

VII. STATE AID TO MINING.

(1.) SUBSIDIZED PROSPECTING.

During the year ended 31st March, 1913, fifty-six approved prospecting parties were granted subsidies, amounting to £5,843, of which sum £2,533 was expended during that period. As a result of such expenditure, 8,407 ft. of drives have been put in, 390 ft. of shafts been sunk, and thirty-nine boreholes have been drilled, all in search of gold. In addition to the above expenditure, £2,867 granted during previous years was expended during the year ended 31st March, 1913. As much of the work for which the above grants were made during the last financial year is still in progress, it is impossible to state definitely the result of the whole of the prospecting; but of thirty-two subsidized operations already completed, in twenty-one cases the results were valueless, and in eleven cases the results warrant further development of the claims. In no instance was a new goldfield proved, or anything of considerable value, the operations being mostly confined to the testing of ground in the vicinity of proved fields. The result to the mining industry is small, but to the successful prospectors, all of whom are miners who operate on a moderate scale, they are of material benefit. Since the discovery of the Blackwater quartz-mining field during 1905 by a Government-subsidized prospecting party, no new goldfield or find of great importance has been made for the expenditure of about £25,000 in subsidies to prospectors. Without the assistance of Government subsidies, in all probability the exploration of the back country for minerals would almost entirely cease, as year by year there appears to be a growing disinclination, notwithstanding greatly improved means of access, to leave the more congenial atmosphere of the towns, where work is plentiful, for the arduous and primitive life of a prospector, in which the chances of success are gradually becoming more remote. The experience of New Zealand in this respect is similar to that in all the Australian States and other mining countries except those of recent discovery.

The following is a statement showing the amount of subsidies granted during the year ended 31st March, 1913, to prospecting associations and miners; also the result of such subsidized work:—

	Amount granted during Year ended 31st March, 1913.	Amount expended of the Foregoing Grants.	Quantity of Work done.				Number of Parties.			Results of Work done.			
			Driven.	Timbered.	Sunk.	Boreholes drilled.	Surface prospecting.	Boring.	Working Underground.	Favourable.	Undecided or in Progress.	Valueless.	No Work yet done.
	£	£	Ft.	Ft.	Ft.	No.							
North Island ..	1,051	155	787	..	..	..	4	..	11	5	1	5	4
Nelson Province ..	1,659	987	809	..	310	..	3	..	5	..	1	6	1
Westland Province ..	2,833	1,391	6,811*	1,659	80	39	1	2	29	6	12	10	4
Southland Province ..	300	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Totals ..	5,843	2,533	8,407	1,659	390	39	8	2	46	11	14	21	10

* Alluvial.

The following statement shows the total expenditure during the year ended 31st March, 1913, on authorities issued previous to that date, in subsidies to prospecting associations and parties of miners in the different counties:—

Name of County, &c.	Expenditure.		
	£	s.	d.
Coromandel ..	247	10	0
Thames ..	80	0	0
Whakatane ..	26	0	0
Ohinemuri ..	396	6	2
Takaka ..	197	0	0
Wairau Road Board ..	45	5	0
Inangahua ..	859	12	6
Murchison ..	66	13	4
Grey ..	307	0	6
Westland ..	1,935	8	0
Ross Borough ..	188	5	0
Maniototo ..	14	18	0
Prospecting associations, &c. ..	1,036	9	10
Total ..	£5,400	8	4