

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.

Your Committee have ascertained that considerable effort is being made by local associations to develop new gold fields, and would suggest that aid should be given to such associations by way of subsidy of cent. per cent. upon a wage considerably below the market value of labour paid per head on the number of men actually employed. That aid also be given by the services of professors of the Schools of Mines being placed at the disposal of such associations free of cost. In some instances actual approaches to and means of exit from new ground might with advantage be formed and provided in whole or in part by the Government, and be a legitimate mode of aiding the development of gold fields.

Your Committee would further recommend that the offer of reward shall hold good until otherwise ordered by the House.

15th August, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

REPORT on the MINES BILL.

THE Gold Fields Committee, to whom was referred the Mines Bill, have the honor to report that they have gone through the whole of the Bill, with the exception of the Schedules and Appendices, and recommend that the portions of the Bill which they have considered be passed, with the alterations, elisions, and amendments as shown in the copy of the Bill annexed to this report.

6th September, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

REPORT on PETITION of JOHN FOLEY, of St. BATHANS.

I AM directed to report that the Gold Fields Committee have carefully considered the petition, together with the report furnished to the Government by Mr. Warden Robinson, and other papers attached to the same.

The whole circumstances being before the Committee, it was not considered necessary to summon local evidence.

The Committee find the following three clauses in "The Public Works Act, 1876:"—

"213. The Governor may contract with any person to make, maintain, and work a water-race—

"(1.) Either by agreeing to pay the contractor a subsidy not exceeding the amount agreed to be expended, and expended by the contractor in construction of such water-race.

"(2.) Or, by agreeing to pay to the contractor year by year such sum as shall, together with the net profit of working the water-race, make up six per cent. yearly upon the amount agreed to be expended, and expended in the construction thereof.

And every such contract shall contain a condition for the purchase, whenever the Governor thinks fit, of the interest of the contractor in the water-race, upon terms to be specified in such agreement.

"214. A water-race constructed under the last preceding section shall be deemed to be a water-race made under this Act; but so long as it continues to be worked by the contractor, and subject to the condition of any such agreement, the property therein shall vest in contractor.

"216. All moneys payable under any agreement made under this Part of this Act shall be paid out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose."

The Committee are utterly at a loss to know what these clauses really are framed to effect. It is, however, clear that an expectation of aid is held out to parties of miners engaged in arduous enterprises.

If the principle of granting aid is kept alive by the Public Works Act, or any other Act, the Committee is of opinion that the petitioner is entitled to relief on behalf of his Company—in the words of the Warden, "that a reasonable case has been made out for some aid to be granted."

The local inquiry has clearly established the channel under construction to be of public importance, and that the mile section completed is of a substantial character.

The Committee have come to the conclusion that the Warden's recommendation is a fair one—viz., "That the construction of the channel be subsidized to the extent of eight hundred (£800) pounds for the second mile, payment to be made as each section of 10 chains is completed, at the rate of one hundred (£100) pounds for 10 chains." They therefore adopt it as their recommendation to the Government.

I am further directed to add that, should it appear to the Government to be now inadvisable to continue the system of Government aid to mining enterprises of special difficulty, and that the aid recommended herein is, in consequence of such reversion of policy, not afforded, the Committee would recommend that the distinct grounds of such decision should be clearly intimated to the petitioner, and be made generally known at the gold fields.

The Committee have carefully refrained from expressing any opinion as to the desirability or otherwise of subsidizing mining enterprises, the question of policy not being within the immediate order of reference.

6th September, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

REPORT on PETITION of STEPHEN READ and OTHERS.

PETITIONERS state that an action was brought against them by James Glassford Gordon Glassford, Esq., for fouling and polluting Thomson's Creek by tailings from their workings at Tinker's, in Vincent County.

That they have sustained losses through the said action, although acting under rights granted to them in due course of law under the gold-mining laws in force at Tinker's, and pray that this House will afford them relief.

I am directed to report as follows:—

That, in the opinion of this Committee, the petitioners are justly entitled to the repayment of the costs incurred by them in defending their rights in a Court of law, and that it be a recommendation to the Government that the sum of £500 be placed on the Estimates to defray such costs, subject to the Government being satisfied that the costs have been duly expended.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

11th September, 1877.

REPORT ON PETITION OF WILLIAM SOWERBY GRENVILLE.

THE petitioner states that in 1874 he purchased a battery on the Thames Gold Fields.

That, in consequence of the operation of "The Mining Districts Act, 1873," he has been unable to obtain a title to the property on the terms upon which it was previously held—namely, by miner's right under the Act of 1866.

That his property has thereby been greatly depreciated in value, and that he has suffered considerable loss.

Your Committee have the honor to report that they consider that the petitioner is entitled to relief, and that the law should be so amended that titles held under the Act of 1866 should be held to be good, notwithstanding any provision of any Act to the contrary, and that such titles should be held and continued upon the same terms as originally provided, and that power should be granted to the Warden to issue rights for that purpose.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

11th September, 1877.

REPORT ON "THE GOLD MINING DISTRICTS ACT 1873 AMENDMENT BILL."

THE Gold Fields Committee have the honor to report that they have gone through the Bill as referred to them by order of reference dated 19th September, 1877, and that they have no amendments to suggest therein.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

20th September, 1877.

REPORT ON PETITION OF W. E. SADLER.

I AM instructed to report that it appears that on the 15th October, 1868, a resolution was passed in the House of Representatives:—

"That a respectful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying him to recommend to the House that a sum of £100 be offered as premium for the best essay to be written on the following subject: 'The means for securing the permanent settlement of the mining population of New Zealand, and for fixing within the colony the capital which is being constantly drained away from the gold fields, as shown in the great excess of exports over imports at the ports of the exclusively gold-mining districts.'"

In pursuance of this resolution, a Proclamation, dated 31st December, 1868, was issued in the General Government *Gazette*, prescribing terms and conditions subject to which premiums of £50, £30, and £20 were offered for the three best essays upon the following subject:—

"The means for securing the permanent settlement of the mining population of New Zealand, and for fixing within the colony the capital which is being drained away from the gold fields, as shown in the great excess of exports over imports at the ports of the exclusively gold-mining districts."

On the 17th March, 1869, the following gentlemen were appointed by the Colonial Secretary (the Hon. E. W. Stafford) examiners to decide on the comparative merits of the essays: the Hon. Alfred Domett, M.L.C., the Hon. W. B. D. Mantell, M.L.C., James Coutts Crawford, Esq., R.M. Upon the 12th May, 1869, the examiners reported that the names corresponding to the mottoes in respect of which the several premiums have been adjudged are as follow:—

(1.) First prize, £50.—"Striving to better, oft we mar what's well," Robert H. Eyton, Parnell, Auckland.

(2.) Second prize, £30.—"*Carpe diem*," F. W. Hutton, Auckland.

(3.) Third Prize, £20.—"*Ubi mel ibi apes*," E. T. Gillon, Wellington.

The Committee instruct me to report that the decision of the examiners was clearly affirmed, and that the request to your House to go behind that decision is utterly unreasonable.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

21st September, 1877.

REPORT ON PETITION OF HENRY KEESING, jun.

I AM instructed to report that the Committee find that the claim of the petitioner was fully considered by a Commission, consisting of G. Maurice O'Rorke, Esq., R. C. Dyer, Esq., and D. Grove, Esq., appointed under the hand of his Honor the Superintendent of Auckland, 1870.

This claim was one of twenty-six investigated by that Commission.

In reference to the claim of Mr. H. Keesing, jun., the Commissioners reported,—

“That Mr. Henry Keesing claims the reward on the grounds that, on the 9th August, 1867, he discovered a specimen in the Kurunui Creek. That at this time the diggers considered the Thames Gold Fields a ‘duffer,’ and were actually leaving it, but, in consequence of his discovery, were induced to remain. He also says that Mr. William Hunt, of ‘Hunt’s Claim,’ had followed him to the Kurunui, and saw the specimen found by him, and that on the next day, August 10th, Mr. Hunt returned and pegged off, in the same spot, the claim since known as the Shotover Company. With reference to this claim, we are of opinion that as the Kurunui was at this time open to the public, and was within the boundaries of the district which had been, on July 30th of the same year, proclaimed a gold field, the claimant simply discovered a specimen on what was already a gold field, and did not discover a gold field, or in any way conduce to one being opened.”

The Committee are of opinion that the Commission could have come to no other decision, and that, therefore, the petitioner has no claim to further consideration.

21st September, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

FINAL REPORT ON THE MINES BILL.

THE Gold Fields Committee have the honor to report that they have gone through the remainder of the Mines Bill, and recommend that this portion of the Bill be passed, with the alterations, elisions, and amendments as shown in the copy of the Schedules and Appendices attached to this report.

24th September, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

REPORT ON PETITION OF MESSRS. RING.

I AM instructed to report that the Committee have carefully considered the claim of the petitioners, and, in so doing, have examined members of the House of Representatives who have been exceptionally conversant with the early circumstances attending the first discoveries of gold in the province of Auckland.

In April, 1867, the Superintendent of Auckland, by Proclamation, offered £5,000 to any person or persons who could satisfactorily prove that they had discovered a payable gold field in the province. No conditions or restrictions were attached to the Proclamation, as was contemplated by the resolution of the Provincial Council upon which it was based.

In April, 1870, twenty-six claims to the reward were examined by a special Commission, including in their number a claim by the petitioners, Messrs. Ring. The Commissioners reported as follows:—

“Claim of the Messrs. Ring.”

“We have held over till the last the case of the Messrs. Ring, who claim the reward on account of their discoveries of gold at Coromandel in 1852. The interpretation which we put on the Superintendent’s notification of the 12th April, 1867, offering the reward, clearly excludes them from any right to participate in it; but it is the opinion of the Commissioners that, although the discovery of 1852, and the subsequent discoveries of 1861 did not lead to the discovery of a payable gold field, still all the subsequent discoveries of gold in the Coromandel Peninsula are we think traceable, to some extent, to the discovery made by the Messrs. Ring in 1852.

“For this reason the Commissioners desire to assign to the Messrs. Ring, as being the first discoverers of gold in New Zealand, a portion of the £5,000. We recommend that, in recognition of their services, a sum of £200 should be granted to the Messrs. Ring as a matter of grace, not of right. It is clear from the evidence that the discoveries made by the Messrs. Ring in 1852 were not considered of sufficient importance to merit the reward of £500, which was the prize offered at that time; but as it is our opinion that the discovery of 1852 has a direct bearing on all subsequent discoveries in the Coromandel Peninsula, we submit that the case should be treated as an exceptional one, and that Messrs. Ring should, to the extent we have specified, be permitted to participate in the present reward, even though their discoveries were well known to the Government and the public long before the offer of the reward of £5,000.”

Notwithstanding the fact that Coromandel was not proved a payable gold field up to 1870, the Commissioners felt justified in recommending a grant of £200 as a matter of grace, though not of right, at the same time insisting that the offer of reward did not apply to discoveries made before 1867.

At the present time no offer of reward for original discoveries or for new discoveries appears to be alive.

The Committee are therefore in any case precluded from making a definite recommendation that a reward should be given to the Messrs. Ring.

It is, however, evident that, since the report of the Auckland Commission, Coromandel has proved to be a payable and permanent gold field; that it was originally discovered by the petitioners; and that the discovery so made is the first known instance of gold having been struck in the colony.

I have, therefore, to report that, as there is no fund available for the payment of rewards upon gold fields, and as the Committee consider it very inadvisable to reopen the cases most fully inquired into by the Auckland Commission, they have no recommendation to make.

26th September, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

FURTHER REPORT on the PETITION of STEPHEN READ and OTHERS.

Your Committee have the honor to report as follows:—

From documentary and other evidence adduced, it appears that in 1864 the petitioners applied for and obtained from the Warden of the district a license or certificate authorizing them to divert and use water for gold-mining purposes from Thompson's Creek, on a run occupied by Mr. Glassford, in the Manuherikia Valley, and above the station; and, in January, 1872, the same parties also obtained a certificate for a tail-race, terminating in Thompson's Creek. Upon the construction of these races the petitioners claim to have expended between £2,000 and £3,000.

The petitioners remained in the undisturbed use and possession of the rights which they had thus legally acquired under the Gold Fields Regulations until 1874, when the runholder commenced legal proceedings against them for the purpose of restraining them from running tailings into Thompson's Creek, the course of which leads through a pre-emptive section held under an agricultural lease granted to Mr. Glassford in September, 1873—twenty-one months after the issue of the tail-race certificate. About the same time a similar difficulty occurred at Maerewhenua, where Messrs. Borton and McMasters had issued an injunction to restrain Howe and party from running tailings into a stream abutting on land partly freehold and partly leasehold.

Under these circumstances, Howe and party, and Read and party, petitioned the Provincial Council for protection in the use and enjoyment of their several rights. On 8th June, 1874, a Committee of the Provincial Council reported on the Maerewhenua case as follows:—

- “1. That the Executive should, as indicated by the Provincial Secretary in Council, get a case stated for the consideration of the Appeal Court, with a view to save the expenses attendant upon protracted litigation.
- “2. That, failing in their being successful in so doing, the Executive should take steps to defend the action, on behalf of Howe and party.”

On the following day, 9th June, the Committee also reported on the petition of Stephen Read and others, as follows:—

- “Your Committee, having considered this petition, have to report similarly to that on the Maerewhenua case (Howe and party) reported yesterday, in the event of the runholder, Mr. Glassford, obtaining an injunction from the Supreme Court to prevent Stephen Read working his claim.”

The recommendation of the Committee was carried out in the case of Howe and party by the Provincial Government; but in the case of Read and party, similar assistance was refused, and Mr. Glassford thereupon—namely, in July, 1874—issued an injunction against the petitioners, thereby forcing them into a Court of law in defence of rights acquired by virtue of regulations issued under the authority of “The Gold Fields Act, 1866. Mr. Justice Johnston, before whom the case was tried, expressed his dissatisfaction with the judgment which had been given in the case of Borton v. Howe, and when charging the jury he said,—

- “There was no doubt that this case was one of considerable importance, both as regarded the parties themselves, and certain classes of interests very important to the community; and reminded the jury that, in discharging their duties, they should give no regard to ulterior circumstances. Damages were claimed on three grounds. Firstly, the pollution of water; secondly, damage done to the land; thirdly, continuation of trespasses, whereby the property was endangered. On the second ground he pointed out to them that there was a conflict of testimony as to whether the deposition of shingle, which caused the alleged damage, was from the defendant's workings or not. He might rule it to the jury, without any great confidence of his being right in law, because *it had never been tested yet*—he should rule it to them that, by the existing law of New Zealand, a person making an honest use of a tail-race which had been constructed by authority, and under a license given under the regulations made in pursuance of the Gold Fields Act—a person honestly and fairly and not abusively working such tail-race—was not responsible for the results. He should lay that down at present, without any absolute conviction as to its being good law, and he must decide the law one way or another, in order to have the opinion of the Superior Court of several Judges in solemn argument on the subject. *The law had not yet been decided*, and in the meantime it was the duty of the jury to accept the law from the Judge. He then went over the pleas, and gave the jury his ruling. He directed them in law to find various allegations to be true, with the exception of this: that it was for them to find if damage was done by the defendants, and, if done by them, whether it was unavoidably done, and reasonably done in the exercise of their rights.”

The jury returned a verdict for plaintiff of 1s. damages for polluting the stream, and £50 for damages to the land; and they found that the defendants did not pollute the stream wrongfully; and the petitioners were further ordered to pay the taxed costs of plaintiff, £222 16s. 8d., in addition to their own costs, amounting, as they allege, to £336, making a total of £608 16s. 8d.

Your Committee reported to your honorable House recommending that a sum of £500 should be placed on the Estimates for repayment of petitioner's costs; but, upon the motion of the Hon. George McLean, M.H.R., the report was referred back to your Committee for the production of further evidence.

Your Committee have now to report that an opportunity was given to the Hon. George McLean to produce any evidence he thought fit, but that gentleman declined to do so, contenting himself with expressing a desire that questions should be put to Mr. Macassey and Mr. Haggitt, as counsel for plaintiff. The Hon. Mr. McLean, however, would not undertake to frame any questions for this purpose; and your Committee considered that the evidence required was not as between plaintiff and defendant, but as to the case itself being the same or different to the case of Borton v. Howe. On this point they were satisfied by the remarks of Mr. Justice Johnston, as already quoted, and by the evidence tendered before the Committee by Mr. Robert Stout, M.H.R.

Your Committee have now again to report,—

That, in the opinion of this Committee, the petitioners should be repaid the costs incurred by them in defending their rights in a Court of law, and that it be a recommendation to the Government that the sum of £500 be placed on the Estimates to defray such costs, subject to the Government being satisfied that the costs have been duly expended.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

15th October, 1877.

REPORT ON PETITION of W. KNOX and OTHERS.

I AM instructed to report that the petition appears to be unintentionally so worded as to ask for a redress of grievance against the Westland County Council, inasmuch as the said Council did not give, by way of reward, a sum of money to the petitioners.

The facts of the case, however, appear to be that on the 10th April, 1877, a resolution was proposed,—

“That this Council vote James Robinson the sum of £200 as a reward for his perseverance in prospecting the Kumara Gold Field, and giving public notification of the discovery after proving it payable; and, further, that, in the opinion of this Council, James Robinson would have been entitled to the sum previously offered by the General Government for the discovery of a new gold field had such reward not lapsed. That the Council, under the circumstances, would respectfully recommend the General Government to place on the Estimates a sum of money for James Robinson equal (in conjunction with the vote of this Council) to that previously offered by the Government for the discovery of new gold fields; and that the Council would respectfully urge upon the Government the advisability of again offering rewards for the discovery of new gold fields.”

Subsequently, in accordance with an amendment upon the above resolution, a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into all claims, and reported on the 10th May:—

“Your Committee have the honor to report, having met at Kumara on the 2nd instant, and again this day. On the first-mentioned date, all the applicants for reward, together with their witnesses, were examined before your Committee. We have given the evidence so taken careful consideration this day, and beg to recommend as follows:—

- “1. That James Robinson be recognized as the prospector whose labour and exertions led to the development of the gold fields of Kumara.
- “2. That the General Government be requested to make a special case of the Kumara Gold Fields, on account of the special circumstances attending that discovery, and to grant a suitable reward to James Robinson and his two mates, William Costello and Wm. Knox, for the discoveries made by them; the result of this action leading, in the opinion of your Committee, to the Kumara Gold Fields attaining its present position as the most important and extensive gold field now in existence in New Zealand.”

This report was adopted without amendment, on the 17th May.

The Committee have to report that, on the ground of the informality above stated, the petition is inadmissible.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

15th October, 1877.

REPORT ON the PETITION of J. NEALE.

THE Committee instruct me to report as follows:—

That the facts as set out in the petition appear generally to be correct.

That the decision in *Borton v. Howe*, if accurate in law, gives the settlers upon the banks of the Maerewhenua River, below the gold field, water rights superior to those held by others under license from the Crown for mining purposes above.

That the Legislature of the colony, having hitherto declined to define the rights and privileges of those engaged in an orderly manner in mining for gold under license, the Judges of the Appeal Court had to decide the case upon the maxims and traditions of common law, many of which are inapplicable to the circumstances of a new country, and are directly antagonistic to the prosperity of many industries that might be prosecuted with benefit to the colony and without serious detriment to any holder of freehold land. Mr. Justice Chapman, in his judgment read by Mr. Justice Johnston, states: “It seems, therefore, that inasmuch as the defendants owe their status as miners to the Gold Fields Act, unless they can establish their right to foul the water of streams under the express provisions of that Act, or by necessary implication from its provisions, they can have no defence; the plaintiffs having a good cause of action at common law.”

I am also directed to report that the decision of the case does not appear to the Committee to have been at all satisfactory, especially in consideration of the fact that the case was submitted to the Court avowedly as a “test case.” The decision was given a long time after the hearing of the case. One of the Judges was then out of the colony. Mr. Justice Johnston appears to have been content to have read the judgment of Mr. Justice Chapman, then in Dunedin, while expressing a general concurrence; but subsequently, in the case of *Glassford v. Reid*, admitting that the manner in which the decision of *Borton v. Howe* had been arrived at was not very satisfactory, and that in its consideration the regulations had been overlooked. It therefore appears to the Committee that the decision in *Borton v. Howe* by no means sets at rest the question at issue as to the actual legal position of the miners and landowners in gold-mining districts, as it was hoped it would do when the case was submitted for trial.

The Committee would urge upon the Government the necessity, in alienations of land upon gold fields, of reserving to the Crown all riparian rights, so that no settler may have any ground in law for action against his neighbour, except for actual damage to the holding.

The Committee are of opinion that water-rights granted in proclaimed gold fields, upon payment, to miners without actual reservations of any kind, which rights have been duly acquired under the Gold Fields Acts from time to time in force, ought to be respected by the Legislature.

The Committee have therefore to recommend that the Government do take the whole subject into consideration, and initiate such legislation as may appear necessary to render of practical and certain value the rights hitherto and hereafter to be granted to all classes.

15th October, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

REPORT on the PETITION of REUBEN WAITE.

I AM directed to report that petitions similar to that under reference to your Committee were considered in 1875 and also in 1876.

That the Committee on both occasions decided that the petitioner had no claim upon the Government. No evidence is offered to your Committee to induce them to alter the decision hitherto arrived at after careful consideration. They have therefore no recommendation to make.

15th November, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

REPORT on "THE MINING COMPANIES ACT 1872 AMENDMENT ACT, 1877."

THE Gold Fields Committee, to whom was referred the Bill intituled "The Mining Companies Act 1872 Amendment Act, 1877," have the honor to report,—

That, having considered the Bill under reference, your Committee recommend that the same be passed; but that it be provided that the deposit money of £20 in clause 5 should be forfeited in case the appeal be not duly prosecuted within the time prescribed by the Act.

26th November, 1877.

C. A. DE LAUTOUR,
Chairman.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1877.

