The question was then asked as to how the present dual control of the Warden and the Lands Department could be ended—that is, in what way could the Crown lands within a mining district be available for selection under the ordinary conditions of the Land Act, which gives the applicant a right to select under the optional system. I can only say that, so long as the land is known, or supposed, to be auriferous, and is brought by Proclamation under the operation of the Mining Act, 1908, the Warden of the mining district must be paramount, and the Land Board occupies a subordinate position. In other words, the Land Board cannot lease lands without the approval of the Warden, and, as the mining industry is so important to New Zealand, and such a large number of men are making their living by mining, it appears to me that the Lands Department cannot step in and claim sole control over the lands in question.

I was then asked if I could suggest that lands in mining districts, and particularly in the Hauraki District, should be treated as ordinary Crown land. This can only be done by abolishing the Proclamation over the whole of the mining district and substituting in lieu thereof another Proclamation setting aside reduced areas as goldfields within proximity to established mining centres—that is, centres where mining is actually taking place, and gold is being won. This question has more than once been discussed by the Under-Secretary of Mines and myself, and I have also discussed it with the Director of Geological Surveys. Though it is perfectly true that there appear to be considerable areas in the Thames, Coromandel, and Ohinemuri Counties which will not be the subject of mining operations for some time to come, at any rate, and perhaps never, yet it is quite impossible for any one to state that no future development will take place or that reefs may ultimately be discovered at depths which at the present time are not workable. When, therefore, I have been asked whether I would recommend the wholesale lifting of the Proclamation over the whole of the Hauraki Mining District as at present constituted, I can only repeat that it would be unwise to make such a statement.

It may be quite possible for the Mines Department, after careful investigation by the Warden and other departmental officers, to decide that certain areas within the mining district in the counties mentioned are suitable for ordinary settlement, and could be withdrawn from the provisions of the Mining Act. If this were done, the lands would then revert to the Lands Department, and could be opened under the ordinary conditions of the Land Act, but until such definite reports have been received I do not feel that I am justified in making such a recommendation.

Mention has been made by Mr Taylor and others of the shortness of the pastoral leases now issued under the attached regulations. As you will see by a perusal of Regulation 5, they are for a period of twenty-one years, and it is competent for the Land Board at the end of that time to grant a renewed lease for a similar term. Further privileges were, however, granted to the holders of these leases by the provisions of section 19 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1907 (now section 193 of the Land Act, 1908), which enabled them to exchange their present lease for a renewable lease for sixty-six years under Part III of the Land Act, 1908. It appears to me, therefore, that whilst Crown lands are within a mining district no better tenure can be found for miners and others who wish to engage in pastoral pursuits than that set forth in the pastoral regulations (attached) which are in force not only in the Hauraki District, but also in Nelson, Marlborough, and Westland to a great extent, with favourable results, and a lack of complaints from the tenants.

To sum up, and replying to Mr Taylor's remark that the inhabitants of the district he represents wish the whole of the Crown lands roaded, surveyed, and subdivided for settlement as ordinary Crown lands, I have to point out that this can only be done by revoking the existing reservation over the mining district, and gazetting a similar Proclamation setting apart reduced areas. The balance of the original area would then be available, and could be utilized as ordinary Crown land.

I may say that some of the complaints that have been made as to persons not being aware of what lands were available under the present regulations have been met by the preparation and issue of land-sale posters containing descriptions of the areas so available, and full particulars of the conditions under which they may be selected. This was done some little time ago, and the practice is still in vogue.

I have, &c.,

WM. C. KENSINGTON, Under-Secretary

The Chairman, Lands Committee, House of Representatives.

[Extract from *New Zealand Gazette*, 2nd March, 1905.]

Regulations for the Occupation of Pastoral Lands within the Hauraki Mining District.

PLUNKET, Governor.

IN pursuance and exercise of the powers conferred by section four of "The Land Act, 1892," and by section thirty-eight of "The Mining Act, 1898," I, William Lee, Baron Plunket, the Governor of the Colony of New Zealand, do hereby revoke a Warrant making regulations for the occupation of pastoral lands in Hauraki Mining District, dated the fourteenth day of March, one thousand nine hundred and three, and published in the *New Zealand Gazette* of the nineteenth day of March, one thousand nine hundred and three, and a Warrant amending such regulations dated the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and four, and published in the *New Zealand Gazette* of the twelfth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and five, and do hereby declare that the following shall be the regulations under which pastoral licenses may be granted within such portions of the boundaries of the Hauraki Mining District as lie within the Counties of Coromandel, Thames, and Ohinemuri:—