

1920.
NEW ZEALAND.

MINES STATEMENT

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE W. F. MASSEY, MINISTER OF MINES.

MR. SPEAKER,—

In presenting my first annual statement on the mining industry of the Dominion it may at the outset be observed that such industry shows signs of revival. During the year inquiries have been received from many parts of the world for information bearing on our mineral resources, and every effort is being made by the staff of the Department to furnish those interested with full particulars.

Early this year the Head Office of the Department was reorganized so as to more closely co-ordinate the activities of the several sections, and honourable members will be pleased to learn that the results already obtained have fully justified the changes made.

In conformity with the announcement made by my predecessor in last year's Statement, the Inspecting Engineer of Metalliferous Mines was instructed to visit the United States of America, and for that purpose he left this Dominion on the 24th November, 1919, and after spending about six months in inspecting the prominent mines in California, Colorado, Oklahoma, and other important mining districts, returned to New Zealand on the 23rd May last. From the valuable experience gained by that officer the mining community in the Dominion should benefit.

STATE ASSISTANCE.

As an aid towards the development of the mining industry the Government has recently authorized the rates hitherto paid for prospecting being increased by 30 per cent. This should encourage miners to continue and increase their efforts to locate and eventually win minerals. The terms and conditions subject to which prospecting-drills are hired have also recently been amended, and the Government now loans the drills free of rent, and in addition the services of an experienced drill superintendent, whose salary and expenses are paid by the Government, are provided.

Subsidies up to £10,000, on a pound-for-pound basis, may also be paid for prospecting deep levels for gold-quartz lodes down to a depth of not less than 1,000 ft., or such less depth as the Minister of Mines may approve.

Any person engaged in prospecting or pioneer mining may be paid a subsidy of not exceeding 5s. for every £1 expended by such person in prospecting or pioneer mining during the preceding twelve months.

Any local body in a mining district may expend a portion of the revenues received by it from duty or goldfields revenue in prospecting for diamonds, gold, silver, tin, or other metals, but I am sorry to say local bodies rarely grant any monetary assistance.