

system. We got our tucker the same way. We had two men acting as cooks, and whatever was made in the swamp 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 previous Commissioners in 1893, and believe that they are correct, and I agree with their statements:—

“Luka Jurmovich: I am an Austrian, from Dalmatia, near Ragusa. I have been in New Zealand eight years on a previous occasion, and was then some years in Australia. I have been only in New Zealand three months now. I am now gum-digging on Mitchelson's ground. In my own country olives and a little wine and wheat is produced. I speak of my own immediate neighbourhood. The people generally pay one-fourth of their produce for rent. That is what they did sixteen years ago. The wages were about 1s. 10d. a day and ‘tucker’ on farms. In town it was about 2s. and find themselves. At gum-digging I earn nearly £2 a week, and it costs me about 16s. to live, including tobacco. I believe some of my countrymen would like to settle in the colony if they had money, but the land here is not good when the gum is out of it. I know of two or three who have their wives with them. I believe those who have come here have come quite voluntarily, and some sold their property to come.”

“Peter Covecic: I am an Austrian, from Dalmatia. This is the second time I have been in New Zealand. The first time was in 1885, when I was thirteen months in the colony, engaged in gum-digging. I came direct from Home to New Zealand. I afterwards went to Australia, and came here twelve months ago. I keep a store at Tikonui, and do some gum-digging as well. I am a single man. I cannot earn more than 18s. to £1 3s. a week at gum-digging. In the summer it is better. At Home I was a stonemason, at which I could earn 3s. a day and ‘tucker.’ For digging on a farm a man would get 1s. 10d. or 2s. a day and ‘tucker.’ It costs 5s. a week for board. Here it costs 12s. or 13s. for food. The work at Home is not constant, and the people often have very hard times in winter, which is often very severe. My countrymen in the colony consist of seafaring men, fishermen, and vine- and olive-cultivators. Some have small holdings from  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre to 3 acres, and some from 5 to 50 acres. They have all to do three years of military service. I think a good many of the young unmarried men would like to settle in the colony if they had a little money, but it is not easy to settle in this colony. I believe the success of some at a sweep had a good deal to do with the arrival of the last batch of Austrians a few months ago. The people were induced by seeing so much money brought Home. There is no truth in the statement that a large number is coming out. I know that by my Home papers, which say nothing of such a movement. It is only the colonial papers that say so. 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.”

“Giovani Bradicic: I come from Istria, close to Trieste. I left home in 1888, and came to Victoria. I came to New Zealand about eight months ago, and am now gum-digging on Harding's ground. I was a sailor from eleven years old, and did one year's service in the army. The people in my country cultivate vines, olives, and fruits. I do not think the soil here in the gumfields is good enough for olives. I make £2 a week at gum-digging, and it costs me 10s. or 12s. for provisions. I do not intend to return Home. I have not been molested in any way by the British. I hope to make a little money and settle somewhere. Where I come from the people mostly live on their own holdings, which are from 10 to 100 acres.”

“Antonio Gasparich: I am from Trieste, and am of the Italian race. I came to New Zealand fourteen years ago, and have been in this district almost ever since. I left home at thirteen. I have dug gum for two years, and have been employed by Mitchelson Brothers in various ways. I am now gum-digging. I am married. I have barely made ‘tucker’ lately at the digging. The weather has been very bad for it. 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.”

Many of my countrymen cannot be expected to settle here because they are married men, with five or six children, and to bring a family out here would cost about £200, and sending £200 Home would be enough to keep them for five or six years. If some of my countrymen could get good land offered to them by the Government, such as that at Kaihu Valley, they would jump at the chance of bringing their families out here. I think it would be a very good idea if pamphlets explaining the land-laws in the Dalmatian dialect were circulated amongst my countrymen, as it would lead to a good many settling on the land. They can all read and write. Many of those who had one child or so would settle here. If the same opportunity had been given to my countrymen as was given to the Maungatu settlers they would have made a better job of it. None would have left the place, and, as for myself, I am sure that if an Englishman had been on my section and without a road he would not have stayed on it up to the present. As regards the savings of my countrymen, taking good and poor workers together, I think they can lay by at least £1 a week, which in the case of those who did not remain in the colony is sent Home to their friends.

*Peter Skakandich, Nicolas Skakandich, Nicolas Matutavii, and John Bilush:* Jacob Radatich was sworn in as interpreter, and said,—Three of them are labourers and one a stonemason. They could not make a living at Home, and came to New Zealand, where they could. They saw the condition of the market in New Zealand through the labour papers in their own country. They came here two years ago. They worked first on the Melbourne Lease, and now on Mitchelson's flax-swamp. When they started on Melbourne Lease they were charged no royalty. Three of them got three sacks of gum in two months, for which they (storekeeper) gave them “tucker,” and they had to pay £3 extra to square the account. When they came to Mitchelson's Lease sometimes they were making 10s., 15s., and £1, and sometimes only “tucker.” They were satisfied with the price they got for their gum. As regards the price of provisions, they were rather higher than if they were working on Government gum-lands and could buy their stores where they liked. They cannot read the prices of gum in the papers, and they do not know what the market price is. They had a 30 lb. spring-balance to weigh their gum with. They never found a difference between their