

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE GOLD FIELDS OF NEW ZEALAND,

(REPORT ON).

(Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 3rd August, 1869.)

‘That it is desirable that the Government should cause to be laid upon the Table of this House, during each Session, a Report embodying a general account of the present condition of the Gold Fields of the colony, their advancement or otherwise during the preceding year, and their probable prospects; together with particulars showing the average price of provisions during the year on each Gold Field, the rate of wages, estimated population, and such other information as would afford a comprehensive idea of the general condition of the mining interest in the colony; and that His Excellency be requested to forward a copy of such Report to Her Majesty’s Secretary of State for the Colonies.’ (*Mr. W. H. Harrison.*)

Mr. C. E. HAUGHTON to the Hon. the MINISTER for PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 15th July, 1874.

I have the honor, in accordance with your instructions, to forward a General Report upon the state and prospects of the Gold Fields, with Appendix containing Reports by the Wardens upon the districts under their charge, and Statistical Tables.

The Hon. the Minister of Public Works, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

C. E. HAUGHTON.

REPORT.

THE difficulty of obtaining full and reliable statistical information as to the earnings of mining companies is one not easily overcome; and although for the year ending March 31st, 1874, I have been enabled to collect fuller information as to the gold fields than was in my power to publish in either of my previous reports, I regret to add that this report is far from being as complete as I could have desired, and, from the numerous inquiries instituted, I had a right to expect. Directors and managers of mines are reluctant to allow their returns to be made public, whilst tributers, in many instances, decline to afford any information whatever; I am inclined to agree with Mr. Warden Charles Broad, who, with the view of getting over the difficulty, suggests that “It would be very useful if an Act were brought into force to compel the owners of machinery to make periodical returns to the Warden of the quantity of stone crushed, with the yield.”

In addition to the returns made by the Wardens, and the answers to circulars sent to mine owners and mining managers, I have gathered from the Press a large amount of information pertaining to quartz mining, which will be found in Table No. 23. It is, I have every reason to believe, reliable, and I hope may be considered of value.

GOLD.

The data collected as to gold are as follow:—In the year 1872 the colony exported 445,370 oz., of the value of £1,731,261; in the year 1873, 505,337 oz., of the value of £1,987,425. During the quarter ending March, 1873, there were exported 199,442 oz.; whilst in the corresponding quarter this year only 108,947 oz. have been returned. The decrease in the quarter’s exports this year affords no reason for the presumption that the yield from the gold fields is gradually decreasing, for every gold-yielding province in the colony during the year 1873, with the exception of Marlborough, increased its output in the following proportions: Otago, 24,742 oz.; Nelson, 18,500 oz.; Auckland, 14,559 oz.; and Westland, 2,949 oz.;