

PROVISIONAL WARRANTS.

The issue of provisional warrants to act as mine-managers has been largely taken advantage of, and the legislation provided by the Amendment Act, 1896, enabled the owners of mines to employ capable men who otherwise did not possess the necessary qualification to manage their mines. The number of mining companies that sprung into existence has now become very much curtailed, and the necessity, therefore, for the issuing of warrants is past, as the number of managers holding first-class certificates is in excess of the present demand. The provision that the Board of Examiners may issue certificates to holders of warrants will enable several old and skilful managers to have the opportunity of availing themselves of the concessions which no doubt the Legislature had in view when the Act was framed.

TESTING PLANTS FOR QUARTZ PROSPECTORS.

In view of the need of a ready opportunity of testing and ascertaining the value of quartz lodes situated at a distance from mining centres, the Government has decided on the erection of small plants for that purpose. It is probable that one of those plants will be erected at Mahakirau, in the Mercury Bay portion of the Hauraki district. The following is a copy of the regulations to be observed:—

REGULATIONS FOR THE ERECTION AND WORKING OF SMALL TESTING PLANTS FOR THE USE OF PROSPECTING ASSOCIATIONS.

1. When the plant has been erected by the Mines Department it will be handed over to a responsible prospecting association, to be approved by the Minister of Mines, to be held in trust for the Government.

2. The person to be appointed by the prospecting association to take charge of the plant must be approved by the Inspector of Mines of the district.

3. The charges for crushing will be fixed by the Minister of Mines, after consultation with the prospecting association, at such rates as will merely cover the wages of the man in charge and provide for working-expenses and keeping the plant in repair.

4. Should the amounts received for crushing at any time not be sufficient to keep the plant in repair and pay the wages of the man employed, any deficiency must be paid by the prospecting association.

5. The cost of obtaining quicksilver, and anything of a kindred nature required for the treatment of the ores, must be borne by the association; but a reasonable percentage of loss will be considered a fair charge on working-expenses.

6. No "cleaning-up" will be allowed to take place except in the presence of representatives of the persons or companies for whom crushing is done unless they first give their written consent to the contrary.

7. Payment for crushing must be made before the gold and silver obtained is handed over, otherwise the cost will be deducted from such gold and silver.

8. The man in charge will be required to furnish a weekly report to the Inspector of Mines of the district, showing—

- (a.) Number of hours the battery has been employed.
- (b.) Total number of tons of ore crushed.
- (c.) Names of persons for whom ore has been crushed, and the number of tons for each person.
- (d.) Names of claims or licensed holdings for which crushing has been done.
- (e.) Breakage or damage (if any) done to plant.
- (f.) Estimated cost of repairing the same.

9. The man in charge will also be required to furnish a monthly or quarterly return of receipts and expenditure in connection with the plant.

10. The Inspector of Mines must report quarterly on the condition of the plant.

11. Arrangements must be made between the association and the Inspector of Mines whereby the battery cannot be monopolized for too long a period by any one party of prospectors.

12. Should any dispute arise under these regulations it shall be decided by the Inspector of Mines for the district.

WATER-CONSERVATION.

Mr. Perham, Engineer for Water-conservation, in consultation with Mr. Alex. Aitken, C.E., of Kumara, inspected the site of the proposed Eweburn Dam, and a joint report has been forwarded finally recommending the suitability of the ground, as previously ascertained by borings, &c., for the erection of the dam. Mr. Perham has also since been through the Hauraki Goldfields on business connected generally with water-conservation, and will furnish reports on the Thames Low-level Water-race and domestic water-supply for the mining townships of Coromandel, Karangahake, Waihi, Waitekauri, and Te Aroha, the last combining electric lighting of the domain and the new bath-houses.