

Should Government favourably entertain the three years' scheme detailed above, the duties I would have to perform under it would be such as the following:—

(1.) To exercise, all the year round, through the post, a general supervision of the local schools of mines, and to aid and advise them in their studies.

(2.) To select, make lists of, and order from London the books, chemicals, and apparatus required by the schools.

(3.) To analyze minerals sent through the local schools by their secretaries at reduced rates—say, half the usual charge.

(4.) To supply any information within my power to the Department of Mines when called for.

(5.) To devote my whole time for six months in the year—1st November to 1st May—to delivering lectures and conducting testing and assaying classes on the goldfields of Otago and the West Coast, as detailed in the scheme.

(6.) To furnish an annual report to the Minister of Mines on the work done in these schools during the year, with information of new localities for useful minerals, new discoveries of useful minerals, and any information of new processes or improved processes not generally known by miners; and anything further of use or interest to the Mines Department.

Mr. Montgomery's duties would be of a similar character.

It will, I think, be desirable to strictly prohibit every one engaged under this scheme from having anything to do with shares in mines, and with mining property in every form.

In conclusion, I wish to express my strong impression of the necessity of taking immediate action, while the minds of the miners are so full of the subject. A Government subsidy of £1 for £1, or even £2 for £1, subscribed for the purchase of books, chemicals, and apparatus, would be a great boon to the local schools. The subsidies might take the form of appliances, imported through me by the Government and allocated to the schools in proportion to their subscribed contributions. It would, I think, be desirable to charge fees for the various classes, the maximum fee for one student, attending all the lectures and classes of all the instructors, to be not more than 10s. This would cover seven weeks' continuous instruction in all the subjects taught. The fee ranging down to 2s. 6d. for students in places where one week's course is carried on. The general public, attending only an occasional lecture, to pay 1s. at the door. These fees would defray the cost of advertising and horse-hire.

The local bodies, such as County Councils, Town Councils, Education Boards, or School Committees, should, I think, provide lecture-room for the purposes of the scheme.

I have, &c.,

JAMES G. BLACK.

The Hon. the Minister of Mines, Wellington.