

on the rolls of these schools was, in my report to you, only about one-half the real numbers now on the rolls.

I append a statement drawn up with this authentic information at my disposal. I find the membership of the schools between Ross and Nelson about 1,160, with an annual subscription of about £600. Now, this, to me, is overwhelming evidence of the intense interest the practical miners take in these technical classes. And you will see this interest is not only sustained by the present service and system, but it is rapidly increasing. This, contrasted with the small number of miners attending the Thames School of Mines last year, according to Mr. Montgomery's report, speaks loudly in favour of the system that plants schools in all the centres, and not merely in one or so in each Island.

The idea of abandoning these technical schools at their present stage must not be entertained for one moment. I consider myself as well as Government committed to the support of these schools, to some degree at least; and I shall visit them all during the four months, January to April, either with or without Government assistance; but if it is to be without Government assistance, I shall be ashamed of the Government under which we live. There is no other Government of any country under heaven that would let so noble and intensely-useful and practical and successful a system of technical education for so important an industry starve.

I have written a letter to the Minister of Mines on the subject, suggesting that Government pay the necessary travelling expenses of myself (without salary) and of my assistant, W. Goodlet (with £30 salary for him), for the four months, January to April, that we are going to devote to the discharge of this duty. We shall leave Dunedin about the 3rd of January and proceed to Nelson to open the school of mines there, with classes of probably a hundred and fifty members. We shall then visit Picton, Collingwood, Owen, Lyell, Westport, Charleston, Denniston, Reefton, Boatman's, Greymouth, Nelson Creek, Notown, Kumara, Dunganville, Stafford, Hokitika, Kanieri, Rimu, and Ross.

I cannot help thinking, however, that it will be to the deep discredit of the Government of the colony, both at home and abroad, if they allow W. Goodlet and myself to carry on this colonial work at our own expense; for I cannot allow the miners, however willing, to contribute to defray my expenses until they shall have their lecture-rooms completed and supplied with the necessary assaying and testing and teaching appliances. When will Government again find any one, duly qualified, so willing to teach the miners, or when will the Government again find the miners so willing and eager to be taught?

I am forwarding twenty copies of my letter to the *Otago Witness* on the subject of the schools, and I desire to draw your attention to the part defining a new basis which, in my opinion, would work well for the colony. The total cost to the colony for the whole system in both Islands would not exceed £1,870 per annum: and for this you would have twenty schools on the West Coast and Nelson, twenty-six schools in Otago, and five or six on the Thames Goldfield. That the miners will do their share of the work is amply proved; and the completion of such a scheme, and the obtaining for it of legislative recognition as a colonial institution, would be, I consider, a very appropriate work of your Committee.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Goldfields Committee, Wellington.

JAMES G. BLACK.

*Names of Schools of Mines, Numbers of Members on the Rolls, and Subscriptions (West Coast only).*—Ross, 45, £17; Rimu, 50, £25; Kanieri, 20, £10; Hokitika, 50, £25; Stafford, 60, £15; Dunganville, 20, £10; Kumara, 50, £25; Greymouth, 90, £45; Nelson Creek, 20, £10; Notown, 20, £10; Reefton 90, £109; Boatman's, 95, £65; Lyell, 50, £25; Westport, 60, £60; Denniston, 110, £78; Charleston, 40, £20; Owen, 50, £25; Takaka (Collingwood), 50, £25; Nelson, 90, £50; Dobsonville, 50, £25; Brunner, 50, £25: total enrolled members, 1,160; total subscriptions, £699. The numbers for Charleston, Owen, Nelson, Dobsonville, and Brunner are approximate, but under the mark. The amounts subscribed opposite Hokitika, Kumara, and Greymouth do not include building funds; they are therefore under the mark.

P.S.—Sir, I have to explain that the probably unusual strength of some of the language of this report must be attributed to the strength and sincerity of my convictions on the subject of it. I look for reasonable indulgence from your Committee, and trust you will be able to stand up on behalf of these technical schools.—J. G. B.

#### Enclosure.

[Extract of a letter from Professor Black to the *Otago Witness* on the subject of the schools of mines.]

THE guiding principles for the recognition of the schools of mines for the whole colony are few and simple:—

1. That the annual cost to the colony do not exceed £1,870.
2. That the subsidy be earned in each separate school by a local contribution of £1 for £2 subsidy.
3. That no school be recognised which does not show at least twenty subscribers and an annual subscription of at least £10.
4. That the time devoted to each school by the Government instructor be strictly proportioned to the amount subscribed by its members.
5. That each school provide itself with such an assortment of chemicals and testing and assaying-appliances as will be required for carrying on the work of its classes.
6. That a stock of such appliances be imported by the Minister of Mines for the use of the schools; and that from such stock the schools be supplied at prime cost, duty free.
7. That each school provide suitable accommodation for the classes and proper custody for the teaching appliances.
8. That the teaching-staff be appointed and discharged by the Minister of Mines, and be in every respect under his control.