

1911.

NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT,

BY THE HON. RODERICK MCKENZIE, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

In presenting to the House my third annual Statement on the mining industry, I again desire to congratulate honourable members on the very successful results from the mines of the Dominion during the last year, and present indications point to continued satisfactory returns.

While the total mineral-production shows a small decrease, it is exceedingly satisfactory to be able to inform honourable members that the two principal branches of the industry—namely, quartz and coal mining—show substantial increases; but, owing to unforeseen and unavoidable but, I hope, temporary causes, the returns from kauri-gum and alluvial mining show considerable decreases. I am, however, of opinion that our mining industry will in the future not only maintain its present prosperous position, but will be annually extended in various directions, and add largely to our wealth and prosperity. In my previous Mines Statements I took occasion to remind Parliament and the country of the great benefits conferred on our people by our mining industry. These advantages cannot be too often impressed on honourable members. I therefore again desire to emphasize that reasonable financial assistance towards developing our mineral resources is a profitable investment.

During the year, discoveries of gold that may lead to important developments outside our hitherto known mining districts have been reported to the Mines Department, and a galena lode showing satisfactory assay values was discovered in the Nelson District. This find is now being energetically and extensively prospected by the parties interested, who anticipate profitable results.

The prospects of petroleum becoming an important branch of our mining industry in the near future are, according to present indications, more promising than on any previous occasion, and the boring-operations being carried on by the companies concerned, in three different and far-distant parts of the Dominion, are being carefully watched and periodically examined and reported on by officers of the Mines Department.

Now that Parliament has wisely authorized the Administration to embark on generating electrical energy by water-power as a State enterprise, it may safely be anticipated that this will prove a most important factor in the future development of our mineral resources, and especially so on portions of our goldfields where it has hitherto been found impracticable to provide water-supplies by gravitation, or motive power, except at excessive or prohibitive expense.

While our most important quartz-mine suffered a somewhat serious set-back during the year, it is gratifying to note that the yield from the quartz-mines as a whole shows a substantial increase.

When last reviewing our coal-mining industry I did not expect any increase in this year's output, as I was then of opinion that the unfortunate disturbance in the coal trade of the Commonwealth created an inflated output in this Dominion during the previous year. It is, therefore, exceedingly satisfactory to inform honourable members that not only did our coal-mining industry maintain its position, but that it exceeded the previous year's output by 286,115 tons, and the quantity exported increased by 75,326 tons, of an increased value of £75,601.

I again regret to call attention to the very large decrease in the value of the kauri-gum exported during the year. While there was an increase of 443 tons in the quantity, the value decreased by the somewhat large amount of £87,654.

Alluvial mining, owing chiefly to the long period of drought experienced throughout the South Island during last summer, combined with the annual and gradual