

Mint.

This Commission recommends to favorable consideration the advisability of urging upon the Colonial Legislature the establishment in this Colony of a branch of the Imperial Mint. They are aware that the gold procured in the Colony differs in quality, not only in districts, but in gullies, yet the miners receive a uniform price. A mint would remedy this evil, and secure to the producers of the precious metal the actual value as established by the Imperial Government, and all civilized nations. They are aware that the establishment of a mint would cost a large sum of money in the first instance, and it would take a number of years before the mint could be brought into operation; they, therefore, recommend, in the meantime, to favorable consideration the desirability of the establishment of an assay and melting office in the Province, where miners and others could bring gold, for the purpose of being melted and assayed, and the Government could then undertake to forward the gold to the neighbouring colonies for coinage,—the shipper paying all expenses, and the Government guaranteeing payment by a written document.

This system, your Commissioners beg to state, is in existence in America where the gold is received and melted at the Government assay office at New York, and coined at Philadelphia.

In conclusion, your Commissioners desire to state that the large scope of the enquiry entrusted to them, and the limited time at their disposal, have necessarily rendered their report less complete than they could have wished, and it has been found impracticable to comprise within it, all the various points which have arisen during their sittings. Your Commissioners beg therefore to refer to the various resolutions, recorded in the minutes of their proceedings, for further elucidation of their report; and they recommend that these should be printed and attached to the report, and that copies should be sent to the members of the General Assembly and Superintendents of the Provinces.

JOHN MOUAT, Chairman.
 THOMAS LUTHER SHEPHERD, M.H.R.
 J. B. BRADSHAW, M.H.R.
 CHARLES F. ROBERTS.
 JOHN THOMAS GWYNNE.
 JOHN KINASTON.
 JAMES RITCHIE.
 WILLIAM HENDERSON.
 JAMES MARSHALL.
 JAMES WATSON.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER ON GOLD FIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

(Laid on the table of the Otago Provincial Council, June 5, 1871.)

The subject of water supply upon the Gold Fields of Otago having been referred to me by the Executive Government, with the object that I should ascertain in what direction advantage might be taken of the provisions of the "Public Works and Immigration Act, 1870," I desire, before suggesting the alternative systems under which Government assistance might rationally be applied to the construction of public works; and indicating in detail the works which may practically be effected—to remark that, geographically and physically, the circumstances of the Otago Gold Fields preclude the possibility of any general application of the scheme as developed in Part III. of the Act, the proposed subsidy being strictly confined to "works for supplying water," while no provision is made for the construction of sludge channels in deep ground, or the rendering auriferous country accessible by means of roads and tracks. I would, therefore, urge upon the Government the expediency of recommending to the General Assembly such modification of the law, as may render this and future subsidies available for the general encouragement of mining enterprise, to be appropriated *pro rata* to the population in the several districts according to their special requirements.

It will be seen by the evidence attached, that this view is borne out by skilled and intelligent witnesses, residing in the Mount Ida and Wakatipu Districts; in which the mere supply of water is not the grave *desideratum*, but where enterprise is cramped and population retarded—in the one case by the want of capital to construct large works, equally important in mining with "water races and reservoirs;" and in the other by the impossibility, owing to the want of communication, of developing the higher auriferous land.

The printed questions hereto annexed, and marked A, show the basis upon which the investigation committed to me was conducted, and the whole of the evidence, oral and literal, ranges itself under the eight heads there indicated. The digest appended, therefore, affords in itself an intelligible and complete Report as to the opinions expressed by witnesses examined, who, I may say, include intelligent men of all classes upon the Gold Fields. It will be observed that I did not confine my inquiries to the mere local aspect of the scheme—the works urgent, desirable, or possible in the several districts—but took a far wider range, and endeavoured to obtain (and I think have succeeded in obtaining) the views of the miners upon the policy of the measure itself; whether it is desirable to assist mining enterprise by subsidies; and if so, in what way such subsidies should be applied, and the works, if constructed by Government, managed and maintained; and whether it would be practicable, where labor is scarce, to obtain the assistance of the miners themselves in the construction of the works, sustenance money only being paid and the balance, at the ordinary rate of wages, taken out in water.

It will be seen that little or no difference of opinion exists upon the question of principle, whether or not mining enterprise should be subsidised by the Government. Public meetings at Clyde, Cromwell,