

1895.

NEW ZEALAND.

## GOLDFIELDS AND MINES COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF, ON THE PETITION OF JAMES HESSON, TOGETHER WITH PETITION).

*Report brought up 16th August, and ordered to be printed, together with Petition,  
18th September, 1895.*

## REPORT.

No. 213.—Petition of JAMES HESSON, of Bald Hill Flat, Vincent County, Miner.

PETITIONER prays that there may be issued to him an occupation license of 100 acres of a mining reserve, upon which he has erected a homestead, outhouses, and fences, planted hundreds of trees, expended large sums of money, and where he and his family have resided for twenty years.

The Committee have the honour to report that, having heard and carefully considered the subject-matter of the petition of James Hesson, they are strongly and unanimously of opinion that his case is one of peculiar hardship; that in their judgment no reason exists against the application being immediately granted; and that, if the law does not provide for this being done, legislation should be passed during the present session to deal with this and similar cases.

16th August, 1895.

JAMES MCGOWAN,  
Chairman.

## PETITION.

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

YOUR memorialist begs to bring before your notice the desirability of making some provision this session for the granting of occupation licenses to *bonâ fide* miners on Crown lands. The Act gives the miner the privilege of applying for such license at a great expense, but does not give a guarantee for the granting of same. Your memorialist thinks that some concession should be made to miners who have resided in a district from twenty to thirty years, bringing up large families, as in my case, who having had the misfortune to settle on a mining reserve, which is now taken from me for mining purposes. The following is a statement of my case:—

I made an application to the Waste Lands Board about two years ago for an occupation license for 100 acres on Mr. Elliott's run, which application stood in abeyance until two months ago, when I reapplied, and the application was declined, for reasons unknown to me. Some time prior to my last application I visited Wellington, and interviewed the Hon. Mr. Seddon and Mr. McKenzie, Minister of Lands, who gave every encouragement to hope for the granting of my application; and I would beg that the matter be reconsidered.

I am a *bonâ fide* miner, having been mining in the district for over thirty years. I took up my residence in the immediate vicinity of the ground applied for twenty years ago, within an hour and a half's walk of the said ground, built my homestead, erected fences and outhouses, planted hundreds of trees, and now I am compelled to leave, which renders me in a manner homeless. Certainly, the ground I occupied was a mining reserve, and it is now taken up for mining purposes, which leaves me with house-room only.

I have expended over £400 in mining ventures in the immediate locality in water-races and elevating claims myself, which do not always turn out remunerative; but, by having land and a little stock combined with the mining, I can make a comfortable home for my family. There are ten of a family in my house, for whom I have to provide throughout the year, gold or no gold; and I may further state that I am compelled to pay £500 per year for labour to keep my mining property valid within the Mines Act, and to represent my own interest.

I may state that I had the misfortune to receive serious injuries through a powder explosion some years ago, which unfits me for hard work, and is a great drawback to me.

Gentlemen, if you take into consideration the fact that I have spent thirty years of my life in the district, mining twenty years in the immediate locality; that I am now turned out of a home which I have occupied for twenty years, without a penny of compensation; and the amount of money I have expended in mining; my large family, and my not being able to do hard work through a misfortune; and further, that the occupation, if granted, would not affect any person in particular, I am sure you will see your way to grant my request.

I am informed that the run in question exceeds 30,000 acres in extent, with about eleven miles of frontage to the main road, and only one occupation license on it.

The present runholder, Mr. Elliott, has made no improvements, with the exception of a temporary sheep-yard on Section 2, which has been done since my application was made, and the cost of which would not exceed £8.

Further, Mr. Elliott holds 1,100 acres of freehold, and objects to my getting 100 acres for a homestead. I actually employ more labour and at a bigger outlay, individually, than Mr. Elliott, who holds the 30,000 acres.

It was suggested that I should take up Section 3, the northern boundary of Mr. Elliott's run, instead of the ground I applied for ; but this section has been proved to be payably auriferous, two others and myself having expended over £300 in mining plant, which has been in work on the same section.

The total cost of applying for the 100 acres in question has been about £40, which is ruinous to miners who are inclined to settle in the country.

Hoping, gentlemen, that you will give this matter your earliest consideration, for the benefit of myself and the whole of the mining community,

And your memorialist will ever pray.

JAMES HESSON,  
Bald Hill Flat, Vincent County.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, nil ; printing (1,200 copies), £1.

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By Authority: SAMUEL COSTALL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1895.

*Price, 3d.]*