

To Mr. Hornsby: You can frame regulations to compel the men to wear them: that to my mind is the only thing that will eliminate miners' phthisis. There are change-houses and bath-houses, and practically everything is done that is possible concerning the welfare of the men. The percentage of accidents is remarkably small; a man is as free from accident as on a city street. In regard to prospecting, I would make the same regulations apply to all. If a man makes a good discovery he will put on as many men as he can profitably employ.

To Mr. Veitch: I think that gold-mining companies should be exempt from income-tax.

To the Chairman: The taxation of shareholders individually instead of the company makes a good deal of difference in the amount collected, because small shareholders may pay no income-tax, whereas the company pays 7s. 6d. in the pound. Gold is wanted, and should not be taxed. The gold-mining industry will not be extended unless it is fostered.

S. FRY examined.

With reference to the saving of arsenic, a great deal is lost here wherever the ore is crushed. The concentrates which are sent away contain a great deal of arsenic. It has been proposed by some people—and I think it is a good proposal—that the Government should treat these concentrates in the country. They could put up smelting-works on purpose to treat them, and they could thus save the arsenic. Sulphate of arsenic is a valuable produce; it is worth £120 a ton. And the arsenic oxide would be saved. Locally there is a large deposit of alum shale. This substance is alluded to in a report by Dr. Henderson. It contains from 6 to 8 per cent. of alum. Platinum is a very valuable metal. We have some platinum in New Zealand. A little has been found at Orepuki in a sluicing claim there; and there is some platinum in other places. I think the Government ought to have investigated the beach-sands; in the Westport black sands they have got up to 2 oz. per ton. I think the experiment might be carried out more efficiently if the stuff were run over percussion tables. I think the Government ought to have some investigation made along these lines, and see if something cannot be done with the low-grade platinum deposits. Platinum is worth £16 or £17 per ounce. It is worth four times as much as gold. I think investigations should also be made of the beaches in the neighbourhood of Dusky Sound and other places. At one spot platinum was discovered some years ago, but at that time it only brought a few pounds per ounce. It also occurs in some of the ores of Westland, in copper, in connection with sulphide. The Geological Survey discovered it there. All those sources should be investigated, because platinum is badly needed. There are some valuable clays about Reefton in connection with the coal-seams. It would be useful for pottery; it is not high-grade china clay, but it would make pickle-jars, &c. There are facilities here for making cement. There is some high-grade limestone also. At Westport you will find that they have at Cape Foulwind limestone and clay, which would make good Portland cement. Another possibility is carbide; but I cannot give any definite data about that. There is high-grade limestone in this district quite close to the coal-seams and fairly close to water-power. These are required for making carbides. The limestone has not been investigated very minutely; it may contain a little too much phosphorus, but I cannot say. I believe the presence of that substance would be an objection. In New Zealand there is a lot of cyanide being used in connection with the extraction of gold from low-grade sands. £25,000 worth of this material was imported in one year. On the other hand, there is enough running to waste from the gasworks—enough nitrogen in one form to make £50,000 worth per annum. Then, there is an enormous amount of sawdust going to waste; by distillation acetic acid can be produced, and alcohol. I think further investigations might be made in regard to this question. I also think that further experiments might be made in connection with the treatment of flax. Much more might be done in the way of beekeeping. The lecturers on beekeeping have at present to go over a lot of country, and they have only been able to visit this district at considerable intervals. In view of the price to which honey is going this industry is becoming remunerative. It is a good food, and is recommended by the doctors, as its sugar is in a highly digestive form compared with ordinary cane-sugar. Much more might be done in the way of fostering this rural industry. It does not take much capital to start it. Then there is a native plant known as the "pepper-tree," which is as fiery as capsicum; and the miro produces a gum which is about the best thing for cracked hands. I think we ought to investigate and utilize these things if possible. I would also like to see something done in connection with our patent laws. You can get a patent in New Zealand, but it is practically only a piece of paper; patents are sometimes taken out, but they are practically useless for lack of proper investigation. I think a paternal Government might have some kind of bureau to investigate patents and help people who have not education enough to work out their own ideas. I think inventors might be helped: there might be something in the nature of an inventors' bureau—similar to the Labour Bureau; I believe it would produce good results.

ISAAC PATTERSON examined.

Something must be done in this district with reference to securing suitable timber for mining purposes. Our forests are diminishing very rapidly, both through settlement and owing to bush-fires. I think that facilities should be given to replant the mountain-slopes and the high plateaux which have been denuded of suitable timber. We asked some time ago that an expert be sent here for the purpose of studying the matter, and to make recommendations in regard to it; but we have had no reply. We are at present supplying timber to Paparoa, Stockton, and to the Reefton field. Our light timbers are rapidly diminishing. White-birch, silver-birch, and red-birch grow fairly quickly to a size which would be suitable for mining purposes. There are other timbers which might grow more rapidly. I suggest that the Committee might make a