

LEGAL MANAGER FOR GOVERNMENT WATER RACES.

Looking forward to the probable collision of interests between the Government, as constructor and manager of mining races and sludge channels, and the holders of private mining property, the Conference is desirous of drawing attention to the necessity—which, indeed, to some extent already exists—of some person being appointed who could defend the Government in the enjoyment of its rights undisturbed, and also be responsible against injuries unintentionally done to holders of private property.

PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS.

It being very much to be regretted that accidents in mining so often arise on the Otago Gold Field—which it is thought in many cases are preventiye, if ordinary caution were observed—it is recommended that the Warden be given power, on the application of any four persons, to order a survey or inspection of any claim. That the expense of such inspection be borne by either the claimholder or the applicants, at the Warden's discretion. That any alterations or safeguards, reported as necessary for the safety of life, be liable to be enforced under penalties.

SAFETY OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

The Conference desire to point out, under the present stringent laws with regard to the proof necessary to be tendered in disputed mining cases of all the links in renewals from time to time made in mining property, that great care should be taken of all such property in the hands of the Court; the danger of loss, through inability to prove title, is immensely increased by the risk of fire duplicate copies transfers and blocks are submitted to in the district Court Houses. This danger might be obviated greatly by the general use in such Court Houses of fire-proof safes.

The Conference, in conclusion, would draw attention to the great expense borne by the miners in obtaining the information placed at your Government's disposal in 1872 and 1874, and respectfully request your Government's assistance, by grant or subsidy, to the Central Association, whose continued exertions cannot fail—by moderating and leading public opinion on the gold fields—to be highly beneficial to the future legislation of New Zealand.

We are, &c.,

JAMES HEALEY, Arrow.

THOMAS SIMS, Clyde and Alexandra.

JOHN EWING, St. Bathans.

W. L. FORSTER, Moke Creek and Moonlight.

JOHN EDGAR, Upper Shotover.

C. F. ROBERTS, Mount Ida.

— WRAGGE, Switzers.

JAMES BARCLAY, Maerewhenua.

W. BUCHAN, Bannockburn and Carrick Range.

C. COLCLOUGH, Cromwell.

No. 2.

The Hon. J. VOGEL to Mr. J. HEALEY and OTHERS.

GENTLEMEN,—

General Government Offices, Wellington, 16th June, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Report of the Otago Mining Conference, 1874.

2. I will cause the document to be laid before Parliament, so that it may be available when legislation is proposed concerning any of the subjects to which the report refers.

3. I desire to say that, personally, I have much sympathy with the wants of the gold miners. I was one of the representatives of the district of the gold fields; and, from associations extending over many years, I naturally feel largely interested in all that affects the welfare of the gold fields. But I must beg you to remember, that in New Zealand the management of the gold fields has never been more than nominally in the hands of the Colonial Government; that the entire administration and control have practically vested with the Provincial Governments; and that, therefore, it is desirable that the representations of miners should be made through the Provincial Governments.

4. A Bill dealing comprehensively with gold mining was prepared for the last Session of the Assembly. It was ably drawn by Mr. Haggitt, Mr. Shepherd, M.H.R., and Mr. Mouat; and it appeared to be a full and exhaustive measure. The Government did not, however, find that it commanded hearty sympathy in the House of Representatives; whilst there was so much difference of opinion exhibited by members representing districts within the gold fields, that there was no possibility of passing the measure.

5. The Government have, pending the receipt of answers to a circular letter addressed to the Superintendents, been unable to come to a conclusion as to what course shall be adopted with respect to the Bill next Session. Copy of the circular letter is appended for your information.