

1875.
NEW ZEALAND.

OHINEMURI MINERS' RIGHTS INQUIRIES COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF, TOGETHER WITH EVIDENCE AND APPENDIX.)

(*Report brought up, and ordered to be printed, 4th October, 1875.*)

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

TUESDAY, THE 3RD DAY OF AUGUST, 1875.

Ordered, That a Select Committee, to consist of eleven Members, be appointed to inquire into the alleged illegal issue of Miners' Rights at Ohinemuri; five to be a quorum; and Report to be brought up in six weeks. The Committee to consist of the following Members:—Mr. Bryce, Mr. Curtis, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Bradshaw, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Ormond, the Hon. Mr. Stafford, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. T. L. Shepherd, Mr. May, and the Mover.—(*Hon. Sir D. McLean.*)

WEDNESDAY, THE 11TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1875.

Ordered, That the petitions of certain miners on the Ohinemuri Gold Field, and electors, and inhabitants of Thames District, be referred to the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the alleged illegal issue of Miners' Rights at Ohinemuri.—(*Mr. T. Kelly.*)

THURSDAY, THE 9TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1875.

Ordered, That leave be given to the Ohinemuri Miners' Rights Committee to postpone the bringing up of their Report until the 5th day of October next.—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

REPORT.

1. The Committee appointed to inquire into the alleged illegal issue of miners' rights at Ohinemuri has made very full inquiry into the matters referred to it. The evidence has been taken of various persons likely to be acquainted with circumstances bearing upon the case. The Committee has examined on oath Mr. Edward Torrens Brissenden, Mr. James Mackay, Mr. Gerald Richard Disney O'Halloran, Mr. Patrick Dillon, Inspector J. B. Thomson, A.C., and Captain Fraser, Warden of the Thames Gold Field. Mr. Adam Porter's evidence has also been taken in support of two petitions sent by him to the House of Representatives, and referred to this Committee. The Committee has likewise carefully considered the Report of the Royal Commission, appointed on the 10th May, 1875, to inquire into the alleged illegal issue of miners' rights at Ohinemuri, as well as the evidence taken before that Commission in the Province of Auckland, a copy of which has been furnished to the Committee.

2. I am directed to report that the Ohinemuri Gold Field was opened by Proclamation a few minutes after 10 o'clock a.m. of the 3rd March, 1875.

3. That some days prior to the opening, arrangements were made by Mr. Warden Fraser and Mr. James Mackay, Agent at that time for the General Government, that application for miners' rights to be exercised on the Ohinemuri Gold Field should be received at any time previous to the date at which the field was to be opened, and that the rights so applied for should be issued at Mackaytown as soon as possible after the reading of the Proclamation at 10 o'clock on the morning of the 3rd March, by which the field was declared to be open, this arrangement being publicly notified in the *Thames Advertiser*.

4. That the arrangements made to secure a fair and impartial issue of miners' rights appear to have been reasonable and good.

5. That the filling-up of the miners' rights for which applications had been received occupied the evening of the 2nd March, and until 2 a.m. of the 3rd March.

6. That the greater portion of the rights so filled up remained in the custody of Captain Fraser until a few minutes before the reading of the Proclamation on the 3rd March, when they were given to the persons who were to issue them from the various compartments of the Warden's tent.

7. That 155 miners' rights passed into the possession of Mr. James Mackay on the night of the 2nd March, and remained in his possession until about 6.30 a.m. of the 3rd March.

8. That these 155 miners' rights were put up in several bundles or parcels, one of which contained 53 miners' rights, for which Mr. Brissenden had made application.

9. That on the morning of the 3rd March, at about 6.30 a.m., Mr. James Mackay handed the whole of the miners' rights in his possession to his private clerk, Mr. Gerald Richard Disney O'Halloran, to keep for him during the time he would be occupied in visiting certain survey or road parties.