

4. Mr. Reid, although by no means supporting the extreme views expressed by some of the Opposition, was during the last session a strong opponent to the abolition of the Provincial system; but, that measure having now come into operation, there remained no reason which precluded his joining the Government, and I believe that his accession to office will tend greatly to strengthen them.

5. The retirement of Mr. Richardson, and the appointment of Mr. Reid, have rendered necessary some changes in the offices held by the other members of the Government, which will now be constituted as follows:—

The Hon. Major H. A. Atkinson, Premier and Colonial Treasurer.

The Hon. Dr. D. Pollen, Colonial Secretary and Minister for Native Affairs and Defence.

The Hon. F. Whitaker, Attorney-General.

The Hon. C. C. Bowen, Minister of Justice and Commissioner of Stamp Duties.

The Hon. J. D. Ormond, Minister for Public Works.

The Hon. Donald Reid, Secretary for Crown Lands and Minister for Immigration.

The Hon. G. McLean, Postmaster-General and Commissioner of Telegraphs.

The Hon. Hori Karaka Tawiti, without office.

I have, &c.,

NORMANBY.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Carnarvon.

No. 7.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor the Most Hon. the Marquis of NORMANBY to the Right Hon. the Earl of CARNARVON.

(No. 7.)

Government House, Wellington,

MY LORD,—

New Zealand, 7th March, 1877.

I have the honor to inform your Lordship that on the 20th ultimo I left Wellington for Hokitika in the Government steamer "Hinemoa," for the purpose of paying an official visit to that portion of the West Coast of the Middle Island.

2. I have long been anxious to visit that district, and, as the Annual Prize-firing of the Volunteers took place this year at Hokitika, I availed myself of the opportunity of attending the Prize-firing and visiting the district at the same time.

3. As your Lordship is no doubt aware, the District of Westland is very mountainous and densely wooded, and, as a rule, little suited either for agricultural or pastoral purposes. It is, however, extremely rich in minerals of various kinds—gold, silver, and coal being those which at present are attracting the most attention.

4. Unfortunately, the harbours along that portion of the coast are all bar harbours, with only a small draught of water, and difficult of access, which greatly impedes the trade of the district.

5. I arrived off Hokitika about noon on the 21st, and landed in the afternoon in a small steamer which is used for the purpose of crossing the bar; and, notwithstanding a heavy rain, I received a most cordial and hearty welcome from the inhabitants. On the following morning I visited the camp, which was situated in a very picturesque valley on the banks of the Arahura River, about nine miles from the town. I found there about 100 competitors from the whole of the Volunteers and Armed Constabulary, and I am happy to say that this year the shooting has been more than usually good, and I append a copy of the return, which, I think, your Lordship will consider very satisfactory.

6. On the following day I left Hokitika to proceed by land to Greymouth, the distance by road being forty-five miles. Nearly the whole of the country through which the road passes is auriferous, and much of it either has been or is now being worked, and it is curious to observe the vast amount of work that has been done, and the skill and ingenuity which have been exercised to bring the water for the purpose of washing, in some instances the whole face of a hill having been washed away through artificial races.