

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

GOLD FIELDS COMMITTEE

(REPORTS OF).

Presented to the House of Representatives, Session 1877, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON GOLD FIELDS REWARDS.

I AM directed to report as follows:—

- (1.) That rewards for the discovery of payable gold fields be given respectively in the North and South Islands, not exceeding five thousand pounds (£5,000) for each Island.

This resolution, being a confirmation of the resolution of the Houses, 26th September, 1872, does not appear to need any special remark.

- (2.) That the reward be based upon population, rather than upon the amount of gold produced.

- (3.) That no reward shall exceed one thousand pounds (£1,000). Rewards not exceeding in the whole five thousand pounds (£5,000) in each Island to be given on the following scale:—

A population of not less than fifty (50) persons (not necessarily the same persons) engaged with reasonable diligence on the new field for twelve months, £50.

A population of not less than one hundred (100) persons (not necessarily the same persons) engaged with reasonable diligence on the new field for twelve months, £500.

A population of not less than three hundred (300) persons (not necessarily the same persons) engaged with reasonable diligence on the new field for twelve months, £1,000.

The onus of proof to rest with claimant, to the satisfaction of the Government.

Under the conditions of 12th June, 1873, the basis of reward was the amount of gold produced. It appears, however, to your Committee that, owing to the rivalry amongst gold-buyers, and the impossibility of proving satisfactorily the amount of produce raised in any new gold fields, a different principle should be introduced—viz., that of continued occupation by population of such new fields. Continued occupation would be the best assurance of the *bonâ fide* nature of the new field.

- (4.) That the physical configuration of the country in the various gold field districts be taken into consideration in fixing the limitation of distance constituting a new field, and that the distance be varied accordingly.

That the principle of variation of distances in the resolution of 1873 is a good one, but that there is no reason in taking the North and South Islands as the districts in which variation only should be allowed. We therefore recommend that the principle of variation should be further extended and adjusted to each mining district, and that two miles be the minimum distance from any established gold workings.

- (5.) That the provisions for mining on Native lands laid down in the Regulations of 12th June, 1873—viz., (c) "No prospecting to be allowed on Native land without the consent of the Native owners previously obtained, and the approval of the Native Minister;" (d) "Prospectors going on Native land without consent of the owners are liable to the penalties imposed by the Acts relating to gold fields, and will forfeit all claim to the reward;" (e) "Native owners will be entitled to rewards, provided that, if the discovery be made on their own land, they enter into arrangement with the Government for throwing such land open to the public for mining purposes" (conditions applicable in North Island)—be adhered to.

Your Committee have no remarks to make.

- (6.) That an additional sum of five thousand pounds (£5,000) be placed at the disposal of the Government to be expended in the encouragement of prospecting for gold and other precious minerals, by the formation of prospecting tracks, and by otherwise aiding local effort, on such conditions as will, in the opinion of the Government, secure the *bonâ fide* expenditure of the money on the object in view.