

1879.

## NEW ZEALAND.

## CONTROL AND INSPECTION OF MINES,

(REPORT ON.)

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.*

To the Hon. WILLIAM GISBORNE, Minister of Mines.

SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 18th July, 1879.

I have the honor to forward for your information the following report upon the official control and inspection of Mines under “The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874,” which was brought into force concurrently with my taking charge of this branch of the Mines Department.

I have, &amp;c.,

OLIVER WAKEFIELD,  
Under-Secretary for Mines.

## REPORT.

## ACT PROCLAIMED IN FORCE, AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

On the 26th of February last, I took occasion to submit for the consideration of the Government, with reference to the accident (referred to hereafter) which had then recently occurred at Kaitangata, and in view of progress being made in various parts of the colony towards developing coal resources, whether the time had not arrived for initiating a plan for bringing coal mines and workings definitely under official control and inspection, suggesting that “The Regulation of Mines Act, 1874,” might at once be brought into general operation, and one or more inspectors appointed, not necessarily at first to exercise all the powers and duties provided for by the Act, but generally to insist upon proper provisions for safety and order being established, and to report upon all the coal mines in the colony, so that the Government might be in a position to see how far the Act would work satisfactorily, and if necessary, to introduce a comprehensive amended measure for dealing with this question in detail.

Although, when I wrote my memorandum containing these suggestions, I was unaware that any other department was interested in this question, I found, upon enquiry, that Dr. Hector, Director of Geological Surveys, had also moved in this matter—as will be seen by correspondence appended to this Report—and urged that action should be taken to put the Act into force. Immediate effect was accordingly given to these recommendations by the issue of a proclamation upon the 28th of February (published in the *New Zealand Gazette* of the same date), bringing “The Regulations of Mines Act, 1874,” into force in all the Provincial Districts in the colony.

At the same time, the administration of the Act was definitely placed under the Mines Department as the proper office to have charge of such business; and on the 11th of March following, Mr. S. H. Cox and Mr. G. J. Binns (who had respectively held appointments as Inspector of Mines and Coal Viewer, but with no legal authority to enforce the observance of regulations) were appointed Inspectors of Mines under the Act, Mr. Binn’s services being entirely transferred to the Mines Department, and arrangements being made for Mr. Cox to give to the department a fair proportion of his time, according to the salary paid to him for the work of inspecting, he being chiefly engaged with his duties as Assistant Geologist. Mr. J. M. McLaren, Inspector of Mines under “The Gold Mining Districts Act, 1873,” for the Hauraki Gold Mining District, has recently also been appointed an Inspector under “The Regulations of Mines Act, 1874,” so that his services may be available in the Northern districts, or elsewhere, as occasion may require.