

RESUMPTION OF LAND FOR MINING PURPOSES BILL.—RESERVES IN MINING DISTRICTS BILL.

THE Gold Fields Committee, to whom were referred the above Bills, have the honor to report that, after having carefully considered them, they recommend that they be allowed to proceed with the amendments as shown upon the copies of the Bills hereto attached.

23rd August, 1882.

MINING COMPANIES ACT 1872 AMENDMENT BILL.

THE Gold Fields Committee, to whom was referred the above Bill, have the honor to report that, after careful consideration, they recommend that the Bill be allowed to proceed, with the amendments as shown upon the copy of the Bill hereto attached.

24th August, 1882.

DRAINAGE OF MINES BILL.

THE Gold Fields Committee, to whom was referred the Drainage of Mines Bill, under date 25th August, 1882, have the honor to recommend that the Bill be allowed to proceed in its present form. And, further, that the Government be recommended to facilitate the speedy passing of this Bill through the House.

28th August, 1882.

No. 410.—Petition of ROBERT REAY.

THE petitioner states that he was, on the 29th May last past, wrongfully mulcted in the sum of £34, on a charge of non-compliance with certain mining regulations, and prays for redress.

Your Committee have the honor to report that, in the case of Robert Reay, the Committee does not see its way to recommend any interference. The Committee takes the opportunity to advise that in all cases of mining leases, the rent for which is twelve months in arrear, immediate steps should be taken for cancellation.

28th August, 1882.

No. 394.—Petition of GEORGE HARCOURT.

THE petitioner prays for some consideration in respect of prospecting done in the Thames District.

Your Committee have the honor to report that the Committee are of opinion that the Hon. Native Minister, when in the North, after making inquiries as to whether or not the petitioner was complying with the regulations other than the condition, if any, that the consent of the Government should be first obtained, satisfied himself that he was so complying, and assured the petitioner that the claim made for assistance should be met. This assurance of a Minister visiting an outlying district, although not strictly responsible for the Mines Department in a matter of administrative detail, ought, in the opinion of the Committee, to have been respected, and the accident of a change of Ministry should not affect such assurance. The statement made by the Hon. Mr. Oliver in the House on the 12th August, 1880, confirms the Committee's view that if the regulations were complied with the claim should be met.

The Committee therefore recommend that such sum as the petitioner would have been entitled to receive under the regulations, had the consent of the Government been first obtained, should be paid, provided the Government is satisfied on inquiry that the work was carried on outside the distance prescribed.

29th August, 1882.

Nos. 414 and 466.—Petitions of MORTON HORNEMAN and PATRICK TOKER.

THE petitioners pray for compensation for damage to their lands caused by the bursting of the dam on Kapitea Creek, West Coast.

I am directed to report as follows: That the Committee, after taking evidence, have assessed in the case of Horneman at £60, and in that of Toker at £100, and recommend accordingly. The Committee further recommend that the Government should endeavour to arrange matters that no further claims for damage for future injury to the same lands could arise.

31st August, 1882.

Nos. 415 and 416.—Petitions of MICHAEL FLANAGAN and Others, and CHARLES WOODHEAD and Others.

THE petitioners ask for assistance in enabling them to obtain miners' water rights.

Your Committee have considered the above petitions, and have the honor to report: That they cannot make any recommendation that relief should be given to the petitioners. The only ground upon which the claim could be made against the Government would be, if there were a reasonable doubt as to whether the laws relating to gold fields justified the petitioners in using their rights held under grant from the Crown *bonâ fide*, notwithstanding that in so doing they caused injury to the occupier (under lease) of land held for other than mining purposes. On this point the Court in its judgment appears to have been clear that Borton v. Howe, a test case, defended by the Crown, precluded the defendants (the petitioners) in the Court, from relief. The costs of Stephen Read v. Glassford were paid by the Government on the ground that there might be some doubt as to the full length to which the decision in Borton v. Howe. The Committee is of opinion that it cannot recommend the Government again to pay the costs of disputing a decision upon a matter of law, which can no longer be considered as being fairly in doubt.

7th September, 1882.