

schools last year amounted to £1,392, and the total expenditure since their inauguration six years ago has been £12,986, of this amount £3,000 was given towards the School of Mines in connection with the University of Otago. Arrangements were formerly made that £500 would be given to the University of Otago, on condition that Professor Ulrich's services would be placed at the disposal of the Government during the six months' vacation to examine any mineral lodes, auriferous drift, or coal-bearing lands in whatever portion of the colony his services might be required, but owing to an accident he met with many years ago he cannot travel about in very rough country, consequently his services could not be utilised to any great extent. The University Council have recently appointed a lecturer in metallurgy, which may be the means of a larger number of students attending lectures in connection with mining, and cause more attention to be given to the proper treatment of metalliferous ores.

Negotiations will shortly be entered into with the Chancellor with the object of getting night classes held at the School of Mines in connection with the University of Otago, where similar subjects will be taught as at the Thames school, and candidates prepared for mine-managers' examinations; also that assays of any mineral or metalliferous ore from Otago and Southland be made on the same terms as that charged at the other schools of mines. If this can be carried out, a subsidy will be granted.

MINING LEGISLATION.

During the recess I had three Bills prepared which directly affect the mining industry in this colony. These were the Promoters' and Directors' Liability Bill, the Mining Bill, and the Coal-mines Bill.

The Promoters' and Directors' Liability Bill has passed both branches of the Legislature, and it cannot fail to produce a wholesome effect in the constitution of mining companies in the future, as it makes directors, promoters, and other persons responsible for the statements set forth in any prospectuses or notices inviting persons to subscribe for shares or in debentures or debenture stock of a proposed company.

The Mining Bill, whilst consolidating the existing Acts, holds out further inducements for the investment of capital, and for the stability of such capital when invested in mining enterprises. Amongst other things, provisions are made for the reduction of rent, compulsory working of claims, increased area of land held under occupation license, proclamation of the lower portions only of rivers for tailing-channels, giving greater security to individuals entering into mining partnership, the granting of second-class certificates to mining managers, and also the issue of service certificates without examination under prescribed conditions.

The reduction of rent, security of tenure, together with compulsory working of claims, will insure mining being carried on more energetically, thus affording greater employment of labour.

The increased area proposed to be held under occupation license will enable miners to make comfortable homes for themselves, and afford a means of employment when not engaged in mining. For instance, in many parts of the colony fruit-growing might be made a profitable industry, whilst everywhere crops of other produce could be raised, or the land utilised for grazing.

The proclamation of the lower portions of the rivers only will, in many instances, provide all that is necessary for the discharge of tailings, whilst the amounts of compensation payable will be considerably reduced.

The clause in the Bill relating to mining partnership gives greater facilities to persons to combine together to work mining properties, each member having a lien on the partnership property for the amounts of the debts due to creditors, and for any money advanced by him, and in the event of any partner disposing of his interest, which he can do without dissolving the partnership, the purchaser takes the share or interest, subject to existing liens. Further, if any partner deserts or abandons his share or interest for a period of sixty days, the other partners may institute proceedings to be put in possession of such abandoned share or interest.

As it has been found to be a hardship on many persons who, from long experience, were competent to undertake the management of mines to compel them to pass examination, it is proposed to have two grades of mine-managers' certificates, and also to issue service certificates without examination to any person of good repute who has had not less than seven years practical experience in underground workings, and on the production of a certificate from the Inspector of Mines that he is qualified to take charge of a mine,