

1888.
NEW ZEALAND.

GOLDFIELDS AND MINES COMMITTEE.

INTERIM REPORT No. 2 ON ORDER OF REFERENCE OF 5TH JUNE, 1888, RELATING TO THE MINING INDUSTRY OF THE COLONY, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Report brought up 17th August, 1888, and ordered to be printed.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

TUESDAY, THE 5TH DAY OF JUNE, 1888.

Ordered, "That the Goldfields and Mines Committee be authorised to inquire into and report on the working of the Schools of Mines now established in various parts of the colony; also to report generally on the best means whereby the gold- and silver-mining industry of the colony may be fostered and encouraged."—(MR. SEDDON.)

REPORT.

THE Goldfields and Mines Committee, to whom was referred the consideration generally of the best means whereby the gold- and silver-mining industry of the colony may be fostered and encouraged, have the honour to report:—

1. That, in the opinion of this Committee, the development of the vast mineral resources of the colony would be greatly furthered by their existence being brought prominently on every occasion before the world, so as to attract the attention of investors in mining enterprise, and lead to the introduction of foreign capital.

2. That your Committee are of the opinion that the Victorian Centennial Exhibition now being held, and the Paris Exhibition to be held in May next, both offer splendid opportunities of bringing our mineral products before the public, and that such opportunities should certainly not be neglected.

3. That your Committee, after making the fullest inquiry, are of opinion that it is desirable that the present mineral exhibits from the colony at Melbourne should be augmented by exhibits of auriferous and argentiferous ores, auriferous cements and sands, copper ore and nickeliferous sand, and other mineral products in bulk.

4. That your Committee are also of opinion that maps showing the several mining districts and chief localities where mining is now being carried on might with advantage be exhibited, also that the area of proved auriferous ground, the number of claims, the capital invested, and dividend paid should be published in pamphlet form and distributed gratis.

5. That it would be advisable, when the mineral exhibits of the colony are completed, to have a separate catalogue thereof compiled, and distributed gratis.

6. That, in the opinion of your Committee, it is to be regretted that the Mines Department left the collection of the mineral exhibits entirely to the Commissioners, and declined to take any active part in it, beyond supplying to the Commissioners the specimens in the possession of the Department; especially as the correspondence shows that the Commissioners desired that the mining industry should be dealt with by the department. It appears, however, that the Commissioners did not do the subject justice after being requested by the department to undertake the sole management of the mineral exhibits; for the specimens in the possession of the department were not obtained by the Commissioners and forwarded, nor was the chief officer of the department asked for information or for assistance. It would also have been much better had the Department of Mines taken steps to ascertain whether or not full justice was being done to the mining industry by the Commissioners in the way of supplying exhibits and information. From the evidence before the Committee, and from correspondence received, it is quite clear that the sums offered by the Commissioners to the several local committees were altogether insufficient to defray the expense of procuring exhibits. On the other hand, the Commissioners, though practising the most rigid economy, have exceeded the sum placed at their disposal. Want of sufficient funds may therefore be set down as one cause why the mineral wealth of the colony has not been more fully represented at the Victorian Centennial Exhibition. The Committee, however, are of opinion that, when the Commissioners found themselves unable to obtain a sufficiency of exhibits on account of the inadequacy of the sum allowed for expenses, they ought to have applied to the Government for more money, and, had their application been refused, the Commissioners would have been relieved of further responsibility in the matter. The Committee are also of opinion that,