

THE GOLD FIELDS OF NEW ZEALAND.

MR HAUGHTON'S REPORT.

(Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 3rd August, 1869)

"THAT it is desirable that the Government should cause to be laid upon the Table of this House, during each Session, a Report embodying a general account of the present condition of the Gold Fields of the Colony, their advancement or otherwise during the preceding year, and their probable prospects; together with particulars showing the average price of provisions during the year on each Gold Field, the rate of wages, estimated population, and such other information as would afford a comprehensive idea of the general condition of the mining interest in the Colony; and that His Excellency be requested to forward a copy of such Report to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies." (Mr W. H. Harrison.)

In presenting the Second General Report upon the Goldfields of New Zealand, I must express my regret that the difficulties in the way of collecting reliable statistics, which I took occasion last year to remark upon, have not in any way been diminished, and that my efforts to obtain satisfactory returns from the mine owners and Managers throughout the Colony have been so feebly responded to as to make the information afforded absolutely useless for statistical purposes.

The facts and statistics herein embodied are drawn almost solely from official sources, and, so far as they go, may be thoroughly relied upon. The reports of the several Gold Fields Wardens, brought up to March 31st, I would specially call attention to; showing as they do very clearly the present condition of every portion of our gold fields; the subject being treated in not a few instances in a very able and comprehensive manner.

GOLD.

Under existing circumstances; it has not been found possible to state the exact produce of the gold extracted from quartz and alluvium respectively. The Banks very kindly expressed their readiness to offer any assistance in their power to enable such a return to be compiled, but as in many instances no separate account has been kept of the gold purchased, as to whether it was from quartz or alluvium, a complete return could not be furnished; and no other would be in any way useful. As set forth in my former report, the quantity of gold absolutely raised in any one year cannot be accurately stated, but a very close approximation can be arrived at by the the Customs returns, by the courtesy of the Secretary to that Department placed at my disposal, and printed herewith in Tables Nos. 4, 5, 6. Summarizing these the following data have been arrived at, upon which estimates may be formed:—1871, gold exported, 730,029 oz.; Quarter ending March 31st, 1872, 154,997 oz.; 1872, 445,870 oz.; Quarter ending March 31st 1873, 194,422 oz.—showing a decrease upon the year 1872 of 284,659 oz., and an increase upon the March quarter of 1873, as compared with the same period of 1872, of 39,425, oz. The large decrease in the yield of gold for the year 1872, as compared with 1871, is to be attributed not so much to any falling off in the yields of the ordinary mines, as to the enormous returns which during the year 1871 were produced by the Caledonian mine at the Thames, being in three months alone 82,824 oz.

SILVER.

During the year 1872, 37,864 oz. of silver, valued at £9,000, were exported from Auckland, and during the March quarter of 1873, 14,057 oz., valued at £4,000. This being exclusively the produce of the Thames Gold Fields, the very considerable decrease in the amount exported this year, in comparison with 1872, is only the necessary consequence of the decrease in the yield of gold already referred to.

REVENUE.

Revenue and gold duty for the year 1872 amounted to £111,135 1s. 10d., and for the quarter ending the 31st of March, 1873, to £32,296 14s.; total, £143,331 15s. 10d. The falling off in the revenue is partly attributable to the reduction of the gold duty last Session by the legislation of the General Assembly, but more especially, as a matter of course, to the falling off in the return of gold for the year.

Tables are appended, which show the revenue of the gold fields from all sources, and the gold duty collected in the several Provinces, for the year 1872 and the first quarter of 1873 respectively.

The falling off in the revenue in the Province of Nelson and County of Westland during the year 1872, as compared with 1871, may be accounted for by the exceedingly dry summer, which seriously impeded sluicing operations for many months, and in some districts put a stop to mining altogether.

MINING POPULATION.

The number of miners employed during the year ending 31st March, 1873, was 22,335, of which number 3,872 are Chinese. Dividing the value of the total quantity of gold exported amongst the mean number of miners employed in alluvial and quartz mining, it appears that in 1872 the average per man for the year was £77 10s. 3d., while for the year 1871 the average per man was about £101 16s 5½d., showing a falling off of £24 6s 2½ per head, a result simply deducible from the falling off in the yield of gold already commented upon. The Chinese miners are chiefly located in the Province of Otago, and confine themselves to alluvial mining; many have left this year for China with a competence realized in a few years; yet from the returns it appears that their number is on the increase; they are generally reported to be a hard-working and orderly class of men, chiefly confining their operations to old and abandoned ground which the European miners have considered worked out.

It will be seen that there is a considerable falling off in the mining population. This decrease is apparently so great that I am inclined to think that the numbers given in my last report must have been overestimated, being probably based upon the census of 1870. Assuming, however, the decrease to be real rather than apparent, I believe it may be attributed principally to the fact that the very high price of labor of all kinds, which has been lately ruling throughout the Colony, has attracted from the gold fields to other more congenial pur-

suits a large proportion of the "wages men," many of whom were never "miners" in the true sense of the term, and whose chances of employment during the late stagnation in our great quartz mining field became exceedingly precarious.

WATER RACES.

There are within the Colony 4,932 miles of water races, carrying 6,776 sluice heads, constructed at an estimated cost of £763,899. Last year the return was 3,595, carrying 7,056 sluice heads, valued at £11,386; but this increased supply over last year is not nearly sufficient to meet the pressing demands of the present workings, either alluvial or quartz. The Wardens' reports show that operations have been suspended for many months, owing to the season being so dry.

In looking through the Wardens' reports I find that nearly all of them express their opinion that a large increased supply of water is required for the better working of the different districts under their charge.

Mr Warden C. Broad, writing from the Nelson South-west Gold Fields, remarks that "some better means will have to be adopted for securing a constant supply of water. The experience of the past summer points to the necessity of constructing reservoirs to fall back upon in dry weather."

Mr Warden Whiteford, Ahaura, writes: "I avail myself of the opportunity given me of again bringing under the notice of the Government the urgent necessity of at once proceeding with the formation of one or more large water races in this district, without which this portion of the gold fields can never be properly worked, or afford employment to anything like the population it is capable of supporting." And again: "From the want of some proper water supply in this district, I am quite satisfied that owing to the dry season we have experienced during the last few months, the loss to the country caused by so many miners being idle for weeks at a time, may be estimated at a very large sum."

Mr Warden Fitzgerald, writing from Westland on the same subject, remarks: "The construction of the Waimea Water Race is anxiously looked forward to, and would doubtless draw a much larger population to the district, which it would be well able to maintain." And again: "With regard to water supply, my opinion, and indeed the opinion of everyone at all acquainted with the subject, is, that were a race constructed (to carry away from sixty to eighty sluice heads) from the Kanieri Lake to Blue Spur, Big Paddock, and the various terraces such a race would command, the yield of gold in the district would be enormously increased."

The same want of a good water supply seems to be felt in Otago, judging from the following extracts taken from the Wardens' reports:

Mr Warden Simpson, Dunstan, Otago, in his report, remarks on certain races which are in course of construction in his district as follows:—"All these races will open up new ground of proved auriferous character to the extent of some hundreds of acres."

It will be seen from these extracts the absolute necessity which is felt by the officers in charge of mining districts for a large extension of the present system of water supply.

[The remainder of this report will appear in our next issue.]

CANTERBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS—THE SORT OF VISITORS ADMITTED.

THE following letter was read at a meeting of the Canterbury Education Board on the 25th ultimo.

"Timaru, August 19, 1873.

"To the Chairman of the Board of Education.

"Sir,—Being in Temuka on last Saturday for divine service in the Catholic Church on Sunday following, I met at the hotel one Mr Graham, the editor of 'Graham's Review' (Dunedin) going about giving lectures on "Spiritism, inspiration of Scriptures, prophecies phrenology, and on what to him is, the truth in religion."

"In my opinion, he talks a good deal of truth, with here and there not a few disfigured religious truths. That people should go and give their shillings to hear him in rooms for the purpose is no business for me that I may interfere with.

"But Mr Graham is admitted in national schools, and there even at school hours addresses the children, and gives them *séances* in table rapping and phrenology. And he gives prizes for good behaviour. Now, that man is a preacher in his way, and he carries about his 'Review,' which has some very offensive articles on my religion.

"Now, I have Catholic children in those schools (I name, Waimate and Temuka), and such visitors are a scandal to their faith. I will now ask one question: Are schoolmasters under the Educational Ordinance allowed to open their schools to such teachers and waste the time of their pupils on perhaps worse than nonsense?

"Hoping you will not find fault with me for drawing your attention to what I think to be a disorder, and in my opinion a nuisance,

"I have the honor, sir, to be your very respectful servant,

"CHATAIGNIER, Catholic Priest."

[The Lyttelton 'Times' from which we extract this letter makes acknowledgement of an erratum therein in a subsequent issue. It says that the word "truth" in the second paragraph should have been trash.]

The Secretary was instructed to reply to Father Chataignier, that the attention of the committees of the schools named by him will be at once called to the complaint made in his letter, and that the Board will allow no infraction of clause 61 of the Education Ordinance.

The Secretary was also instructed to forward copies of Father Chataignier's letter to the committees of the Arrowhenua and Waimate schools, and request an explanation of the circumstances mentioned therein.

The Inspector said *apropos* of this he would like to ask by what authority persons could visit schools during the school hours, as he noticed that, at some schools, visitors had been invited to attend by the teachers.

The Board replied that no person can visit a district school during school hours, except by authority of the School Committee or the Board.