

tion with the School of Mines, and, as soon as completed, tests will be made on certain charges being paid, which will be hereafter fixed by regulations. The cost of the plant, when completed, will be £1,200. The half of this amount was subscribed by the people in the district, and £600 was authorised as a subsidy, of which £390 18s. 3d. has been paid.

SCHOOLS OF MINES.

In 1885 Professor Black was engaged to initiate a system of teaching the miners in different centres of the colony, whereby they might distinguish any metalliferous ores they found, and also to determine the percentage of metals those ores contained. The telling way in which Professor Black put forward the necessity of miners being acquainted with metalliferous deposits, and the energy displayed by him in travelling all over the mining centres in the colony giving lectures, and showing, by experiments, the easy manner in which the different metals and minerals might be distinguished and tested, created quite an enthusiastic feeling among the miners, which has caused them to build small halls and fit up laboratories in all the principal mining centres in the colony.

During the first year's initiation of the Schools of Mines Mr. A. Montgomery, M.A., was appointed a teacher and lecturer for the Thames, Coromandel, and Te Aroha Districts, and the result is that there is a very influential School of Mines at the Thames. There is no place in the colony where a School of Mines is wanted so much as in this district. The gold is associated with a variety of metals, which make the ores very refractory to work. With the present method of treatment not more than 50 per cent. of the precious metals are obtained; and, indeed, it is very questionable if even this percentage is got.

The Schools of Mines in the North Island districts have been the means of causing the attention of the miners to be directed to minerals other than gold. Many of the lodes contain a far larger percentage of silver than gold, which in former years was altogether disregarded, and the ore, unless it contained sufficient gold to pay for the expense of working, was thrown away in the waste-heap. This state of things is now entirely altered. Silver is as much sought after as gold, but the great difficulty under which the mining industry is still labouring is a proper and cheap method of treatment, whereby the metals can be extracted.

The following is an extract from Mr. Montgomery's report: "The attendance for the quarter ending December, 1887, remained much as shown in my October report, but there was a slight falling-off in the school-children's attendance as the warm dry weather came in. For the first quarter of the present year there has been a very large increase in the attendance at the classes, as will be seen from the following table:—

				Attendance of Pupils, October, November, and December, 1887.	Attendance of Pupils, February, March, and April, 1888.
Laboratory and practical chemistry	...	...	...	9	15
Architectural drawing	...	...	...	6	5
Mining mathematics	...	...	...	8	17
Assaying...	...	...	...	16	38
State schools pupils' chemistry class...	...	...	...	47	120
Total attendance at all classes	...	...	...	86	195
Total number of individuals attending classes (without including the school-children)	...	...	...	27	49

"A very encouraging feature is the large number of new students that have joined the classes this year, and that last year's students have this year nearly all returned. Most of the new students are of a most desirable sort—lads who have just left school and young men. The school-children's class has already borne fruit in supplying the other classes with a few of its older boys. Altogether, the prospects of the school, as far as regards the attendance of pupils, are most encouraging.

"For the period covered by this report the receipts from membership- and class-fees have amounted to £29 10s., and from fees for assays to £15 2s. The class-fees charged are very low, being only 5s. per quarter for each class, and 10s. membership-fee per annum. It would be highly inadvisable to raise the fees at present, as a higher fee would deter many of our students from attending. Most of them are young, and not in receipt of high wages, and cannot afford to pay high fees. When the value of the instruction received at the School of Mines has been demonstrated by the success of some of its old pupils the public will be able to appreciate it more rightly. It is a most difficult thing to convince ignorant men that scientific instruction is worth paying for, and unless they can get it very cheap they will not take advantage of it. After some experience of it they are ready to pay much higher fees to secure its continuance. By-and-by, when they clearly see that it is necessary to go through a course at the School of Mines to secure any of the better positions, such as those of managers of mines, as it will be necessary in the near future, the pecuniary value of the classes will be rightly estimated, and fees more proportionate to the character of the teaching can be charged. But in the present state of things it would be most inadvisable to raise the fees, so that they cannot be relied on as a source of much revenue for the school. The voluntary contributions of the public are also a very precarious source of revenue; besides that, reliance on them places the School of Mines in the very invidious position of having to