

1880.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE GOLD FIELDS OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON).

Return to an Order of 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.*)

Secretary for Gold Fields’ Office,
Wellington, 7th August, 1880.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward the general report on the gold fields for the twelve months ended the 31st March, 1880, together with the detailed reports of the Wardens for their several districts, and statistical information tabulated in the same form as in previous reports. There are also appended reports from the Inspector of Mines, Thames Gold Field, and from the managers of water-races.

The preparation of this report has been greatly delayed awaiting the returns from one important mining district.

The Hon. Richard Oliver,
Minister of Mines.

I have, &c.,
JAMES MCKERROW,
Secretary for Gold Fields.

REPORT.

THE prospects of the New Zealand gold fields are more hopeful at present than they have been for many years past. The quartz-mining districts, which were at a low ebb twelve months ago, are now greatly revived, and in alluvial mining districts fresh discoveries have been and still are being made. There is such abundant evidence of the permanence of the gold fields that they may be relied on for many years to furnish one of the principle staple exports of the country. As will be seen by a statement to follow, gold to the value of nearly £37,000,000 sterling has been exported since 1857, and the annual export for the last few years has been considerably over £1,000,000. The return for the year 1879 is less than for any of the years since the famous discovery at Tuapeka, Otago, in 1861; but the increase in the returns for the first quarter of 1880, and for the six months ended the 30th June last, would seem to indicate that for a time at least the tide has turned. The Customhouse returns of gold entered for payment of duty furnish the nearest approximation to the actual produce of the colony. In adopting them, there is the satisfaction of knowing that the quantities cannot be over-stated, for no account is taken of the gold used up by the jewellers, nor of what may be smuggled out of the country. Relying solely, then, on the Customs