

1904.

NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT.

BY THE HON. JAMES MCGOWAN, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

I again present my annual Statement to Parliament, and, in doing so, am pleased to be in a position to remark upon the continued expansion of the mining industry of New Zealand. Gauged by the returns of output and value, the production of minerals (including kauri-gum) during last year shows that progress is still satisfactory. In my last Statement, attention was drawn to the fact that for the year 1902 the gross value of minerals raised was over a quarter of a million sterling in excess of that of the previous year; and now a still further increase is to be noted for the year 1903, amounting to £309,032 over the value of minerals produced during the year 1902. Large as this advanced value certainly is, a greater increase would have been recorded had it not been for the fact that dredging and hydraulic-mining operations in Otago were seriously interfered with, owing to snowstorms and severe frosts during last winter, and the consequent floods which followed the thaw.

MINERAL PRODUCTION.

The annexed Table No. 1 shows the quantity and value of gold, silver, and other minerals (including kauri-gum) exported during the year ending the 31st December, 1903, and also the quantity of native coal consumed in the colony during the same period. The amount of gold entered for export was 533,314 oz., valued at £2,037,831, and of silver, 911,914 oz., valued at £91,497, making a total value of gold and silver amounting to £2,129,328, this being an increase of £105,920 as compared with the export returns for the previous year.

Other minerals, including coal, lignite, and kauri-gum, represent a value of £1,401,326, or an advance of £203,112 as compared with that of the previous year.

The quantities and values of the chief mineral productions exported for the past two years are summarised for comparison as follow :—

Product.	Year ending 31st December, 1902.		Year ending 31st December, 1903.	
	Quantity.	Value. £	Quantity.	Value. £
Gold	508,045 oz.	1,951,433	533,314 oz.	2,037,831
Silver	674,196 "	71,975	911,914 "	91,497
Copper-ore ... ..	...	...	6 tons	123
Manganese-ore ... ..	...	...	70 "	210
Mixed minerals	415 tons	4,422	625 "	7,014
Chrome-ore	175 "	525	...	...
Colonial coal exported, includ- ing that used by Home steamers	188,677 "	154,747	152,332 "	128,927
Hæmatite... ..	17 "	116	...	1
Colonial coal consumed in New Zealand	1,174,025 "	587,012	1,267,861 "	633,931
Kauri-gum	7,430 "	450,223	9,357 "	631,102
Shale (treated in New Zealand)	2,338 "	1,169	36 "	18
Total value of production for 1903 ...			...	£3,530,654
" " 1902 ...			...	3,221,622
Total increase ...			...	£309,032