

SESS. II.—1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE KUMARA SLUDGE-CHANNEL.

(PETITION OF MR. A. MILLER AND OTHERS, AND REPORT THEREON BY MR. H. A. GORDON.)

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Stout, with leave of the House.

PETITION of ALEXANDER MILLER, on behalf of 61 Miners using the Sludge-channel at Kumara, addressed to the Chairman and Members of the Gold Fields Committee, protesting against Priority of Rights to use the Sludge-channel being allowed, and requesting that Increased Accommodation be provided for the Miners; and Memorandum by the Inspecting Engineer on same.

PETITION.
Sludge-channel Question.

GENTLEMEN,—

Kumara, 6th October, 1884.

As we advised by telegram to-day, we beg to supply you with information as to the position of the various parties working into the sludge-channel, with the object of assisting the Gold Fields Committee towards the satisfactory settlement of the sludge-channel question.

As may have appeared to you, the main difficulty is the question of priority of right to the use of the sludge-channel. We are under the impression that a certain number of claimholders using the sludge-channel, whose original permits have expired, have petitioned Government with the view of establishing a priority of right to the use of the sludge-channel. Should we be correct in our supposition, we beg to protest against such a right being granted, as being an injustice to others using the sludge-channel. We consider that any such claim cannot be sustained, either morally or legally, for many reasons. The question of priority of right to the use of the sludge-channel was tried in the Warden's Court here, on the 11th July last, and Warden Giles's decision was that those only whose original permits had not expired could claim priority, and that only for the term for which their permits are dated. It will thus be obvious that those claimholders whose original permits have expired, and who are now, we suppose, trying to substantiate a claim of fixed priority, have no legal right. Besides, they have been working for many months under new permits, in which priority is not recognized. Warden Giles's ruling places nineteen out of thirty parties using the sludge-channel on an equal footing; the remaining eleven parties hold original permits, which are still in force, and they have the power of exercising their priority of right. This right entitles them to the use of the sludge-channel for four hours every day; but they have made a concession which enables all parties to work. The three-hour system of shifts has been introduced, which apparently gives satisfaction to all; this, however, can only continue during the summer months. A grant of priority would have the effect of throwing twelve parties idle; the sludge-channel being only equal to provide for eighteen parties in three shifts of four hours, or twenty-four parties in four shifts of three hours. The remedy we would suggest would be that Government should be asked to provide increased accommodation for those using the sludge-channel by constructing another tail-race.

Trusting the above will receive your attention,

We remain,

Your obedient servants,

ALEXANDER MILLER,

For — PRICE and Party of	8 Men.
CHARLES HOOD and Party of	5 "
J. P. THOMAS and Party of	7 "
H. McMASTERS and Party of	6 "
THOS. ROBINSON and Party of	6 "
STEPHEN McNEILL and Party of	5 "
W. BAIN and Party of	6 "
JAMES CONAGHAN and Party of	6 "
MICHAEL GINTY and Party of	6 "
GILBERT ROBERTS and Party of	6 "

61 Men.

The Chairman and Members of the Gold Fields Committee,
Wellington.