

with the Native owners shall not be prejudicially affected by reason of the extinguishment of the Native title or the issue of a Crown grant for any portion of any land comprised within the original boundaries in the agreements with the Native owners.

Further, the Amending Bill provides that, in assessing compensation for any damage done to any land in consequence of a river being declared a watercourse for the deposit of tailings, that the value of such damage shall not exceed the valuation made under "The Land and Income Assessment Act, 1891," instead of "The Property Assessment Act, 1885," which is repealed by the previous-mentioned Act.

The Bill will also give power to the Governor to grant mineral leases on Crown lands outside a mining district, providing for the same payments of rents and royalties as those prescribed in the Mining Act of last session for leases granted within a mining district. The other amendments are merely of a verbal character.

In regard to the amendments in "The Mining Companies Act, 1886," it has been represented that in many instances shareholders are entirely ignorant of the position of the companies they are interested in, and, unless they can personally attend at the manager's office, they cannot get a balance-sheet showing how the affairs of the company stand. Provision is being made in the Bill for the manager or secretary of any incorporated company carrying on mining operations to transmit a list of shareholders in arrears of calls every six months to each shareholder.

Representations have also been made by investors in mining companies that "The Mining Companies Act, 1886," is not complied with in respect to the payment of calls and the qualifications of directors. The Act requires that a director shall not be eligible for election, or be qualified to act, if he be indebted to the company in any sum due in respect of shares held by him. It has been stated that, in order to comply with this provision, some directors give a cheque for their calls which the manager holds in his cash-box, and does not present at the bank for payment; in cases of companies going into liquidation, numbers of these cheques are found to be valueless. The Amending Act provides for all cheques and moneys being paid into a bank within three days after their receipt, and it also gives the Governor power to direct the Audit Office to make an audit of any company's books if at any time deemed desirable.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

The annual reports of this department for the previous year were distributed during the recess. The Twenty-seventh Museum and Laboratory Report, which is now in preparation, will, besides the statistical information relative to the museum collections, the library, and the observatory work, give the details of 401 chemical analyses which have been performed for the Government and for the public.

The twenty-second volume of the Geological Reports will give a detailed account of the surveys made during the past year. These surveys have chiefly been directed with the purpose of giving information that will lead to the practical development of those mineral resources which have been indicated by previous explorations.

In the northern district of Auckland the geological map has been revised, and several special surveys have been made for the purpose of defining possible coal-bearing formations which are known to be very extensive in that part of the colony.

This survey will have a very important practical bearing on the profitable use of railways which have been constructed and are in progress.

The Hikurangi Coalfield, to open out which the Kamo Railway is being extended, has been geologically surveyed, and from the evidence obtained the area in which coal may be expected to occur has an extent of ten square miles. The seam where it has been cut is from 6ft. to 11ft. in thickness, and the coal is of excellent quality. The coalfield which is tapped by the Kawakawa Railway has undergone further examination. It has a very large extent, but owing to the manner in which the surface is obscured by recent formations, the discovery of workable seams can only be made by the use of the diamond-drill in well-selected positions.

In the same district the mineral lodes of the Puhupuhi Silverfield were investigated. They occur on the flanks of a table-land, which has an elevation of 1,100ft. above the sea, and formed by a sheet of volcanic rock about 100ft. thick, resting on greenstone slates, which have become decomposed to a great depth. In this rotten rock quartz-lodes are very numerous and generally carry silver-ore, but none of the mines have yet proved successful. Cinnabar also occurs in the creek beds, but has not been traced to its source.