

would be wise to give the mining interest the benefit of the doubt of any land that may be considered auriferous, though not actually proved so—that such lands should be exempted at least for a certain number of years. In opening new blocks of land on gold fields, for which provision is made by the above Act, an inquiry, to be made public, should be held, and mining reserves, if desired, to be there and then set apart.

*Peat Reserves.*

The existence of peat in some districts of the gold fields, and the fact of its being profitably used as fuel for the inhabitants, induces the Conference to recommend that section 91 of the Otago Waste Lands Act may be extended to give licenses of certain portions of Crown Lands for the raising of peat.

*Commonages.*

The want of commonage for the miners and mining community has been greatly felt in many of the mining districts of Otago. The Conference desires to record their approval of the course of the present Provincial Executive in endeavouring to meet the requirements of the people in one important district, and trusts it will continue to endeavour to satisfy all demands for this purpose that may be based on fairness.

*Sale of Lands on Gold Fields.*

The Conference recommends that any sale of lands on gold fields should be duly advertised in the local papers. A case in point in one particular district which has come under our notice, which has caused great dissatisfaction, and gives a monopoly of rich auriferous land, hinges entirely on such sales being concluded without sufficient publication.

*Gold Export Duty.*

The Conference expresses its approval of the course of late legislation on this subject; and now that the ice is broken it trusts the Government will find the ways and means without imposing this tax on the industry of the miners. The tax is unfair in its principle and unjust in its operations, and is moreover a class tax.

*Survey and Water Supply Subsidy.*

The Conference is of opinion that the Government should place at the disposal of the Mining Associations, free of charge, the survey staff, for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of water schemes which the Associations may deem feasible; and further, the Conference is of opinion that the rules under which subsidies can now be obtained are too stringent, and should be made more elastic, so as to include private parties. Also, that the subsidy, instead of being £2 to £1, should be £1 to £1.

*Minister of Mines.*

The subject has only slightly come under consideration, and is now left to be dealt with by the various Miners' Associations. That the gold fields of New Zealand are of sufficient importance to have a responsible head is undeniable, but the two governing powers already in existence might be made to conflict to a greater extent, and greater expenses might be the result.

*Mint for New Zealand.*

The Conference would indorse the recommendation of the Royal Mint Committee, made to the Government at last sitting of Assembly.

*Final.*

The Conference having concluded the business of its present meeting, trusts that its suggestions will meet with the concurrence of the Government and of the people generally.

Trusting that the foregoing suggestions and recommendations will meet with your approval,

We have, &c.,

John A. Miller, Arrow River.

W. D. Morrison, Tuapeka.

James Alexander, Dunstan.

Thomas Allan, Cardrona.

Joseph Fenis, Waitahuna.

William Gray, Table Hill.

David Anderson, Teviot.

Samuel Candiyell, Waipori.

John Edgar, Upper Shotover.

Ralph Shaw, Switzer's.

James Crombie, Cromwell and Bannockburn.