

AT HOME WE DO 3YRS IN THE MILITARY SERVICE

I am an Austrian from Dalmatia. I keep a store at Tikinui and do some gum digging as well. I cannot earn more than 18 s to 1 pound 3s at gum digging. At home I was a stone mason at which I could earn 3s a day and tucker. For working on a farm a man could get 1s 10d or 2s a day and tucker. It costs 5s a week for board. My country men in the colony consist of seafaring men, fishermen, and vine and olive cultivators.

I only know about 315 to 320 Austrians in the Wairoa district. I think that is nearly all there are. I have taken some trouble to ascertain.

At home we all have to do 3 years in the military service.

GIOVANNI BRADICIC

I WANT TO STAY

I come from Istria, close to Trieste. I am gum digging on Harding's ground. I was a sailor from 11 yrs. old. I did one years' service in the army. I make 2 pound from gum digging and it costs me 10s 12s for provisions. I have not been molested in any way by the British. I do not intend to return home.

ANTONIO GASPARICH

ITALIAN PACK HORSE WORKER

I am from Trieste and am of the Italian race. I have been living in this district for fourteen years. I have been employed by Mitchelson Brothers in various ways I have not fallen in much with the Austrians. When packing provisions to them they appeared to me to take a fair amount of stores, as well as others. If some of my country men could get land offered to them by the government, such as that in the Kaihu valley, they would jump at the chance of bringing their families out here.

As regards the saving of my countrymen taking good and poor workers together, I think they can lay by at least 1 pound a week, which in the case of those who did not remain in the colony is sent home to friends.

PETER SKAKANDICH, NICOLAS SKAKANDICH, NICOLAS MATUTAVII, AND JOHN BILUSH

Three of them are labourers and one a stone mason.

Jacob Radatich was sworn as interpreter, and said…

COULD NOT MAKE A LIVING AT HOME

They were at present draining a swamp on Mitchelson's Flax mill lease.

We have each spent 20 pound of our money and are in debt to the storekeeper to the extent of about 10 pound each. This debt has incurred over the last six months. Up to the present we have cut about 3 miles of drains and found very little gum. If the swamp is a failure we will have to dig gum somewhere else to pay for the tucker.

During the last twelve months close on a hundred more Austrians have left than have arrived in the colony. Many had to borrow from their friends for passage home.

BOLD BTOMEH

DALMATIAN DIGGER WITH SETTLING RIGHTS

I come from Pellissa, in Dalmatia, Austria. I have been five years in the colony, and am twenty three years of age. My father is a farmer. I am the occupier of an occupation with the right of purchase section; No 30 Block 1 Maungaru Survey District. A number of my countrymen were in New Zealand before me and from them I heard about it, and so decided to come myself. Some of them get money from their brothers and relations in the colony, and some paid their own passage to New Zealand. I sent for my brother three years ago and he is still about the Wairoa digging gum. Some of my country men do not make money at digging gum and so go home. And others make 2 pound a week.

MITCHELSON'S STATEMENTS

RICHARD MITCHELSON

"We are in business of buying and selling gum and also goods through our five stores"

Gum is getting scarcer, and so the earnings are less, and the gum digging must be of a more systemic character, and the old idea of spearing is gradually being abandoned. The swamps must be drained. I hand in statements A and A1, showing total average earnings per week of two Europeans and two Austrians dealing at the Babylon store, of five men dealing at the Flax – mill store, and of three men at the Maropiu store. All our out stores are branches of

our firm and work on wages. There is no subcontracting or commission allowed. Mr Trounson has the grazing rights over gum field leases and it suits us better to let him supply the diggers with meat. There is no payment made by Trounson to our firm for the right of supplying meat to our gum leases. We pack the gum for the diggers to our stores and charge then according to distance. I hand in return marked B; it gives the prices we charge for provisions at the four out stores; also the average price paid for gum off our lease lands for twelve months at the out stores. I also furnish the commission with a return marked C giving the cost of goods supplied to the stores for the two years ending 31st December 1897. In the Kaihu store men employed at Kauri timber work and settlers receive their supplies, and we cannot, therefore, without great trouble, give the statement as it applies to gum diggers only.

The average of gum output for the last fourteen years has been 712 tons per annum.

B.

PRICES CHARGED ON GOODS SOLD AT MITCHELSON BROTHERS' LEASE STORES.

Commodity.	Flax-mill.	Babylon.	Maropiu.	Kaihu.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Flour (100 lb.)	16 6	16 0	16 0	14 6
Potatoes (new), per cwt. ..	12 0	12 0	10 0	10 0
Sugar (per lb.)	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 3½
Milk	0 9	0 10	0 10	0 9
Tea (per lb.)	2 6	2s. 6d. to 3s.	2s. 6d. to 3s.	2s. to 2s. 6d.
Candles (per lb.)	1 0	..	..	0 10
Beef (per tin)	1 3	..	1 3	1s. 1d.; 1s. 9d. doz.
Rice (per lb.)	0 4	..	..	0 4

AVERAGE PRICE PAID FOR GUM FOR TWELVE MONTHS OFF LEASE LANDS.

Babylon, £2 6s. 6d.; Maropiu, £2 5s. 9d.; Flax-mill, £2 7s.; Kaihu, £2 3s. 6d. Prices ranging from 7s. to £5 per hundredweight; average price, £2 5s. 8d.

MEN EMPLOYED AT GUM-DIGGING ON LEASE LANDS.

—	Babylon.	Maropiu.	Kaihu.	Flax-mill.	Totals.
Austrians	81	57	..	30	168
British	23	18	20	14	75
Maori	..	22	20	..	42
					285

OUTPUT OF GUM.

Output of gum from all sources in 1897, 552 tons, as against 1,138 tons in 1893. Average output per year for fourteen years, 712 tons.

RENT OF LEASE.

Rent, £600 per annum, to — Nimmo, Esq.; in 1893 it was £1,000. Lease was for ten years, rental commencing at £1,200 for first year, with reduction of £100 for each year after.

C.

RETURN OF CASH AND GOODS SUPPLIED TO E. MITCHELSON AND BROTHERS' STORES FOR TWO YEARS ENDING THE 31ST DECEMBER, 1897.

—	1896.		1897.	
	Cash.	Goods at Cost, with 10 per Cent. added.	Cash.	Goods at Cost, with 10 per Cent. added.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Flax-mill*	1,602 7 7	570 10 0	1,682 7 7	664 10 0
Babylon	5,631 15 5	2,223 2 7	5,017 6 11	2,148 10 9
Maropiu†	6,999 7 6	2,585 2 9	4,637 9 11	2,177 18 6
Opanake ‡	..	..	..	..

* A number of people deal at this store who are not gum-diggers, but it is not possible to separate their purchases. † At this store a number of customers are not gum-diggers. ‡ This store is supplying bushes, and paying bush orders. We are unable to separate the different items without considerable trouble.

D.

DRAINS.

Drain at Long Gully, being dug by Austrians, a mile and a half, consisting of cross drains; area of swamp, one mile long by 300 yards wide; depth of drain, 8 ft.; width at top, about 10 ft.; at bottom, about 6 ft. Number of men in party, 22.

Drain at Flax-mill Swamp, about a mile and a half long; area of swamp, same as above. Drain about 5 ft. by 4 ft. by 2 ft., running smaller at top of the swamp. These swamps are given over to those who are draining them for the term of our lease, subject to the usual conditions, we to protect them from encroachment by other diggers not being of the party. The number of men in this party is twenty.

E.

CONDITIONS UPON WHICH THE UNDERSIGNED IS PERMITTED TO DIG KAURI-GUM ON THE KAIHU NO. 2 BLOCK, KAIPARA.

1. All kauri-gum dug or obtained in any way from the said blocks shall continue the property of Messrs. Mitchelson Brothers, and shall be delivered by the person digging the same to them at either of their stores on Kaihu No. 1 Block, and until so delivered shall be held by the person digging the same as bailee for them.

2. No rent being charged for the right to dig gum above mentioned, it is hereby agreed in lieu thereof that, on delivery as aforesaid of any such gum, Messrs. Mitchelson Brothers (whose decision as to quality or description of gum shall be final and binding upon the person delivering the same) shall have the right to fix, and will thereupon pay, the fair and reasonable value thereof to the person delivering the same whose receipt shall be a sufficient discharge.

3. Any person being upon the said land shall leave and vacate the same within forty-eight hours after receiving notice, either verbal or in writing, requiring him or her so to do from Messrs. Mitchelson Brothers or their agent, and will not again enter upon the said land without first obtaining permission from Messrs. Mitchelson Brothers or their agent; such notice, if in writing, shall be deemed to have been given if left at the last-known place of abode of such person.

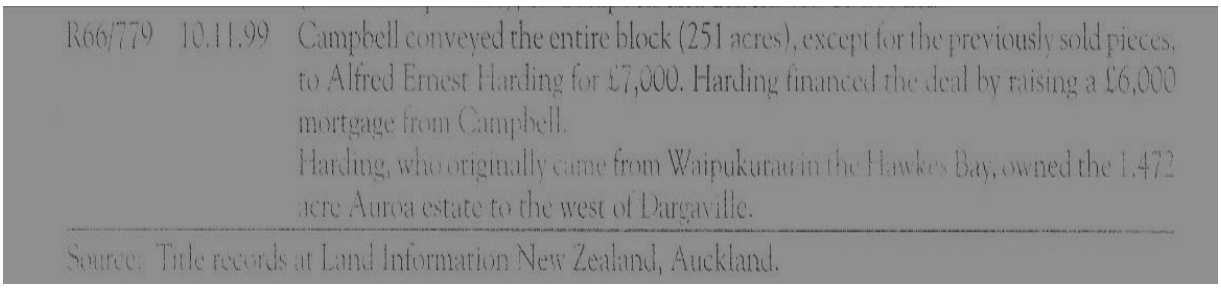
I agree to the above conditions:

HARDING'S GUM FIELD LEASE

ANTONIO FALCONETTI

I am Austrian and come from Istria. I was a sailor and came here because my brother thought I could do better than at sea. Our agreement with Mr Harding is to this effect: We pay him half royalty that is 5s per quarter per man instead of 10s. which the gum diggers pay who work on any other part of the lease. In return for this concession he will have his swamp drained. Mr Harding does the carting at 1s 3d per hundredweight. We care free to deal with any storekeeper or butcher but as a rule we get our meat from Mr Harding. Under the agreement we have the right to dig gum in this swamp for ten years. The swamp is divided into five sections, allowing for each section to be worked over in every two years thus allowing ten years overall. We are working the swamp on a co-operative principle.

There are twelve married men and eight single in our party.



R66/779 10.11.99 Campbell conveyed the entire block (251 acres), except for the previously sold pieces, to Alfred Ernest Harding for £7,000. Harding financed the deal by raising a £6,000 mortgage from Campbell.

Harding, who originally came from Waipukurau in the Hawkes Bay, owned the 1,472 acre Aurora estate to the west of Dargaville.

Source: Title records at Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

Note: these two blocks are separate from one another. One is leased by Harding the other is owned giving Messrs Brown, Campbell and Mr Marriner sole digging rights by way of a royalty paid to Mr Harding.

WILLIAM FITZPATRICK

DIGGERS DISHEARTENED WITH GOVERNMENT

I am a gum digger. The digger's desire is free trade that is to buy and sell in the best markets.

Harding's block is now exclusive to three merchants who pay a royalty to Mr Harding for the right to purchase gum from the diggers on his block. If you sell on this field you now have to deal with Messrs Brown, Campbell and Mr Marriner. I do not agree with this system.

I think the reason why the diggers have not paid their license fees is that they are dissatisfied. They have no voice in local affairs and have only the vote under manhood suffrage.

Gum is becoming scarcer and men are working longer hours. I know of a few men who are engaged hooking gum in the swamps, who are averaging 3 to 4 pounds but are exceptionally good men and working sixteen hours a day and these are not to be considered average any more than the aged and infirm, who are only getting 20 pound of gum a week,

I am quite positive there are now five Austrians to everyone who were in the fields in 1893, and the British digger has decreased proportionately.

The diggers are thoroughly disheartened after waiting five or six years, finding no remedy whatever has been applied by the Government to do away with the substantial complaints constantly brought under notice. Many of our most active men in the union gave up agitating any further and I feel convinced if such a state of things had existed in the southern districts a remedy would have been devised long ago.

GUM DIGGING LICENSES

HORACE HAMMOND

LICENSES TO DIG FOR GUM

I am Clerk and Engineer of the Hobson County Council. There is great difficulty in collecting license fees. In 1894 we sold 142 licenses at 5s each. In 1895 we only sold 34, and in 1896 we only sold 30. Total: 206 licenses in three years.

These bear no proportion to the number working on the fields.

We appointed a Ranger, and gave him 1s 6d commission for every license sold.

Our first Ranger was Mr J B Pullman, and then we had John Perry. There are one or two camps of Austrians and they declined to take out licenses and refused to give their names. The local policeman was away at the time and we could do nothing.

I do not know how many diggers there are in the district. My idea is the time has gone by to worry much about collecting the license fees on the gum fields. It would have been different ten years ago or fifteen years ago.

The gum fields should have been put on the same footing as the gold fields.

There are fewer diggers in the area now as the main reason is they are working at other industries such as timber. If the timber failed they would have to go back to digging.

In our district we have a number of settlers who have taken up land and if it had not been for the gum they could not have existed.

Our county has always advocated the selling of the gum lands.

JOHN PERRY

LICENSE COLLECTOR

I am a fruit grower and authorised collector of gum licenses and dog licenses in the Hobson County. I commenced the collection of gum licenses about two years ago. When I commenced to collect the licenses there was a rush to the Northern fields. I have experienced great difficulty in collecting the licenses and had to take promises to pay at some future time again and again. Some of the diggers evade paying the licenses by simply shifting from Crown land to private land when they see me coming along. Another wyt they have of avoiding me when working in swampy grounds, is simply to go across to the other side through 3 feet and 4 feet of water, so I cannot follow except by going miles around, and even then they would be back across again. I think an amendment should be in the law whereby a store keeper should demand the production of a digger's license before buying his gum.

PETER LANGTON

BRITISH GUM DIGGERS ARE THE WORST

I am a settler and storekeeper in the Vale of Avoca and a Ranger for the Kauri Timber Company for one hundred miles. I have the only honest men in New Zealand are the foreigners, not one of whom has gone away owing me a penny. Look at my books and you will see that all the others have a balance on the wrong side. The British gum digger is always scheming how he can get the better of me.

GUM DIGGERS' CONFERENCE

NORTHERN ADVOCATE, 19 MAY 1906, PAGE 4

At the request of the Secretary of the Gumdiggers' Union we publish the following :—

The meetings of representatives from the Waihopo, Parengarenga, Waipu, Kaipara and other district branches of the Gumdiggers' Union have been concluded. The following resolutions were passed :—

That representation be made to the Premier of the Colony calling his attention to the disabilities under which the gumdiggers labour in the matter of not being able to be represented on the County Council, and asking the amendment of the Local Government Act so as to allow the gumdiggers to have a vote in the matter.

That where it can be shown that lands which have either been purchased or leased from the Government, or even private property are not being used for legitimate pastoral or farming purposes, but solely for the purpose of working the gum therein, the State shall have power to resume such land at the original value plus improvements.

That the local authority have power to have swamps and lakes in the reserves drained, and to charge a special license in addition to the present one to any qualified digger who wishes to dig therein, until the amount expended in drainage plus interest is paid out of such special licenses. Thereafter such special license fees shall be paid to the Government, and be utilised for the repurchase of gum land and settlement of gumdiggers on the land after the gum has been dug out of it.

That all gum land reserved under the Kauri Gum Industry Act be resurveyed and boundaries fixed with iron standards, and that all people settled on the reserve be not disturbed by such re-survey.

That the book of rules be left with the executive.

That at the present time the gumdigging community has no opportunity to settle on the land, as there are no crown lands adjacent to the reserve. Therefore we propose that the Government resume all those large estates on the Northern Wairoa, such as Mitchelson's, Mangawhare, Harding's, Fitzgerald's run and Yate's, Parengarenga, North Cape, or any other large estate; and if resumed by the Government the State to bring in some scheme of land settlement in combination with gumdigging.

That before any reserve is taken off gum lands the Commissioner or his authorised deputy shall inspect such land, and evidence must be taken on the spot, all notice of application to be served on the Gumdiggers' Union.

That a gumdiggers' union brokerage be started in Auckland to be controlled by the Gumdiggers' Union and all workers in connection therewith to be members of the union exclusively.

That only bona fide gumdiggers shall be members of the Union, or those whom the executive consider fit and proper persons to be members.

That the headquarters of the Union be shifted to Waipu, that Mr Crowe be recommended as President, Mr Stafford as General Secretary, and Mr Way, Organising Secretary for Auckland.

That 75 per cent. of all funds accruing to a branch be retained for the purpose of meeting the branch expenditure, and that the remaining 25 per cent. from each branch be forwarded to the executive and banked to a general Union account. That if at the conclusion of the year's operations it is found that a branch has more funds than it requires for its own use out of the 75 per cent. it shall devote the remainder or surplus to the general Union account for organising or other purposes.

That the entrance fee be 2s 6d and the annual subscription be 12s payable quarterly in advance.

That all genuine out of pocket expenditure for travelling etc. be allowed the General Secretary, and that if he be called upon in the interests of the Union to devote his own time to their affairs he be remunerated for such services at the rate of five shillings per day in addition to travelling expenses.

That the Government be urged to take over the entire control of the gum industry in so far as the handling, sorting, and selling of such gum is concerned. That a central depot be established in Auckland for the receiving of such gum, that all private persons be prohibited from exporting gum, that all gum dug on private land shall pass through the Government depot, and that a royalty be chargeable on such gum.

That the New Zealand Worker be the official organ for the Auckland Gumdiggers' Union.

That the above resolution dealing with the admininistration of gum lands be sent on to the Premier and the members of the Legislature.

That for the purpose of collecting the subscriptions of the Union a collector be appointed in each camp by the Union exercising authority over such camp.

That the Government be urged to so amend the Act as to allow the Union to take up a lease of gum land in a syndicate form and work it with a view to testing the advantages of thorough co-operation.

(a) Only Unionists to become shareholders.
(b) All gum to be sold under the auspices of the Union.
(c) Their own servants employed.
(d) A reasonably small store instituted for their use.

NORTHERN ADVOCATE, 22 OCTOBER 1906

At Mr J. Trounson's bush at Siberia, near Kaihu, Messrs Lineham and Watson have a body of men engaged in tapping 2000 kauri trees, 600 of which have already yielded seven tons of pure white gum, valued at £65 per ton. The average yield per tree is about 84lbs., though in one record instance a tree yielded 203lbs.

EVENING POST, VOLUME XC, ISSUE 82, 5 OCTOBER 1915, PAGE 6

A plea for the segregation of all alien enemies was made by Dr. Thacker in the House of Representatives last night, during the debate on the Kauri-gum Industry Amendment Bill. The doctor said that it was all very well for the Prime Minister to make arrangements for the re-issuing of licenses to the gumdiggers, but what had struck him was that no mention had been made during the discussion of the fact that a very large number of these men were Austrians. He contended that they should be placed on one of the islands in the same manner as other alien enemies. Incidentally, he mentioned that he believed there were two soldiers in the Tauherenikau camp who could not speak a word of English, and who had learned their drill by coyping the other men. The Prime Minister, when replying, said that the attitude generally taken up was that a large number of the gumdiggers in the north were Austrians. The fact was, however, that they were Crotians and Dalmatians, and their sympathies were not with Germany, but with Russia. A large number of them had volunteered for service, and he had received a telegram to the effect that 200 of them were available for the front. That fact proved their loyalty. Also, in the way of contributions, they had been some of the most generous of the residents of New Zealand. On one occasion they had contributed £1000. At a carnival in Dargaville not long ago their queen occupied third place on the list. During the recess considerable sums of money had arrived from these gumdiggers, and it was only right that he should place this fact on record to remove the misapprehension that existed.

7
Gum Extraction Plants

As the gum became scarcer to obtain from the land some enterprising people set up factories to extract gum from Kauri swamp timber. It would appear from evidence found that this proved unprofitable and so was short lived.

Gum extraction near Glinks Gully

A factory was built by the Paeranga Company in 1922 to extract gum from the Kauri roots. The venture lasted a short while with the building destroyed by fire.

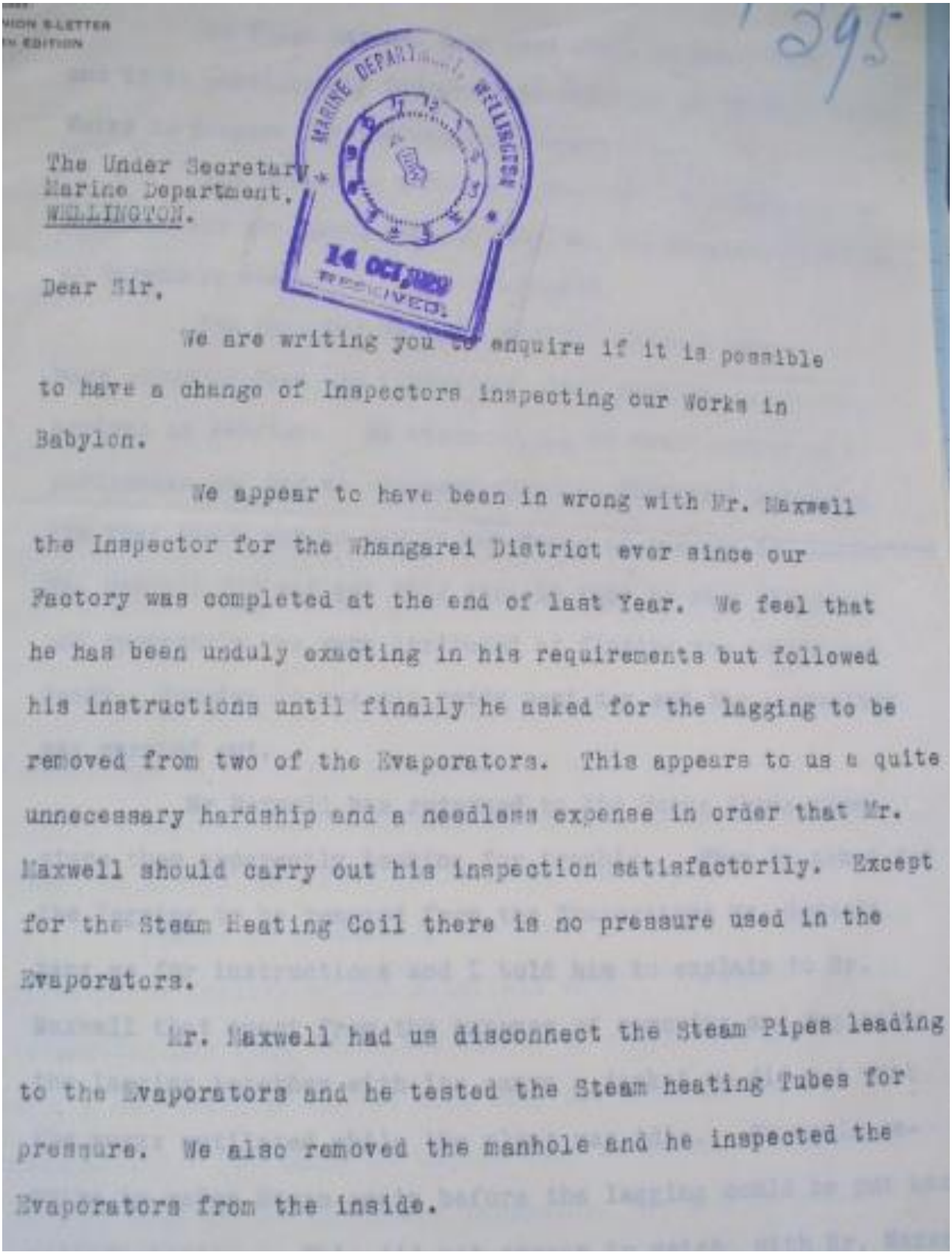
Gum extraction factory at Babylon

By reporter: A train from Dargaville took the party up past Babylon…

The sight of that Northern Wairoa day (1st November) 1928, that will remain longest in the travellers' memories was the Kauri forest of Trounson Park, where nearly a thousand acres of precious timber land, mostly Kauri, have been preserved as a national treasure, through the generosity of the late Mr. James Trounson and Government purchases. A train from Dargaville took the party up the Kaihu Valley line to Te Aranga a run of 22 miles, and from there it was a wonderful bush walk among the Kauri, many of them huge trees, the last of the primeval forest of the North. The visitors lunched in the stately bush, an interlude of delight. Returning down the Kaihu Valley the train pulled up at quaintly named Babylon — a name-relic of the days when the Maori had a craze for Biblical nomenclature—and saw A. C. McArthur's Ltd. new industry for the extraction of Kauri gum from timber in operation. The plant deals with Kauri swamp timber, pulverizing it and subjecting the shredded materials to the action of alcohol and other solvents. Finally the dissolved gum is separated by agents and produced in a commercial form. The first shipment of the company's product was recently sent overseas for varnish manufacturing purposes.

This plant was closed by the Marine Department about 1929 and it would appear it did not start up again as the following letters would indicate…

BELOW: THE PLANT AT BABYLON.



295

MARINE DEPARTMENT WELLINGTON
14 OCT 1930
RECEIVED

The Under Secretary,
Marine Department,
WELLINGTON.

Dear Sir,

We are writing you to enquire if it is possible to have a change of Inspectors inspecting our Works in Babylon.

We appear to have been in wrong with Mr. Maxwell the Inspector for the Whangarei District ever since our Factory was completed at the end of last Year. We feel that he has been unduly exacting in his requirements but followed his instructions until finally he asked for the lagging to be removed from two of the Evaporators. This appears to us a quite unnecessary hardship and a needless expense in order that Mr. Maxwell should carry out his inspection satisfactorily. Except for the Steam Heating Coil there is no pressure used in the Evaporators.

Mr. Maxwell had us disconnect the Steam Pipes leading to the Evaporators and he tested the Steam heating Tubes for pressure. We also removed the manhole and he inspected the Evaporators from the inside.

The Plant has not been used since December 1928 and it is particularly inconvenient bringing an Engineer to the Works to prepare for the several inspections.

The Writer is a Partner in Messrs. Marriner & Co's business and our Accountant at Babylon, Mr. Gossett, is acting as Caretaker while the works are closed.

The original trouble with Mr. Maxwell appears to have occurred from the Boiler not being ready on his first arrival in Babylon. He wrote saying he would arrive on a particular day and Mr. Gossett wired to Whangarei informing him that there was no one at the Works to prepare for inspection Mr. Maxwell did not get this wire in time to stop his visit and apparently was very irritated at finding the Boiler not ready. However it was got ready next day and the inspection was carried out.

Mr Maxwell has returned to the Works three times since then apparently looking for trouble. When he asked for the lagging to be removed from the Evaporators Mr. Gossett rang me for instructions and I told him to explain to Mr. Maxwell that apart from the expense of removing and replacing the lagging together with its canva s jacket we did not want the works mutilated while the plant was idle. We would require to raise Steam again before the lagging could be put back satisfactorily. This did not appear to weigh with Mr. Maxwell

as he then wrote virtually informing me that the Plant must remain closed until the inspection was carried out. At that time he knew we had written for the particulars and drawings respecting the Steel used in the Evaporators and these particulars have since come to hand and are enclosed herewith.

The early troubles with Mr. Maxwell were more in the nature of pin pricks but asking us to spend £30 to £40 removing and replacing the lagging is an absoulte hardship. He was given a chance to see the Evaporators before the lagging was put on but he rang us up and told us to carry on and he would inspect the place later.

In order to save trouble we recently tried to arrange a personal meeting with the Inspector but when the Writer, at considerable inconvenience, arrived in Babylon on September 11th he found the second wire from Mr. Maxwell awaiting him.

There is nothing in our Plant to leave a doubt about the first class quality of the materials used. The Plant is used for extracting gum from the waste timber by means of solvents. We are starting a new industry and we have many difficulties in getting the business moving. We think it unjust that we should be harassed the way we have been by the Machinery Inspector. We are as anxious as anyone that the Plant used should be safe and satisfactory.

Our gum is being tried out in different parts of the world at present and we are expecting to fix up contracts shortly

To The Under Secretary
Marine Dept.

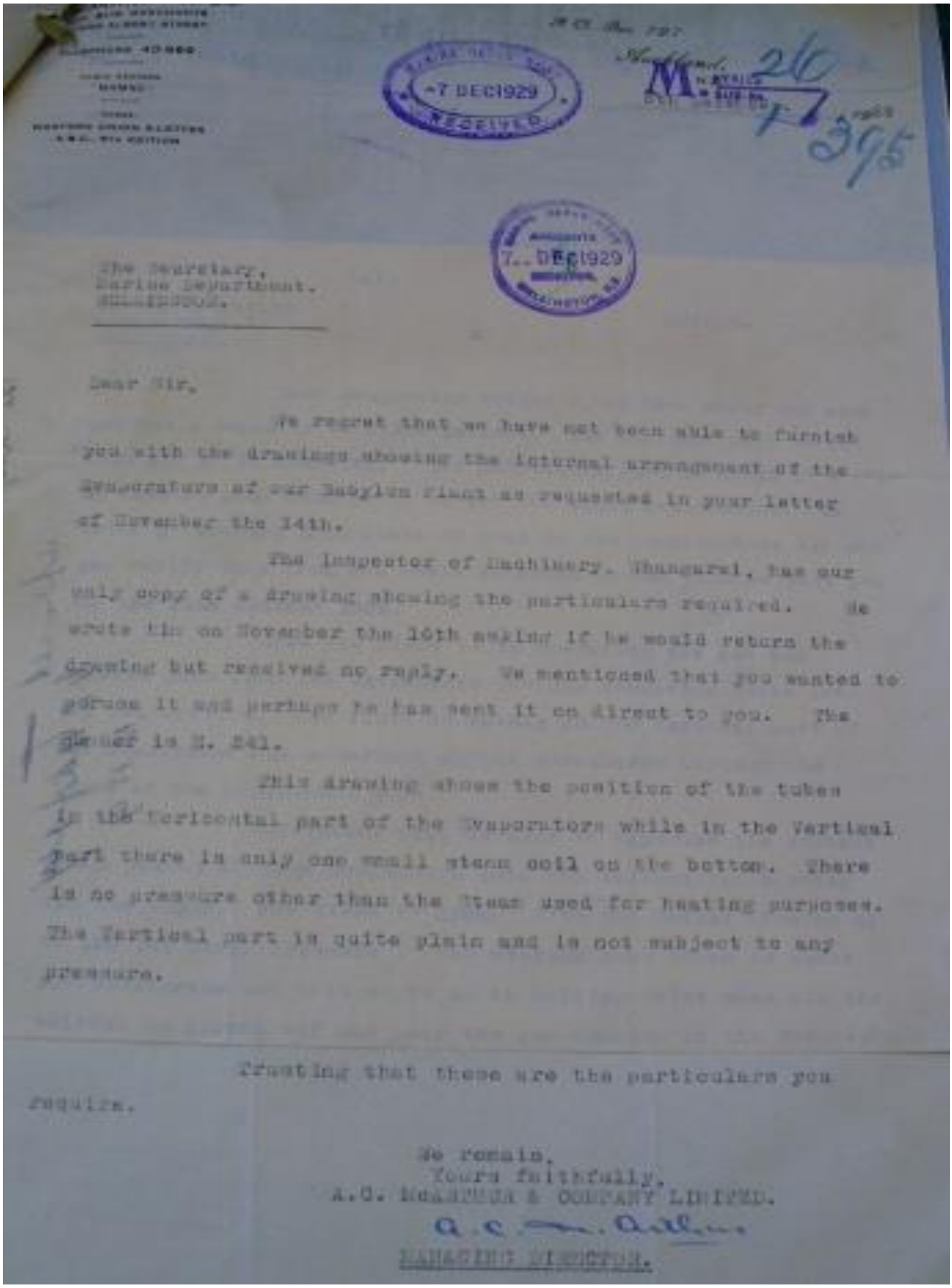
and to have steady running of the Factory. We wish to have the Machinery Department working with us rather than against us and the only satisfactory way seems to be to have a change of Inspectors.

We are quite willing to pay the extra expense of having an Inspector sent from Auckland in order to reach some finality about the business and in order to be allowed to proceed with our work in a rational manner.

Yours faithfully,
A.C. McARTHUR & CO; LTD:

a. c. Mc. Arthur

MANAGING DIRECTOR.



-7 DEC1929
RECEIVED

7 DEC 1929

The Secretary,
Marine Department.
SOUTHPORT.

Dear Sir,

We regret that we have not been able to furnish you with the drawings showing the internal arrangement of the evaporators at our Babylon plant as requested in your letter of November the 14th.

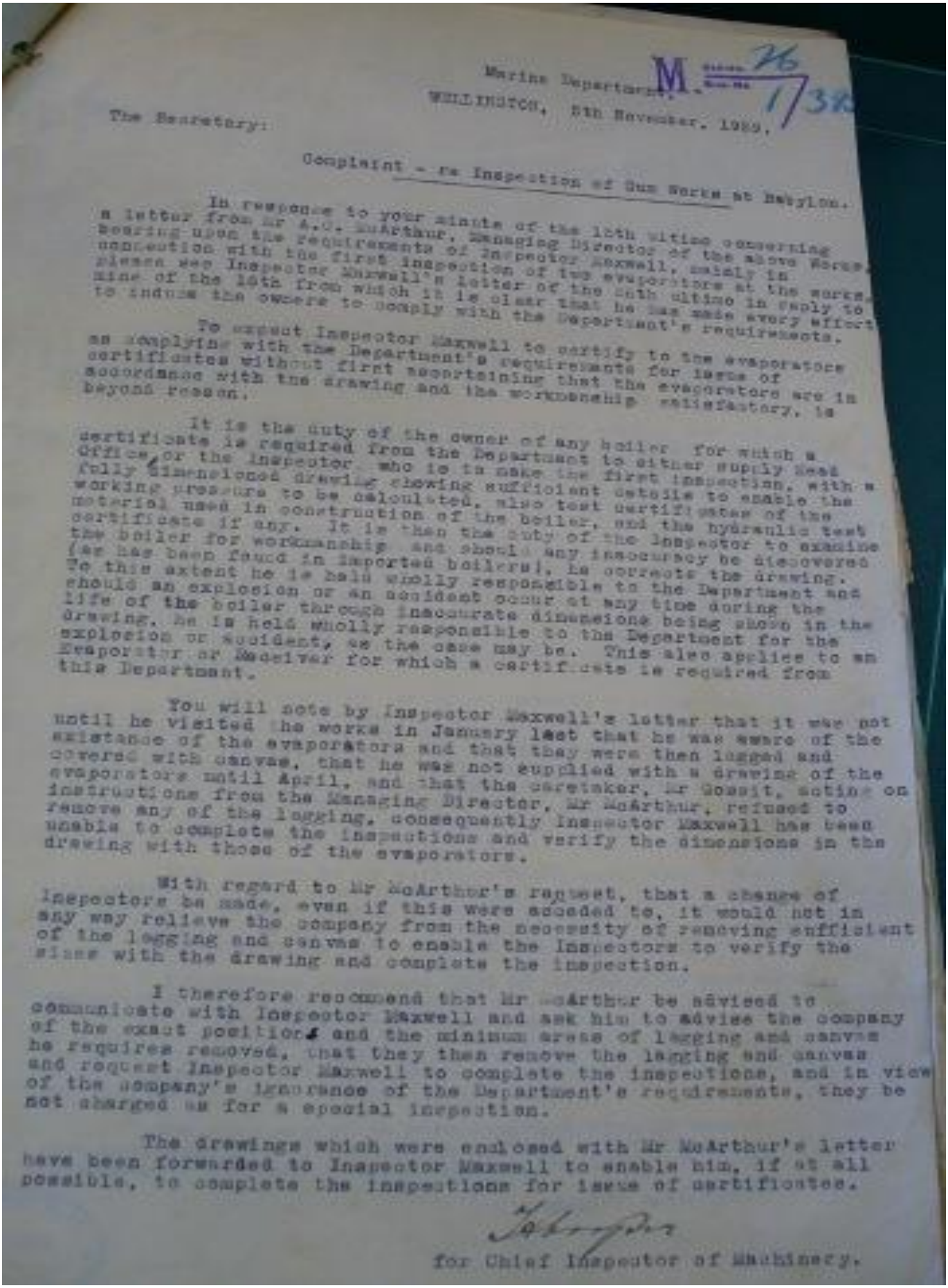
The Inspector of Machinery, Thangarei, has our only copy of a drawing showing the particulars required. He wrote us on November the 16th asking if he would return the drawing but received no reply. We mentioned that you wanted to peruse it and perhaps he has sent it on direct to you. The number is M. 241.

This drawing shows the position of the tubes in the horizontal part of the evaporators while in the Vertical part there is only one small steam coil on the bottom. There is no pressure other than the steam used for heating purposes. The Vertical part is quite plain and is not subject to any pressure.

Trusting that these are the particulars you require.

We remain,
Yours faithfully,
A.C. McARTHUR & COMPANY LIMITED.

MANAGING DIRECTOR.



Marine Department,
WELLINGTON, 8th November, 1929.

M. 36 1/38

The Secretary:

Complaint - re Inspection of Gum Works at Babylon.

In response to your minute of the 16th ultimo concerning a letter from Mr A.C. MacArthur, Managing Director of the above Works, bearing upon the requirements of Inspector Maxwell, mainly in connection with the first inspection of two evaporators at the works, please see Inspector Maxwell's letter of the 24th ultimo in reply to mine of the 16th from which it is clear that he has made every effort to induce the owners to comply with the Department's requirements.

To expect Inspector Maxwell to certify to the evaporators as complying with the Department's requirements for issue of certificates without first ascertaining that the evaporators are in accordance with the drawing and the workmanship satisfactory, is beyond reason.

It is the duty of the owner of any boiler for which a certificate is required from the Department to either supply Head Office or the Inspector who is to make the first inspection, with a fully dimensioned drawing showing sufficient details to enable the working pressure to be calculated, also test certificates of the material used in construction of the boiler, and the hydraulic test certificates if any. It is then the duty of the Inspector to examine the boiler for workmanship and should any inaccuracy be discovered (as has been found in imported boilers), he corrects the drawing. To this extent he is held wholly responsible to the Department and should an explosion or an accident occur at any time during the life of the boiler through inaccurate dimensions being shown in the drawing, he is held wholly responsible to the Department for the explosion or accident, as the case may be. This also applies to an Evaporator or Moediver for which a certificate is required from this Department.

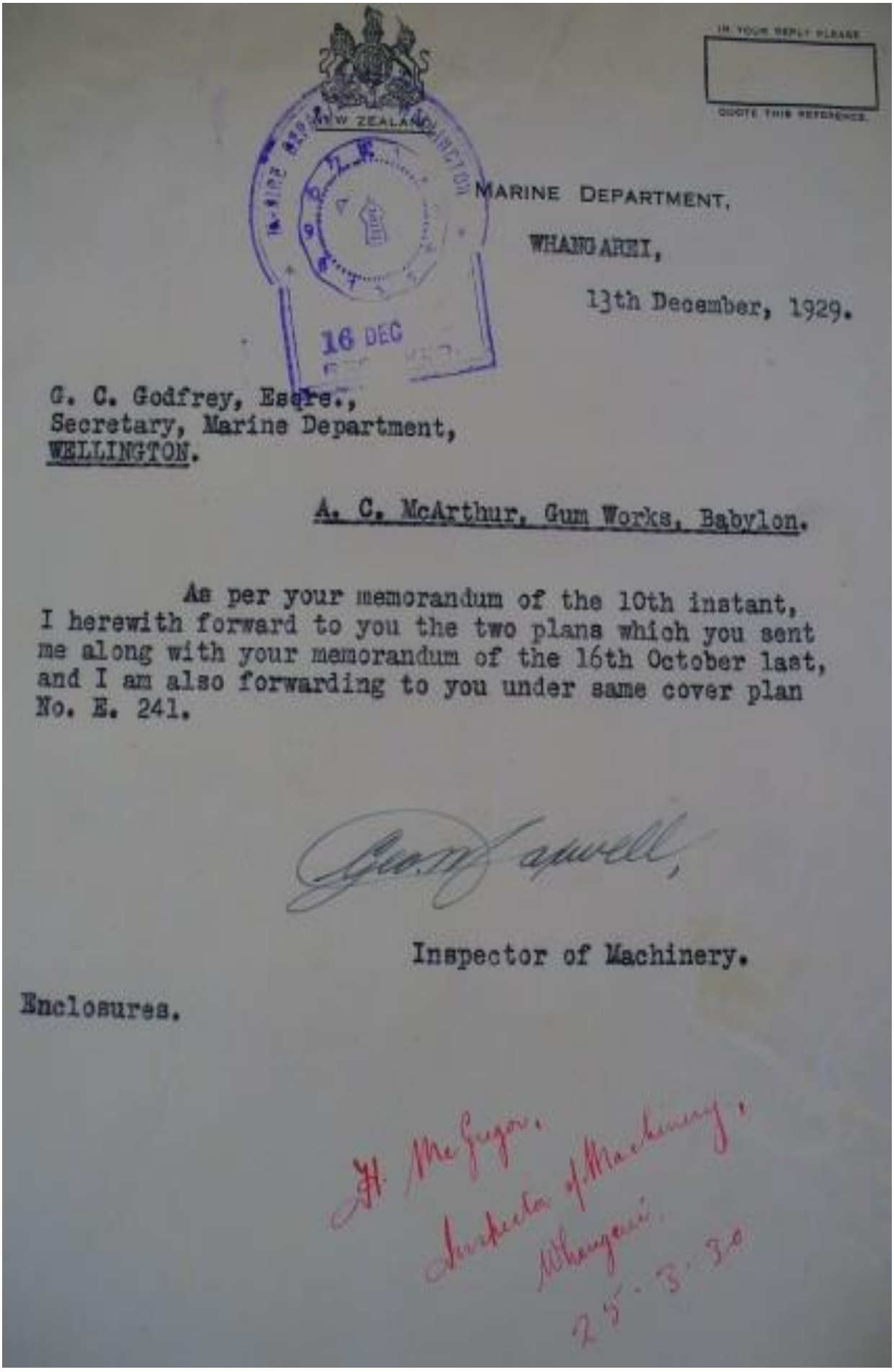
You will note by Inspector Maxwell's letter that it was not until he visited the works in January last that he was aware of the existence of the evaporators and that they were then lagged and covered with canvas, that he was not supplied with a drawing of the evaporators until April, and that the caretaker, Mr Gossit, acting on instructions from the Managing Director, Mr MacArthur, refused to remove any of the lagging, consequently Inspector Maxwell has been unable to complete the inspections and verify the dimensions in the drawing with those of the evaporators.

With regard to Mr MacArthur's request, that a change of Inspectors be made, even if this were acceded to, it would not in any way relieve the company from the necessity of removing sufficient of the lagging and canvas to enable the Inspectors to verify the plans with the drawing and complete the inspection.

I therefore recommend that Mr MacArthur be advised to communicate with Inspector Maxwell and ask him to advise the company of the exact positions and the minimum areas of lagging and canvas he requires removed, that they then remove the lagging and canvas and request Inspector Maxwell to complete the inspections, and in view of the company's ignorance of the Department's requirements, they be not charged as for a special inspection.

The drawings which were enclosed with Mr MacArthur's letter have been forwarded to Inspector Maxwell to enable him, if at all possible, to complete the inspections for issue of certificates.

for Chief Inspector of Machinery.



NEW ZEALAND

IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE QUOTE THIS REFERENCE.

MARINE DEPARTMENT,

WHANGAREI,

13th December, 1929.

16 DEC

G. C. Godfrey, Esqre.,
Secretary, Marine Department,
WELLINGTON.

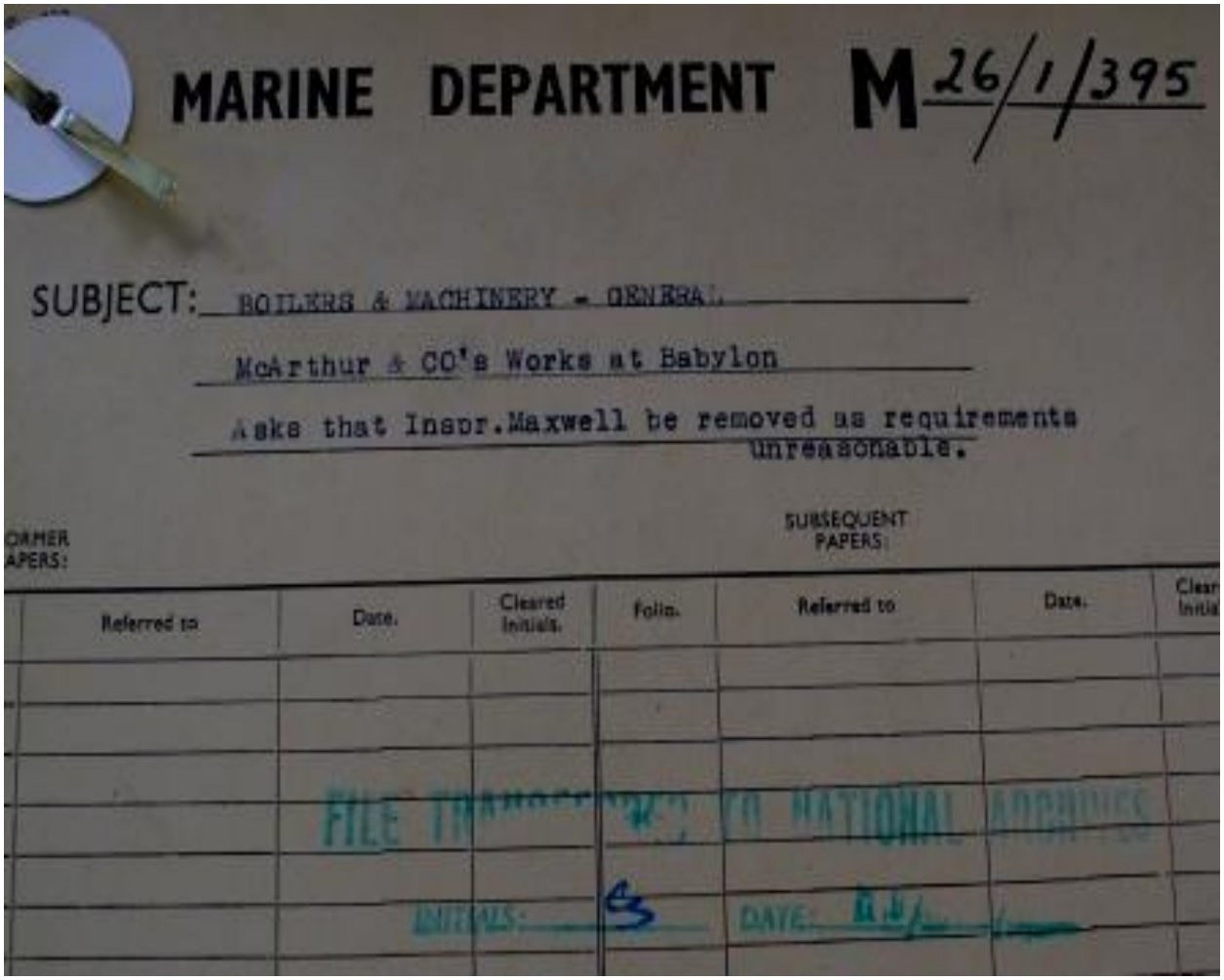
A. C. McArthur, Gum Works, Babylon.

As per your memorandum of the 10th instant, I herewith forward to you the two plans which you sent me along with your memorandum of the 16th October last, and I am also forwarding to you under same cover plan No. E. 241.

Inspector of Machinery.

Enclosures.

H. McGregor,
Inspector of Machinery,
Whangarei.
25-3-30



MARINE DEPARTMENT M 26/1/395

SUBJECT: BOILERS & MACHINERY - GENERAL

McArthur & CO's Works at Babylon

Asks that Inspr.Maxwell be removed as requirements unreasonable.

FORMER PAPERS:

SUBSEQUENT PAPERS:

Referred to	Date.	Cleared Initials.	Folio.	Referred to	Date.	Clear Initia

FILE TRANSFERRED TO NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INITIALS: [illegible] DATE: [illegible]

ABOVE AND BELOW: THE GUM EXTRACTION PLANT AT BABYLON.