

1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE GOLD FIELDS OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT ON).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 3rd day of 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 interests 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.)

Secretary for Gold Fields' Office,
Wellington, 7th June, 1884.

SIR,—

I have the honour to forward the general and detailed reports and returns of the gold fields of New Zealand for the twelve months ended the 31st March, 1884.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MCKERROW,
Secretary for Gold Fields.

The Hon. W. Rolleston, Minister of Mines.

REPORT.

In this, as in former annual reports on the gold fields of New Zealand, the details of the several districts are given in the reports of their respective Wardens; and whatever relates to more improved modes of working, and the introduction of labour-saving machinery, is treated at length in the report of Mr. H. A. Gordon, the Inspecting Engineer. In the same report will also be found particulars of the contributions from the State funds in aid of public works on the gold fields. The reports of the Managers of Water-races deal with the water-supply, and the tables in the Appendix give the statistical information of the gold fields, arranged in the same manner as in former years.

In taking a general view of the state of the gold fields, it may be said that there never has been more skill and enterprise brought to bear on the workings, whether of quartz or alluvial mining, than at the present time. The digger phase of scratching the surface, and using the hand-cradle, has been almost entirely superseded by the systematic operations of mining engineering and scientific processes brought to bear in saving the finer gold.

In quartz-mining, the rock-drill, driven by compressed air—the advantages of using which were prominently urged in a former report—has been extensively introduced during the year. In the Reefton and Lyell Districts alone the cost of introducing new machinery, and its application to the opening-out of the mines, may be stated at about £70,000. In alluvial mining, the tailings difficulty has been solved for many auriferous areas by the adoption of Perry's hydraulic method of raising stuff, as described in last year's report. Wherever there is a sufficient head of water, ground can be worked on this system that would have been considered impracticable a few years ago. It is now adopted in several of