

1882.

NEW ZEALAND.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENCOURAGEMENT OF MINING
INDUSTRY, AND AMENDMENTS OF MINING LAWS,

BY MEMBERS REPRESENTING GOLD FIELDS DISTRICTS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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

SIR,—

Wellington, 12th June, 1882.

I have the honor to forward, for your information, suggestions in regard to the better encouragement of the gold-mining industry, which have been this day adopted in a full meeting of members representing gold-mining districts.

Further suggestions in reference to the reduction of taxation, and the unification and amendment of mining laws, will be shortly submitted for your consideration.

I have, &c.,

C. DE LAUTOUR,

Chairman of Meeting.

The Hon. the Minister of Mines.

Encouragement to Mining Industry.

THE gold fields members have unanimously resolved that,—

1. Prospecting should be encouraged by grants-in-aid upon capital invested or labour employed, in the latter case whether the prospecting party has a fund in hand or not. The working of inferior auriferous ground, and of country requiring special cost or labour for its development, should be encouraged by the granting of extended claims on easy terms, subject to equitable conditions as to capital invested and labour employed, so as effectually to check the locking-up—"shepherding"—of mining country.

2. In addition to the construction of water-races and sludge-channels wholly undertaken by the Government, water-races and other works undertaken by private enterprise, should, under exceptional circumstances of difficulty, be subsidized by the State, and this whether such works are carried on by capital and labour, or by labour only.

3. Sufficient sets of diamond-drills, with a supply of extra diamonds to replace any that may be broken, are required for the proper development of the gold fields. Separate sets should be provided for the Auckland, Westland, and Otago Gold Fields. They should be placed at the disposal of the County Councils, for use within their respective districts. The same remarks apply to rock-boring apparatus.

4. The cutting and formation of tracks on or to gold fields should be wholly undertaken or largely aided by the Government, especially in the case of newly-discovered workings. The construction of roads to timber-forests should also, when required, be wholly undertaken or largely aided by the Government.

5. Lands known to be auriferous should be permanently reserved from sale, and land believed to be auriferous should, on sufficient evidence, be temporarily reserved; but provision should, in respect of all such reserves, be made for the temporary occupation and utilization of the surface.

C. DE LAUTOUR,

Chairman of Meeting.

Second Statement of Suggestions, submitted to the Hon. the Minister of Mines by the Members representing Gold Fields Districts, 19th June, 1882.

THE gold fields members recommend that the mining laws of the colony shall be codified and made uniform throughout the colony. In considering existing mining laws for the purposes of consolidation, the following matters should have special consideration:—

1. That all fees and charges under the Act should be uniform.

2. That the procedure of both the administrative and judicial departments of the Wardens' Courts should be simplified and shortened.

3. That the reduction of officers in the Mines Department has been carried too far, and additional officers should be appointed.

4. That, in codification of mining laws, the special facilities granted to applicants for agricultural leases, prospecting licenses, and mining leases, under the Lands Act, 1877, in the Provincial District of Nelson, should be retained.

5. That further provision be made for the draining of mines of adjacent claims, to facilitate the working through adjoining claims or leases.

6. That provision be made for tunnelling through adjoining claims or leases.

7. That, until land be tested, prospecting licenses should be alone granted, in order to prevent the locking-up of auriferous country.

8. That the cancellation of leases should in all ordinary cases be effected upon breach of covenant, and the procedure should be simplified.

9. That cancellation should be so announced locally as to give to the public an equal chance of taking up the ground subsequent thereto.

10. That the scale of fees should be revised, and that miners' rights, business licenses, and other charges should be lowered, unless the gold duty be abolished or materially reduced.

11. That rural land adjacent to mining townships or mining claims should, where practicable, be reserved from sale, in order to provide commonage rights to the inhabitants.

12. That, in hearing and granting applications for rights authorized under "The Mines Act, 1877," or regulations to be granted, in cases where objections are lodged, a right of rehearing should be given to either applicant or objector. Such rehearing to be determined by the Warden, sitting with Assessors, as provided in the Mines Act, and the costs to be determined in like manner as provided in the case of suits determined in the Warden's Court.

13. That, in the case of reserves made under the provision of the Public Works Act for works on gold fields, where it is proved that such lands are auriferous, then in such cases the Warden should have jurisdiction over such reserves, in so far as granting such rights and determining suits, subject to the approval of the Minister for Public Works, as are contemplated and provided for by "The Mines Act, 1877."

C. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman of Meeting.