

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE GOLD FIELDS OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 3rd August, 1869.

"That it is desirable that the Government should cause to be laid upon the table of this House, during each session, a report embodying a general account of the present condition of the gold fields of the colony, their advancement or otherwise during the preceding year, and their probable prospects; together with particulars showing the average price of provisions during the year on each gold field, the rate of wages, estimated population, and such other information as would afford a comprehensive idea of the general condition of the mining interest in the colony; and that His Excellency be requested to forward a copy of such report to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies."—(*Mr. W. H. Harrison.*)

To the Hon. WILLIAM GISBORNE, Minister of Mines.

Secretary for Gold Fields' Office,

Wellington, 20th August, 1879.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward the annual report on the gold fields. In the Appendix will be found the Wardens' reports on the several mining districts, together with statistical information tabulated in the same order as in previous reports. There are also reports in the Appendix from the managers of the Government water-races.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MCKERROW,

Secretary for Gold Fields.

REPORT.

THE history of the gold fields during the past year reveals encouraging features of progress in several districts; but, generally speaking, there has been a considerable falling off in the average returns for the whole colony. This is most marked in the Customs returns of the quantity of gold exported. They afford the most reliable approximation to the

YIELD OF GOLD.

In last year's report, 18,000 oz. was taken as the trade estimate of what was used up in the colony for the twelve months: this year the trade estimate is considerably less. Leaving this out of account, and comparing the export returns for similar periods, they are as follow:—

	1877.		1878.		Decrease.		Increase.	
	Oz.	Value.	Oz.	Value.	Oz.	Value.	Oz.	Value.
Auckland ...	99,081	£403,627	55,982	£220,454	43,099	£183,173	...	...
Marlborough...	870	3,197	404	1,617	466	1,580	...	...
Nelson ...	602	2,300	4,463	17,223	...	...	3,861	£14,923
West Coast ...	157,963	631,615	144,634	578,508	13,329	53,107	...	...
Otago ...	113,169	455,341	105,003	422,277	8,166	33,064	...	...
	371,685	£1,496,080	310,486	£1,240,079	65,060	£270,924	3,861	£14,923
					3,861	14,923		
Decrease for 1878 ...	...	...	...	...	61,199	£256,001		

Comparison of three-months periods ending 31st March, 1878 and 1879:—

	1878.		1879.		Decrease.		Increase.	
	Oz.	Value.	Oz.	Value.	Oz.	Value.	Oz.	Value.
Auckland ...	15,446	£61,246	9,567	£38,108	5,879	£23,138	...	...
Marlborough...	...	...	560	2,240	...	...	560	£2,240
Nelson ...	1,139	4,276	1,193	4,518	...	...	54	242
West Coast ...	47,361	189,418	41,764	167,035	5,597	22,383	...	...
Otago ...	38,684	156,544	21,616	85,592	17,068	70,952	...	...
	102,630	£411,484	74,700	£297,493	28,544	£116,473	614	£2,482
					614	2,482		
Decrease for three months ended 31st March, 1879 ...					27,930	£113,991		