

1919.
NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT

BY THE HON. SIR WILLIAM FRASER, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

During the currency of the war mining interests have suffered considerably, but now that victory has happily crowned our efforts on the battlefield, and our soldiers are returning to their former avocations, we may confidently look forward to an extensive revival.

For some years past the mining industry, owing to the war, has not received the attention and encouragement that it deserved, and the time has now come for a considerable forward movement.

The staff of the Mines Department, and particularly of the Geological Survey Branch, has become greatly depleted, so that the important functions devolving on the Mining Department of the State cannot be adequately and satisfactorily performed. This calls for an immediate remedy, and several new appointments have been or are to be made.

It was felt that a second Inspecting Engineer was badly needed, so that the important coal-mining industry might monopolize the services of one of these officers, and leave the metalliferous mining, oil-boring, &c., to be supervised by the other.

Applications for the position of Inspecting Engineer of Metalliferous Mines were duly invited, and eight replies were received; but I am pleased to be able to announce that the candidate considered to possess the best qualifications was found amongst the Department's own staff, and the officer selected for the position has now entered upon his duties.

■ The Geological Survey staff has been strengthened by the appointment of several additional officers, notably a Field Geologist and two Assistant Geologists, while a Palæontologist has been advertised for. With the enlarged staff we shall be able to put in hand a great deal of survey work that has been standing over for some time—in some cases for several years. Inquiries are also being made for a suitable man to act as Government Metallurgist, who it is hoped will be able to advise practically and acceptably regarding the reduction of our refractory ores, and also as to the smelting of our iron-ores and titaniferous ironsands.

A General Manager of the State Coal-mines has also been appointed, such an appointment having been found to be necessary in view of the opening of new coal-mines at Waikokowai (North Island) and Nine-mile (near Greymouth).

With a view to giving the Inspecting Engineer of Metalliferous Mines a good start with his work, and to ensure our methods and procedure being quite abreast of the times, he was instructed to visit Australia to make himself acquainted with